

Hacker, Marsha

From: Paul Beckett [beckettpa@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, November 21, 2012 12:00 PM
To: Tolley, Sabrina; Hacker, Marsha
Cc: Ellingson, Susan; Solomon, Brian
Subject: Fwd: SW Bike Path lighting issue
Attachments: November 19 bike path.doc

Dear Sabrina and Marsha,

I forward you an email from Sue Ellingson. I had written to her and to Brian Solomon to give my views on the SW Bike Path lighting issue which is coming up for decision. Below Sue's email is what I sent to her and Brian, and I have attached it also to this email as a word document. You may circulate it if you choose.

Paul Beckett

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Ellingson, Susan <district13@cityofmadison.com>
Date: Mon, Nov 19, 2012 at 9:44 PM
Subject: RE: SW Bike Path lighting issue
To: Paul Beckett <beckettpa@gmail.com>

Paul,

These are very thoughtful comments. I encourage you to email them to Ped/Bike and BPW committees:

PED/BIKE/MOTOR VEHICLE CMSN

- Staff will distribute your comments to committee members: Sabrina Tolley, stolley@cityofmadison.com

BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS

- Staff: Marsha Hacker, mhacker@cityofmadison.com

Also, you can attend the meeting on 11/28. Probably at 5:00p, Rm 260 Madison Municipal Bldg, 215 MLKing Jr Blvd. And agenda will be available a few days before the meeting:

<http://madison.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

Thanks.

Sue

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Sue Ellingson, Alder • Madison District 13
district13@cityofmadison.com • 259-1824
Subscribe to my updates: www.cityofmadison.com/council/district13/updates/

From: Paul Beckett [beckettpa@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, November 19, 2012 6:59 PM
To: Ellingson, Susan; Solomon, Brian

Cc: Ken Golden
Subject: SW Bike Path lighting issue

Dear Sue and Brian,

I live near the path (but on the south side of Gregory Street) and I use the path almost daily as a biker and a walker. I served on the design committee for the Southwest Path, and subsequently chaired a Dudgeon-Monroe Neighborhood Association committee which liaised between the City and our neighborhood residents. (We feel that our neighborhood was affected more directly than any other, and that our committee operated successfully as a two-way channel of communication which eased the stresses of change for the residents, and in some cases resulted in better City decisions as the construction phase progressed.) I was very proud that our neighborhood did not indulge in the kind of NIMBY reaction that has killed many good projects elsewhere.

I have been reserving judgement a bit on the question of lighting. Many friends living along the path are passionately against lighting. Many other biker friends feel that there SHOULD be night lighting on the path.

Now, I've come to a personal conclusion, and one that I hold strongly: the path lighting should go forward.

The arguments FOR lighting are well summarized in the Bicycle Federation's article at:
<http://bfw.org/2012/07/12/lighting-madisons-southwest-bike-path/>

Important in my own thinking is the need for city-wide fairness and even-handedness. Our neighborhood is full of highly literate intellectuals who are good at mobilization. But, love the neighborhood as I do, I do not feel that we should get special treatment from the city. If the bike paths elsewhere are lighted, and if the wider Madison community wants them and feels they are needed, then our path should have lights. I was proud before that our neighborhood avoided a NIMBY hysteria. I want us to do that now.

Respecting the arguments on the other side, four principal ones have been advanced:

1. The strongest argument that, at a time when we are becoming more conscious of light pollution, we should preserve an area of darkness. This argument has some traction with me. But a) the lighting plan minimizes light pollution; and b) this is to single out a very minor source of light pollution while ignoring the much more major sources, including the outside lights that too many of our neighbors leave blazing at night.
2. Owls will leave the path area and our neighborhoods. This is based on a complete misunderstanding of owls. (Come and listen to them at my house, in one for the best-lighted areas of Dudgeon Monroe.)
3. Lighting will decrease rather than increase security, both of the neighborhood and of individual path users. This is simply preposterous.
4. Lighting will make the path LESS safe for night-time bicyclists. Ditto.

It is too bad that in advancing the lighting project, if you do, you will be going against the strongly held feelings of a small but very vocal minority. You will be accused of hating owls and preferring insecurity and bicycle crashes.

But if you also agree that on a more objective basis, and with the interests of the larger Madison community in mind, the lighting project needs to go forward, then I would urge you to proceed.

Thank you for being Alders!

Paul Beckett
2533 Gregory Street
Madison WI 53711
608 238 2580

November 19, 2012

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