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**Sent:** Wednesday, December 17, 2014 9:33 AM  
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**Cc:** Rummel, Marsha; Brad Hinkfuss  
**Subject:** Union Corners - UDC Meeting

AI - Please share this email with the other UDC members.

UDC Members -

I was very disappointed to see the plans Gorman has submitted to the Urban Design Commission for 2500 Winnebago St.

On October 27th, I attended a neighborhood meeting to find out more about the proposal. The Gorman representative present was Marc Ott, the project architect. The majority of the neighbors in attendance expressed their dislike for the "modern" look of the buildings, comparing them to a 1960s dorm, and requesting something that fits with the neighborhood, something unique, and something with color. City Row Apartments was suggested as a building neighbors liked the design of, although neighbors were made aware the buildings at Union Corners would need to have flat roofs. At that meeting, Marc said he agreed with the comments and stated this was "thrown together" in the last month. He seemed receptive, even excited, to make the suggested changes.

On December 8th, I attended the Union Corners Steering Committee meeting and was disappointed to see that few (if any) of the changes discussed at the October 27th neighborhood meeting were made.

The plans they've presented are inconsistent with their own application to the City for Affordable Housing Initiative (AHI) Funds. That application, which they've indicated is similar to what they'll submit to WHEDA for tax credits, indicates 14 three-bedrooms, which WHEDA requires to have ground floor entrances. Their plans have no three-bedrooms on the ground floor. This WHEDA scoring category is "Serves Large Families (3 BR or larger)". If these units are to serve large families, I feel there must be some sort of green space for these families and other tenants in the buildings, and it needs to be included in this phase of the development, not delayed for future phases.

The representatives from Gorman couldn't provide a clear answer, specifically regarding the ground floor, on what space will be residential and what will be retail and/or commercial. If there's to be a mix of residential and retail / commercial on the ground floor, I feel the UDC and the neighborhood (or at the very least, the steering committee) should see what the plans for that look like. Where will residents of ground floor units enter? Where will they store their outdoor items (grills, children's toys & bikes, etc.) since these are "family" units? Will these items be visible from the retail / commercial space next to the residential units?

The exterior design of the buildings is reminiscent of a bad 1970s dorm. It doesn't evoke the historical character of the site or the neighborhood, nor does it complement the existing residential and commercial buildings in the neighborhood. I would like to see brick become a primary component of the exterior building materials. The developer indicated there would be some brick, but that the budget doesn't really allow for a significant amount. In the City AHI application, the developer indicated they would be taking the maximum number of WHEDA tax credit points for "credit usage". (WHEDA awards more points to developments that spend less money.) Although I understand the importance of having a realistic budget, I don't feel the design of the buildings should be limited strictly because the developer is trying to stay under a certain dollar amount for points.

Some examples of developments that use exterior materials I feel are more suitable to this site are: Arbor Crossing Apartments (Shorewood Hills – some affordable units), Baldwin Corners (Baldwin & Williamson), and Park Central Apartments (Ingersoll & Wilson – 100% tax credit/affordable housing). Although the scoring requirements change from year to year, these developments (and many

other affordable housing developments in the City of Madison) show that affordable housing can be built without sacrificing design aesthetics and quality.

I want to see the Union Corners site developed, and I think the affordability components of these two buildings will be a positive addition to the neighborhood, however the current design of these buildings, and the lack of green space, is not a positive addition. The developer seems to be rushing this project through, without having an idea of how the entire final project will look. The plans they've provided thus far are inconsistent with the proposal that won the RFP, inconsistent with their own AHJ application, and incomplete in that they have no three-bedrooms on the first floor. I think the neighborhood and the UDC deserve to see complete, consistent plans before any approvals are granted. There is one chance to get this building design "right" and what the developer is presenting right now is not right for the City, the neighborhood, or the future residential and commercial tenants of these buildings.

Thank you for your service to the City, and your time in reviewing my comments.

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