

TO: City of Madison Committees on Sustainability & Environment
FROM: Sandy Stark, Dudgeon-Monroe Neighborhood Assoc. Path Chair
DATE: September 20, 2015
RE: Pollinator Protection Task Force, August 2015

In August, when the Commonwealth Pollinator Gardens on the SW Path were being feted, and our Nature&History Trail grant group hosted the Tour the Path Prairies event featuring monarchs and milkweed plants, I first heard of the Mayor's task force on Pollinators. I had assumed this group was in early stages until a fellow restorationist emailed me that late Friday that the final report and recommendations are up for approval in your committees this Monday afternoon.

This is the first time I have seen the report. There is a lot to like about what its authors identify as issues and goals, including getting the public and neighborhoods involved in supporting pollinator friendly practices in green spaces. This is exactly what we have been doing along the bike path, in residential rain gardens, and even in mixed native/garden community areas in the path corridors, for, oh, about 15 years, along the SW Commuter Path.

We even formed a multi-neighborhood coalition of path volunteers two years ago, working with engineering--mostly Greg Fries and his staff--to look at mowing and planting practices that would encourage a better habitat.

So of course we are supportive of the general proposals, although a tad puzzled that yet another document suggests the city wishes to get us volunteers involved when here we have been, and are, and will be. One of our August events, supported by a city grant, even featured a UW Madison Arboretum pollinator expert, as well as a local group, The Wild Ones, who donated tons of flats of milkweed plants for free distribution in homeowner gardens and to add to the bike path corridors already approved for planting.

Even at this late stage, we would love to connect with and support the task force more officially in the implementation phases, since we are already well organized to do so, and our volunteer groups include many native restorationists and habitat experts. I am out of town Monday, so have asked others to relay this information to you, or I would do so in person.

Thanks for any time you can take to review these comments & interests.
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