

October 28, 2019

Agenda Item No. 5

11/5/19 Common Council Meeting

To: Members of the City of Madison Common Council

Re: November 5, 2019 meeting - Meadowlands development proposal at Milwaukee and Windstone.

It is my hope that the members of the Common Council will connect more with the residents of the Meadowlands Community and surrounding areas.

The residents should be given strong consideration over the developers. We live there and will have to live with the consequences. If a mistake is made, there's no going back, it's there for generations to come. The residents need to be given respect and should be taken very seriously. It was very apparent that the development plan was given more consideration than the residents at the Plan Commission meeting, hence the 4-2 vote in favor. There were many residents that wrote in. There had to be close to 100 residents that showed up to the neighborhood meeting held by Alder Lemmer.

It's about our health (which includes mental and emotional) and wellbeing. These choices affect the residents and their homes. The Meadowlands is a very peaceful neighborhood and we moved to the area because of what it has to offer. We are not against development. There was a plan intended for the Meadowlands and the proposal far exceeds what that intention was. There are areas outside of the Meadowlands that can be more accommodating to a development of that size and nature.

Many people wrote in opposing the proposal because of the affordable housing. There already is the same type of affordable housing right down Milwaukee street in the Grandview Commons neighborhood. You need to realize that the development has had a very negative impact on the neighborhood and that residents are very concerned and disturbed. Please listen to them, they have valid points. Given the history of the Harmony, they are afraid of another bad situation. Why compound the issue and put additional stress on the residents?

Another opposing factor is the size of the development. The neighborhood already has large apartment buildings on Littlemore and Windstone, not even 3 city blocks away, which are much more suitable and appropriate than what is being proposed. We want new developments to be consistent with the rest of the Meadowlands neighborhood. That means 12-16 units per acre as outlined in the Sprecher Dev Plan, not 30. We want natural habitat and parks consistent throughout, not some huge apartment buildings and parking lots. Some may not consider 216 units as being high density. I think that is subjective and it depends on the area. If you go downtown E. Washington Ave., that many units may not be high density. But in the Meadowlands in comparison to what is already there, it is high density. And just because there is enough space to put in a large parking lot doesn't mean that it's right for the Meadowlands. There is also another development of close to 200 units going in on the corner of Milwaukee and Sprecher just a couple of blocks away, so why put the burden of another large development in the Meadowlands affecting the residents of a peaceful neighborhood?

Please listen to us, we want consistency to what has already taken place. We want something better than what is being proposed. We want our environment to be kept healthy and safe and peaceful. We moved to the Meadowlands to get more openness and had the understanding that the area still needing development would be done with medium density in which the Sprecher development plan indicates 12-16 units per acre in the area, not 30. We want less units, thereby less parking lot spaces and less cars so that we can better protect the integrity, safety, character and charm of the neighborhood and environment. There is a small pond and Door Creek Park close by and there could be problems with the runoff affecting them. The more development, parking stalls and cars, the more toxins that hurt the environment, and the drainage system may not keep the living ecosystem in that area safe.

There were issues with placement of the size of the apartment buildings because of the gas lines. I believe placement of buildings with less units would not have the same issue. So why force things to fit when they shouldn't be there?

Quality of materials – I lived in an apartment building with subsidized housing and the materials were low grade, inside and out. In looking at the Harmony units, the quality of the buildings do not compare to the surrounding homes.

With the Interstate, there is limited access to the development causing travel and safety issues.

There is already a lot of noise pollution from the Interstate and with so many more additional vehicles in such a small area, the noise pollution will increase.

There is a huge concern for city services as the Madison Police Department is short staffed and the Madison Metro has limited services in the area.

There were things that seem to impress people at the last meeting, like the resource room – Fine if kept up but down the road, will need updating and there is no guarantee for that. Green space – Playground for children promised but nothing set in stone. Community garden of 8 ft X 20 something feet is very small, so only a few units (4-6?) would have benefits from that. If some issues were to come up during the build, what will be sacrificed to make things fit?

There is so much controversy and opposition to the Meadowlands proposal, plus there are too many loose ends. I am of the opinion we are not at the place where approval should be given.

We need to make that area the best that it can be, and that is not by overcrowding it or overburdening it.

We want something better than what is being proposed. That does not mean that the first proposal to come to the table is better. That does not mean that bigger than the original intent is better; that does not mean that more parking lot and less green space is better; that does not mean lowering the standards for quality and design is better, that does not mean sacrificing safety and quality of life for surrounding neighbors is better. The proposed development is not what is in the best interest of the Meadowlands community.

The Meadowlands community deserves respect, and cooperation, and it deserves better! Your responsibility lies with the best interest of the people that live in that area, not the developers. We ask that you hold off for something better. Please do not approve the Meadowlands development proposal that is presented today.

Respectfully,

Cheryl Solaris, resident of the Meadowlands

cc: Alder Lyndsay Lemmer

Lisa Veldran, City of Madison

I approve of my letter being made public record. CS