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Subject: Fwd: OMSAP and Hartmeyer Natural Area
Date: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 11:30:27 AM

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Begin forwarded message:

From: beckytradewell@gmail.com
Date: June 23, 2020 at 10:58:38 AM CDT
To: SMC@cityofmadison.com
Cc: allalders@cityofmadison.com
Subject: OMSAP and Hartmeyer Natural Area

Members of the Sustainable Madison Committee,

My name is Rebecca Tradewell, 414 Marston Avenue. I ask that you recommend that the Plan Commission amend the Oscar Meyer Special Area Plan in order to preserve the entire Hartmeyer property (Hartmeyer Natural Area) as natural and park land.

I would like to first make a couple of observations based on responses from city staff (Planning and Parks) to requests to keep the entire HNA as open space.

Why preserve 13 acres?

Why did staff arrive at a recommendation for 13 acres of park on the Hartmeyer property? Primarily, it seems to be because the number of residential units expected to be built on the remainder of the approximately 30 acre property would result in a requirement for the developer to dedicate 13 acres of property for parkland. The city would receive the property at no cost. It apparently does not matter what is currently on the property as a whole (an ecosystem rich in wildlife plus a buffer To provide protection from intense development). This may be a smart approach generally, but there should be room for adjustment based on the nature of the property. There must be other funds for parks being generated by housing constructed in other parts of the planning area (I assume that not all developers will actually dedicate parkland). Also, this approach means that the public would not have access to the HNA until a company decides to develop the Hartmeyer property and, I suppose, that if fewer units are proposed, the size of the park might be reduced.

Parks and Open Space Plan

City staff also indicate that the presence of Demetral Park in the Oscar Meyer

Special Planning Area provides the larger community park amenities required by the Parks and Open Space Plan. I was shocked to learn that Demetral is considered to be the existing open space that provides more than adequate open space under the OMSAP, to be augmented by the small park on the Hartmeyer property. Demetral has very little biodiversity. It consists mainly of athletic fields and is across Packers from the areas to be developed as residential. The play area and shelter in Demetral are a significant walk south of Commercial — I would expect them to remain primarily attractive to residents of the Eken Park Neighborhood, toward which they are oriented.

The OMSAP aims to create a walkable neighborhood, but it is difficult to envision changes to the intersection at Packers and Commercial that would tempt many families to walk across six lanes of traffic to get to Demetral or to take the bus there, for that matter. More diverse park space should be provided for the many new residents of the Oscar Meyer planning area, in easy walking distance from their homes.

As to a neighborhood park, because of the increased density proposed within the planning area, the originally proposed small park on the Hartmeyer needed to be scaled up. However, staff concluded that a park larger than 13 acres would be inconsistent with the POSP and cannot be justified. Again, there should be room in park planning for flexibility based on the special nature of the property.

The OMSAP mentions that there is a strong Community desire for the Madison Little League Fields to continue functioning as baseball fields. It's hard to disagree with that. The land on which the fields are located is part of the Oscar Meyer property. City staff mention that the parkland dedication requirement for the Oscar Meyer property may be about the size of the baseball fields. I don't see any discussion of whether the turning the baseball fields into a public park would be consistent with the POSP. Perhaps it is. But if not, it should arguably be done anyway. The HNA should also be made a park (or call it something else, but preserve it).

Madison Sustainability Plan

Preserving and restoring the Hartmeyer property will promote several goals of the Madison Sustainability Plan. That plan calls for restoring and maintaining natural habitat, ensuring all youth have access to environmental stewardship programs and information, and improving stormwater management. Several experts have disagreed with city staff's recent statements that this area does not and cannot improve stormwater management and the Oscar Meyer Area Strategic Assessment Report (2/5/19) states that the wetland serves an important stormwater retention function. The Sustainability Plan also aims to promote healthy neighborhoods. Natural areas and parks promote both physical and mental health.

The planning area consists of many, many acres. Surely, creative planning can make room for a few more acres for wildlife and recreation on the Hartmeyer property. Please propose to amend the OMSAP to protect the entire 30 acres of

the Hartmeyer property.

Thank you.