

From: [JANET L CHRISTIAN](#)
To: [Urban Design Comments](#)
Subject: comments for Oct.7 meeting, agenda item NEW BUSINESS #12. 61778 -- re 6145 Mineral Point Road
Date: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 9:57:12 AM

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6205 Mineral Point Road, Apt. 212
Madison, WI 53705
September 30, 2020
City of Madison Urban Design Commission
Dear Commissioners and Staff:

I am a resident of Oakwood Village-University Woods. **THIS LETTER IS TO EXPRESS MY OPPOSITION TO THE OAKWOOD VILLAGE AFFORDABLE SENIOR LIVING APARTMENT COMPLEX THAT IS BEING PROPOSED FOR 6145-6201 MINERAL POINT ROAD, ADJACENT TO THE EAST SIDE OF THE OAKWOOD VILLAGE-UNIVERSITY WOODS CAMPUS.** The parcel for the project is currently owned by Oakwood Lutheran Home Association, Inc., but it would be purchased from Oakwood by the organization AgeBetter if all approvals were obtained. For convenience here, I will refer to the proposed project as the *AgeBetter complex*.

I understand that you evaluate proposed projects based on their physical appearance, signage, and site design. Therefore, I will confine my comments to those topics.

Concerns regarding physical appearance. Although the AgeBetter complex and the Oakwood Campus would be owned by different entities, the extremely close proximity of the proposed AgeBetter complex to the existing large Heritage Oaks senior apartment building suggests that they should be considered as parts of the same overall design unit. The fact that those two large residences would share the primary Oakwood driveway between them adds to that argument.

My objections here are that neither the style of architecture nor the materials suggested by the plan would be consistent with the style and materials of buildings on the Oakwood Campus. Since the AgeBetter complex and several Oakwood buildings would be visible from Mineral Point Road, the AgeBetter complex would look radically different. Further, since all the large trees on the proposed AgeBetter parcel would need to be removed to build the complex, the absence of mature growth would add an additional disruption to the design flow of the area.

Concern about signage. One driveway would serve both of those large senior apartment complexes. Therefore, signs and addresses to identify each complex would need to be placed at the main entry to the Oakwood Campus along Mineral Point Road. I am concerned that multiple, necessary signs would cause confusion and therefore slowing of traffic at that busy motor and pedestrian intersection.

Concerns about site design. The designers of the AgeBetter complex sited it just within the legal requirements for the parcel, which would make it appear very "tight" to buildings on both sides and to the public sidewalk. If the AgeBetter complex could be designed with a smaller footprint and more stories, this concern could be lessened. However, when asked about this possibility (at the only meeting made available to Oakwood residents), the design company representative stated that making the building higher would make it more expensive to build and therefore undoable.

In closing, **I AM OPPOSED TO THE PROPOSED OAKWOOD VILLAGE AFFORDABLE SENIOR LIVING APARTMENT COMPLEX BECAUSE IT WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE FOR THE SITE BASED ON PHYSICAL APPEARANCE, SIGNAGE, AND SITE DESIGN.**

Thank you for considering my concerns.

Jan Christian

OAKWOOD VILLAGE – UNIVERSITY WOODS CAMPUS
Heritage Oaks 122, 6205 Mineral Point Road
Madison, WI 53705-4577

31th August 2020

AgeBetter Building Project:
Of No Benefit to Oakwood Village; But Only Damage

Ever since the Zoom town meeting introduced residents to this project early last month, informing us of plans to jam an affordable housing unit into the northeast corner of the campus, I have carefully pondered consequences of what has been proposed. I now wish to register alarm at what is looming on the horizon. Since not a single benefit and only untold harm will result from bringing this building into being, why Oakwood is engaging in such self-inflicted damage to itself, as well as to the appearance of this City, is enigma.

Elements of this damage – aesthetic, environmental and pragmatic – are as follows:

(1) Destruction of Quiet and Sylvan Appearance at the Entrance to the Campus:

Removal of oak grove with its sylvan elegance of entrance, and replacing this with a nearly curb-side building, bereft of any spacious setback atmosphere along Mineral Point Road will remove much that is attractive about Oakwood. Gone with oak woods will be sound barrier that shields the campus from one of the busiest thoroughfares in Madison, where thousands of vehicles of all sizes are constantly rushing along at 50 mph creating a ceaseless din – especially during morning and evening rush-hour. Indeed, what resident in this new building will wish to have rooms adjacent to the noise of Mineral Point Road?

A quiet suburban area of mainly single-family dwellings will give way to the new urbanism that began to be imposed from Washington a half dozen years ago. This kind of development calls for rezoning and may cause consternation among neighbourhood residents. Environmental concerns are obvious, and bring opposition. What prospective new long-term, independent-living residents will want to buy into this?

(2) Dangerous Traffic Congestion, Parking, Waste & Water Management Issues:

Even with the new plan to put underground parking exit at south end of development, there are severe problems. Constant flow of cars belonging to over five-hundred Oakwood residents and six-hundred staff, along with service and emergency vehicles regularly move up and down the road to the light at the Island Drive Junction. Added to this are ever moving vehicles of buildings & grounds staff for maintaining gardens and moving debris.

Severe traffic congestion will occur at the double nexus of forked roads that meet near the Island Drive traffic light. This is already a serious problem. What will happen when, as so often occurs, cars line up at Oakwood waiting for the stop light to turn green?

A whole line of parking places for staff and visitors on the east side will be lost to make way for the AgeBetter driveway. Indeed, this, in latest drawings, may exit at the crossing that leads down to the main entrance of Heritage Building.

Finally, there is no provision of a sidewalk for AgeBetter pedestrians who will be expected to negotiate a pedestrian crossing to Heritage Oaks in all kinds of weather. This, also, is a recipe for disaster

(3) **Danger of Damage to Common Spirit of Community Among Residents**

Perhaps the most serious loss of all is the prospect of community segregation. Until now, one never knew which residents of the Oakwood community were living there as recipients of HUD or other forms of Affordable Housing assistance. The Tower and Gallery house renters of all kinds, so that no one knew who was receiving aid.

Conclusion

Living at Oakwood has been desirable, with a long list of applicants waiting to reside within its campus. Until now. Removal of its wonderful attractions will end this. Indeed, some residents may well decide that Oakwood is no longer a desirable place to live. With financial problems already mounting, I fail to see why Oakwood is doing this to itself. What single benefit will come from jamming an apartment block almost up against the Mineral Point curb on the east side of the entrance to the campus?

I sincerely recommend that the City Planning Commission reject this project.

Respectfully yours,

Robert Eric Frykenberg
Resident of Oakwood Village
(UW Professor Emeritus of History & South Asian Studies)

Email: refryken@wisc.edu
Line Phone: 608-230-3533
Cell Phone: 608-358-8317

From: [Diane Adams](#)
To: [Urban Design Comments](#)
Subject: Age Better Low-income Housing project at Oakwood Village
Date: Tuesday, October 6, 2020 2:58:37 PM

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I understand that this project has suffered some setbacks in the past year and appreciate the fact that the actions of the Urban Design Commission will greatly affect its moving forward.

As a resident of Heritage Oaks on the Oakwood Village University Woods campus, I will attend your hearing tomorrow as an interested observer. I have only two thoughts - neither of which comes under the category of "support" or "against" the project:

a) I'd like to see the building set back a bit further south, so that the large bank of 100-year old trees is not completely destroyed. The residents of any building put there with all trees down will find the noise from Mineral Point quite distracting. (We face north, but are on the 7th floor, so are not disturbed - but lower floor residents who face north do hear every siren and rumbling truck). It just seems awkward to have any building put there that doesn't leave a "buffer zone" for sound.

b) This has nothing to do with the sale of 2 acres to AgeBetter, but one of the absolute joys of this campus as it is comes in the fact that everything is connected by walkways or underground passage. (One can get to any part of the campus without going out in the elements). It seems shortsighted to have a new housing complex for senior residents (who could potentially utilize Oakwood's services such as therapy, dining, or cultural programming) be situated without any potential for indoor access.

There is real need for low-income senior housing, and something built very near this campus is a perfect idea. But this particular tract of land - while available - may require re-thinking.

Thank you. Diane Adams, 231-1836 703 Heritage Oaks

October 7, 2020

Ms. Marje Murray, Board Chair
Oakwood Lutheran Senior Ministries

cc: Reginald Hislop III, CEO of Oakwood Village
cc: Julie Holden, Vice President of Oakwood Village, Campus Operations

Dear Ms. Murray,

Having spent nearly 60 years as an architect, planner and educator, both at UW-Madison and at City College of New York, I have been curious about the AgeBetter project since joining Oakwood Village in the middle of July of this year. I have gotten to know many of the residents and have already begun to form friendships, I am confident will be lasting and rewarding. They have shared their thoughts about the project with me. I offer the following observations and opinions as a way of sharing with you my professional take on the consequences of the decisions that have been made so far, realizing of course, that everyone may not agree with my opinions. But I offer them, nonetheless:

Unlike many communities and neighborhoods in cities across the country, a significant number of Oakwood Village residents, its administrators and board members have taken a socially responsible position for supporting affordable retirement housing and have made a commitment to locate it on the Oakwood Campus. AgeBetter, a continuing care consortium made-up of two nonprofit retirement communities in Dane County, Oakwood Village and Attic Angels, have tendered an agreement to sell a 1.39-acre parcel of the Oakwood Village campus to Gorman & Company for the primary development of an affordable senior living apartment complex.

While AgeBetter's social intention is to be applauded, the resulting development solution is problematic for several reasons, not the least of which is that it establishes a building setback precedent along Mineral Point Road and destroys site assets and attributes that have historically given the Oakwood Village campus its valued recognition. It would be sad to see such a peerless gem, like Oakwood, suffer the loss of this sylvan setting in an attempt to wedge the proposed building into such a small space on the corner of an otherwise spatially relaxed campus.

With the loss of the wooded setting there also will be the loss of an elegant and major "gateway" experience that visitors, residents and prospective residents currently perceive as they travel into the site off of Mineral Point Road— like the anticipation and mystery of an extended drive when accessing a private estate. And worse yet, that small, but effective wooded parcel would be replaced by a 60 foot high office building-like structure that would be on average 15 feet away from the front property line of the site (and sidewalk), a precedent nowhere else found along Mineral Point Road in either direction. The impact this structure would have on the scale of experience for both pedestrians and occupants of automobiles as they approach and pass this overbearing structure would easily have them perceive they were traveling through downtown Madison, but only momentarily.

I find fault with other issues in the current AgeBetter project solution, like accessibility and congestion during rush hour traffic, a better connection to the main campus to offset its feeling of isolation, a loss of control by Oakwood over the entrance drive accessibility and maintenance (as the plans show, there are two sections of the entry drive that are included in the sale of the 1.39-acres by Oakwood). These are just three additional issues that should be considered along with those stated above in making a major decision about the future of Oakwood Village.

Respectfully yours,
Hanque Macari

The Oaks, Apt B40
(262) 226-5349
macarihanque@gmail.com

From: [Emma Macari](#)
To: [Urban Design Comments](#)
Subject: Written comments
Date: Wednesday, October 7, 2020 12:15:08 PM

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The proposed development would deny residents and the nearby community of a beautiful wooded corner/entrance to our tranquil campus, much deserved by the residents, who have come here to spend a part of our remaining years living in an environment of beauty and solitude.

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Nino Amato](#)
To: [Urban Design Comments](#)
Subject: AgeBetter Elderly Housing proposed development on Mineral Point.
Date: Wednesday, October 7, 2020 3:55:38 PM

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As the former CEO/Pres. for the Coalition of Wisconsin Aging & Health Groups (CWAG) and as a westside home owner since 1978 — I support the AgeBetter & Oakwood partnership, for additional Elderly Subsidized Housing on Mineral Point Road BUT with the following modification.

Project Concerns: 77 or 78 unit subsidized senior living building (15% market rate) on an approximately 1.2 acre parcel owned by Oakwood Village, is to be sold to AgeBetter, with Oakwood Village as a partner in the project.

Pros: We all understand the pressing need for subsidized senior housing in Madison, so this project is most welcomed, but with modifications.

Cons: The “footprint” of the proposed building on the 1.2 acre parcel owned by Oakwood Village, is “too large” and not only does it create storm water run-off issues and inadequate storm water drainage — it will unnecessarily, remove the healthy, mature trees on the Mineral Point frontage. The removal of these trees, run counter to the City of Madison own Sustainability & Climate Change mitigation plans.

Therefore, the current project needs to be modified, to preserve all of the mature trees and to address the storm water run-off issues. Below are several modified options, that need to be considered and hopefully approved by the Urban Design Commission, in collaboration with the current Oakwood Nursing Home Residents:

1. After looking at this site, it is possible to carve out additional land from the Oakwood owned parcel to the South of the current proposed building location. This would allow the building to be moved back saving the mature trees along Mineral Point & allowing a Storm water run-off pond.
2. It is also possible to carve out and purchase a portion of the parcel of land, to the East of the proposed project that is owned by UW-Madison but isn't being used. This would allow the proposed building to be reconfigured, saving all of the mature trees, on Mineral Point.
3. The proposed building is currently a four story high complex and it's more than possible to build a fifth or sixth story building — utilizing more cost-effectively the 1.2 acre parcel footprint and solving the storm water run-off concerns — while preserving the mature trees on Mineral Point Road.
4. PLEASE NOTE: This third option will add additional construction cost to the project but in a cost-effective way, when you consider the **Environmental externalities, that is; the uncompensated environmental preservation of the trees and mitigating the storm water run-off issues.**

Thank you for your consideration and I will be on this afternoons Zoom Meeting, if anyone has any questions.

A.J. Nino Amato
CWAG Board Member & Former Pres./CEO
UW-Adjunct Professor, "Sustainability Policy & Best Practices."
(C) 608-514-3317 / namato@cwag.org

Sent from my iPhone