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Subject: Fourteen02 on Park -- An Outstanding Project for South Madison
Date: Monday, January 11, 2021 1:27:54 PM

Dear Plan Commission Members,

As you're no doubt well aware, the project before you is critically important for South Madison.

In April of 2019, when I was first elected to Council, it was feared the Pick n' Save would be demolished by November of that year, eliminating the only full-service grocery store on the south side. We've made considerable progress since then, first convincing SSM to build their clinic on their own property on Fish Hatchery Rd, and then working with city staff to secure a developer to build on the city-owned Truman Olson site.

Rule Enterprises out of Milwaukee, joined by Movin' Out based here in Madison, have submitted plans for a mixed use development featuring 150 units of much-needed affordable housing and a full-service locally-owned grocery store. A robust neighborhood engagement process has brought us to this point, including a survey with over 500 responses, two neighborhood meetings prior to the selection of the development team, and, after that selection was made, four steering committee meetings and four neighborhood meetings.

In other words, this process has not been rushed or hurried in the slightest.

This process has been a group effort for nearly two years, with residents in South Madison fully engaged in an effort to prevent an interruption of grocery services. South Madison Unite was formed largely in response to this need and is comprised of residents from Bay Creek in District 13 and residents from neighborhoods in District 14 represented by Alder Carter.

It's worth noting the diversity of the development team, including a Black developer and a female developer, resulting in a unique public-private partnership including the City of Madison, a private-sector developer, and a non-profit developer.

Residents have expressed concerns that there will not be enough parking for the grocery store to succeed. The development team has allocated 60 spots to the grocery store, the amount requested by the vendor, Luna's Groceries. The development team has expressed confidence the remaining parking is adequate to meet the needs of their residential tenants. Given the site's location on a major transit route, this project does not call out for additional parking. However, overflow parking is available in the nearby surface parking lot owned by SSM should that be necessary.

Regarding the greenspace on the NW side of the lot, City Stormwater Engineer Greg Fries has spoken with the development team's engineers to discuss what is required to meet the standards set by our stormwater ordinance. In this instance, rather than insisting on a predetermined outcome and making that outcome a condition of approval, I am comfortable with trusting the experts.

In recognition of neighborhood concerns about recreational open greenspace, Alder Carter and I recently met with Parks Superintendent Eric Knepp to request action on identifying a parcel within the Wingra Triangle for a min-park. More projects are coming, including the development of the Pick n' Save site starting in the summer of 2022. Wingra Triangle will need its own park. Due to limitations in the shape and size of the Truman Olson parcel, it may not be reasonable to burden the project with the demand to address this need onsite, but instead the City should meet this need on its own. I am pleased to report that Superintendent Knepp agrees with this assessment and has committed to this course of action.

Lastly, engaged residents are intently focused on the success of the grocery store and have expressed this focus by requesting a 20-year deed restriction as a condition of approval. I understand this concern, as I have been focused on the success of this project for the better part of my first term on Council. I am cautious, however, not to interfere with staff's ability to work out the terms of the deed restriction based on best practices and believe this is best left to negotiations between staff and the development team.

My appearance before this body is to underscore two important goals: one, to make sure that neighborhood voices are heard, and, two, to move this project forward without delay.

It has long been my hope that we could cut the ribbon on the new grocery store and turn out the lights on the neighboring Pick n' Save, all in the same day. That goal remains in sight, provided we can break ground this spring.

In short, Fourteen02 on Park, to be built on the City-owned Truman Olson property, is an outstanding project fully worthy of your support. I ask you to vote in favor.

Thank you.

Tag Evers

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