



ALDER LARRY PALM, DISTRICT 15  
COMMON COUNCIL OFFICE  
CITY-COUNTY BUILDING, RM. 417  
210 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BLVD.  
MADISON, WI 53703-3345  
608.692.8416  
LPALM@CITYOFMADISON.COM  
WWW.CITYOFMADISON.COM/COUNCIL/DISTRICT15

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# ALDER LARRY PALM DISTRICT 15 ALDER REPORTS

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## Meeting calendar:

Hargrove/Dennett Greenway  
Monday, July 31  
6:00 p.m.  
Olbrich Gardens Atrium

Royster-Clark  
Tuesday, August 15  
6:30 p.m.  
Pinney Branch Library

Lake Edge Park Master Plan  
Monday, September 25  
6:30 p.m.  
Pinney Branch Library



Contact me:  
692.8416 (home)  
lpalm@cityofmadison.com

## Royster-Clark Update

A few months ago, Agrium announced that it was closing the Royster-Clark fertilizer facility on Cottage Grove Road. Agrium expects to continue operating the plant until supplies run out, which are expected to last until August. The operation will continue to use rail cars to transfer product and equipment to other facilities or for sale.

Agrium is working on a plan to sell the twenty-six acres of land as soon as possible. However, several things must be done first before they can consider offers, such as closing the facility, assessing the property's value and identifying any environmental concerns on the property.

Company officials express doubt that the current plant would be suitable for any future production, as it is over fifty years old and would be costly to upgrade. A community discussion would have to occur if

there was desire to demolish the plant prior to the completion of any planning process. I know that several residents have expressed concern about having a vacant and potentially dangerous facility in the neighborhood.

Speaking of community discussions, **I will be hosting a community meeting concerning Royster-Clark on Tuesday, August 15, at 6:30 p.m., in the Pinney Branch Library conference room on Cottage Grove Road.**

This initial meeting will set the groundwork for what to expect and hopefully establish a core group of people interested in working with the City, Royster-Clark/Agrium, the County Supervisor, myself and other neighbors to facilitate discussions.

## The Lessons from Midvale Plaza

If you look at a city development map, you might see construction in the downtown area and many dots along the periphery. But, for a very long time, the middle ring has been without substantial development. Midvale Plaza falls within this ring and also almost all of District 15.

I hope the Midvale Plaza development is a "wake up" call for many neighborhoods in this middle ring. As development opportunities become less available downtown and on the periphery, new infill developments will occur inside this ring.

District 15 is likely to experience a few. Already, across the border there is Union Corners; Park East, a four-story, 17-unit development is being built on Atwood

Avenue; and a potential development on 10 acres of land on Milwaukee Street by Swiss Colony. This does not include the potential for the far larger 60+ acre Voit property on Milwaukee Street or the 26-acre Royster-Clark property, as well as the many smaller infill opportunities on busier streets, such as Monona Drive, Atwood Avenue, Milwaukee Street, E. Washington Avenue and Stoughton Road.

So, study up, long before development begins. Take a look at the City's Comprehensive Plan and the Development Guide Book (both available online at [www.cityofmadison.com/planning](http://www.cityofmadison.com/planning)), and consider establishing a neighborhood plan.



I hope this issue of the District 15 Alder Report is useful to you. To help keep down the costs of production and distribution, please notify the Common Council office if you are able to receive the Alder Report electronically, and we will email it to you in Adobe PDF format.  
 Email: [dfields@cityofmadison.com](mailto:dfields@cityofmadison.com)  
 Phone: 266-4071

#### NEIGHBORHOOD GRANTS APPROVED!

- Lake Edge (and East Buckeye) - \$20,000 for the Stoughton Road Revitalization Project (SRRP).
- Worthington Park - \$3,000 for a trilingual neighborhood sign.
- Eastmorland - \$500 for the neighborhood's 50th Anniversary Commemorative Booklet.
- Eken Park - \$500 each for a public neighborhood bike rack and a public picnic table.

Both the Lake Edge Neighborhood Association and the Eastmorland Community Association were the high scorers in each of their requested categories.

I continue to be impressed with the capabilities and dedication of the leaders and members of District 15 neighborhoods. Congratulations, and good luck!

## Starkweather Path at Darbo Drive and Marquette Street

In June, I held a neighborhood meeting to discuss the proposed pedestrian and bicycle path along Starkweather Creek from Milwaukee Street to Aberg Avenue. As part of the reconstruction of E. Washington Avenue in 2007, a bridge will be constructed across E. Washington Avenue from near McDonald's to the former Wing's Inn site, which has been demolished to prepare for this project.

At the neighborhood meeting, several residents desired an alternate version for the path. The three primary concerns from the neighborhood meeting were:

1. The bridge across Starkweather Creek should be moved closer to the center of the Milwaukee Street-Darbo Drive span, closer to Sachs Street.
2. Remove designated pedestrian access to Hauk Street so that parking can remain.
3. Design Clyde Gallagher to maintain the street from Union Street to Sachs Street.

For residents near this area of Starkweather Creek, two plans for the path are enclosed with this newsletter. The plans are also avail-

able online at [www.cityofmadison.com/council/district15](http://www.cityofmadison.com/council/district15).

These changes are not a "package deal"; residents will be able to "mix and match." The bridge could be moved south while keeping the original street removal concept, for example. Or, we could reconstruct Clyde Gallagher Avenue as a street all the way from Milwaukee Street to Sachs Street and only begin a separate bike path north of Sachs Street.

More importantly, it is not yet certain that it is feasible to relocate the bridge to the south. City Engineering has done enough preliminary engineering to be pretty confident that it could work, **but it is not at all certain that the Wisconsin DNR will approve the creek relocation.** In addition, we have not yet completed the flood analysis, which could have a major impact on the feasibility of the project as a whole.

Residents near the project will be invited to a neighborhood meeting in December, when Engineering staff is again able to attend to our concerns. If you have any initial questions, concerns or issues, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

## 2007 City of Madison Budget

Recently, the Mayor presented his budget instructions, which call for a 3% decrease in funding for all City budgets except Police, Fire, agencies that are revenue neutral to the City, and the parts of budgets that are paid by other governmental agencies.

I support the Mayor's effort to control costs where appropriate. Especially true is his comment that "our 'cost to continue' would require an increase in the property tax levy of \$10.5 million, or approximately 7.7%. This is a higher property tax increase than I can accept." The last part is pretty telling - even the Mayor can't support a 7.7% increase in your property taxes.

The major factors affecting our budget situation are wage increases, rising health insurance premiums, fuel costs and retirement benefits. The more these costs increase, the more we either charge property owners or the fewer services we can offer.

The Mayor will release his 2007 Capital budget (non-employees and supplies) on August 22 and his 2007 Operating Budget on October 3. After this, the Board of Estimates will review the budgets until November, when the entire Council will review it. There is potential for three Council meetings - November 14, 15 and 16 - to decide the budget.

As always, please let me know your opinions.

## IZ Wrap-Up

During July, the Common Council finally approved changes to the City's two-year old Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) ordinance. Many parts of the ordinance remain substantially similar; however, from the homeowner's perspective, the new equity model will be an improvement. Now, those who purchase their homes will share their equity with the City at a fixed percentage, rather than a fluctuating percentage based upon when the home was purchased.

Another change to the law was adding a sunset provision that would automatically repeal the law on January 2, 2009, if the Council does not vote otherwise. By 2009, there will be five

years of experience with this program and, if it is to work, we will know by then.

During the whole IZ debate, I have grown increasingly concerned about many of our neighborhoods that feature affordable workforce housing. According to Money magazine, the average Madison home sells for \$218,600, whereas District 15 homes average about \$160,000 in assessed value. What are the long term ramifications to our neighborhoods if we sell new homes at artificially suppressed pricing? Over the next few months, I hope to explore more of these concerns with City officials and residents.

## Stoughton Road and the Stoughton Road Revitalization Project

As the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) continues to work on the physical plan for Stoughton Road (including the three alternate proposals which can be found online at <http://www.dot.state.wi.us/projects/us51-stoughtonrd/index.htm>), a local neighborhood group, the Stoughton Road Revitalization Project (SRRP) has been working to oversee a formal study of the corridor that will understand the potential and direction of development.

Representatives from eight area neighbor-

hoods, including Eastmorland and Lake Edge, and elected representatives, including County Supervisor Stoebig and myself, have been involved in this project. The City of Madison has submitted a Dane County BUILD grant application for the project, and a City of Madison neighborhood grant request received the highest score of all submitted grants.

As the SRRP continues its efforts to improve the Stoughton Road Corridor, we will become more public and welcome your input.

## Lake Edge Park Master Planning Meeting

A few months ago, residents near Lake Edge Park met to discuss the future of the park. Based on the experience I had with the Eastmorland Park master planning process, we first met with Lt. Carl Strasburg of the East Police District to discuss safety issues in the park. Lt. Strasburg provided data about previous police calls to the park and information about how residents can contact the police when something is happening in the park.

**On Monday, September 25, at 6:30 p.m. in the Pinney Branch Library conference room**, Parks Superintendent Jim Morgan will meet with neighbors to discuss creating a Master Plan for Lake Edge Park. Having a master plan will enable the City's Parks Division to allocate resources in the future to support the plan.

Please be sure to come to the meeting!



**Your opinion counts:**

**Please share your ideas and comments with me.**

**I can be reached at**

**692.8416 or**

**[ipalm@cityofmadison.com](mailto:ipalm@cityofmadison.com)**

### EKEN PARK PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

In late June, crews arrived to build new Eken Park playground equipment. The neighborhood has spent months since January fundraising for the equipment and deciding what equipment they would like. I want to congratulate Park Chairperson Kate Johnson and everybody else who was involved for their hard work! Also, thanks to Jim Morgan and the entire Parks Division for their good work.

The neighborhood had a goal of raising \$6,000 and, within a week, they were able to raise over \$1,300. When matched by People for Parks funding and money from CDBG (provided as part of the neighborhood plan), over \$40,000 was invested in Eken Park.



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Alder Larry Palm, District 15  
Common Council Office  
City-County Building, Rm. 417  
210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.  
Madison, WI 53703-3345  
608.692.8416  
lpalm@cityofmadison.com  
www.cityofmadison.com/council/district15

You are receiving this newsletter because of an upcoming event in your area. If you would like to be added to the mailing list to receive future District 15 newsletters, please contact Debbie Fields at the Common Council office at 266-4071 or [dfields@cityofmadison.com](mailto:dfields@cityofmadison.com).

## “Low Mow” and Hargrove/Dennett Greenway

Since the 2006 budget, I’ve always been a supporter of the Parks Division’s plan to create additional “low mow” areas in City parks. At the time, I didn’t know that this would extend into Engineering greenways (medians and other environmental areas controlled by the Engineering Department), but the policy should work the same in both cases.

1. **Inform the public and nearby residents of specific “low mow” areas.** Parks did this well. Every alder got a list of the parks in his or her district and a map detailing what would be added to the no-mow list. The Board of Park Commissioners voted on the recommendations, and they were implemented.
2. **Inform the public.** Yes, this is the same as above, but this one is about the environmental, aesthetic and economic benefits of grass prairies. Many people have said that “\$50,000 isn’t much,” but you should remember that’s \$50,000 each year, \$500,000+ over a decade. Whoever puts together the 2016 budget should thank us.
3. **Modify based upon real-world impact.** We didn’t

know who really used which areas. (Of course, baseball diamonds and hills are obvious.) But, last year we didn’t track where kids might set up their soccer game or otherwise play in the grass. Now, based on experience, we can.

Now back to my engineering/environmental greenway concerns. Our district has one of these areas next to Hargrove Street. There’s a bike path and railroad corridor on one side and a greenway on the other side of a drainage ditch. Back in April, Engineering asked if we could try out “low mow,” and I said, “Sure.”

This is a big piece of property across from Schenk/Whitehorse’s playground and a few blocks from Olbrich and Eastmorland Parks. It is also an area in which some residents have been interested in creating a community garden. Others want it returned to a mowed, “park-like” condition. Either way, there will be a **neighborhood meeting about this on Monday, July 31, at 6:00 p.m. at Olbrich Gardens in the Atrium.** Representatives of the Community Action Coalition, Parks and Engineering will be there. If you’re interested, stop by and share your opinion.