

Patrick Goss
5 Fairfax Court
Madison, WI 53718

Re: Proposed Grandview Commons Big Box Grocery Store

I read your letter of January 24 to Ald. Jill Johnson and feel compelled to respond.

During the last two years I have attended well over 25 meetings on this matter; meetings with the developer, meeting with neighbors, meetings with City staff, meetings with Grandview Commons' residents and meetings with City Boards and Commissions. During all that time I have heard from one Richmond Hill resident who supports the big box store proposal. That person, however, would also support a much smaller store.

I did not see you at a single one of those meetings. You are not in a position to judge the level of support for this proposal and you certainly are not qualified to accuse others of being ill-informed or of making misleading statements.

Had you attended just one meeting you would know that the issue is not about a grocery store. Most people favor a grocery store. They do not, however, favor a big box (the City of Madison defines a big box as a store over 40,000 square feet) regional shopping facility, along with almost 500 parking stalls embedded within an existing residential area.

The approved Sprecher neighborhood plan provides for a "small, compact, pedestrian oriented town center." Under the plan, a grocery store of up to 25,000 square feet could be constructed. The developer now wants to abandon this concept and replace it with a regional shopping destination.

The proposed location would isolate the store from the planned town center and locate it the farthest possible distance from the area with the highest population density. I can't envision many elderly people walking to the proposed site.

If approved, Veridian would sell the land to a real estate investment company located in Appleton. That company would construct the grocery store and lease it to Roundy's. Once that happens Veridian will lose all control, and the operation and management of the store will be totally independent of the town center.

You also mentioned the benefit of added tax base. Big box stores do not add a lot of value relative to the large amount of land they occupy. And a huge parking lot does not reflect the highest and best use of valuable land, nor does it constitute a pedestrian friendly environment.

Yes, we live in a City. And that means living within certain restrictions and honoring existing zoning and approved plans that protect the integrity of residential neighborhoods. Your comment about “If you want country living you should have moved there” was very condescending. People relied on representations made by the developer and the City approved plans when they made their decision of where to live. To change that now is highly unfair.

Ald. Johnson has done an excellent job of representing her district and working to protect our neighborhood. While I respect your opinion you would do well to take a little time to educate yourself before you criticize others and write letters that simply echo the words of the developer.

Regards,

Paul Reilly
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C: Ald. Jill Johnson
Michael Waidelich