



Office of the Common Council

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To: Members of the Plan Commission
From: Sara Eskrich, District 13 Alder
RE: 1004 & 1032 South Park Street
Date: June 7, 2015

Thank you for your thorough review of the Wingra Point II proposal before you this evening. As you know, this project has garnered much attention from the Urban Design Commission, neighbors, and city staff. The process for neighborhood input began prior to my tenure as alder, and I want to thank the development team and the neighborhood leaders for their deep and responsive work from late January until now.

Neighborhood Concerns: Most of the concerns I have heard from neighbors regarding this project are within the purview of the Plan Commission. They relate to added density, traffic risks, inadequate parking, bike and pedestrian safety, possible negative environmental impact, and general community impact.

The process within the neighborhood with regard to this project has been swift and strong. It has activated many neighbors to broader involvement in the community and greater awareness of the larger policy issues that affect the city. Bay Creek Neighborhood Association (BCNA) has reinstated its planning and economic development (P&ED) committee. The neighborhood turned out in large numbers at 3 alder-sponsored and 3 BCNA-sponsored neighborhood meetings. The P&ED committee met regularly. I also fielded a survey of neighborhood concerns (a summary of results from this non-scientific survey is attached). Neighbors continued their activism by going door-to-door to gain signatures for a petition regarding condition for development of this project.

I ask that you take neighbors' concerns and organizing seriously in your deliberations and action this evening. There are a multitude of opinions about development in this neighborhood, as there are everywhere. However, many before you this evening are doing their best to represent the many voices and perspectives of Bay Creek residents, particularly those who will be most impacted by this development process. Given the tight timeline for approval on this project and because of the time it took to inform the community of its multiple iterations, BCNA was unable to complete the work necessary to reach consensus on a position. However, the P&ED committee did its best to collect and represent those issues that received the most attention from the greatest number of neighbors—particularly those who will be most impacted by this development—in the attached advisory paper. This paper became the basis of the petition that neighbors submitted to you with their statement.

The vast majority (about 2/3 of those who responded to the survey and 90% of those approached with

the petition) have chosen not to oppose the project, but to articulate and advocate for specific changes that would in their experience of their community allow it to fit better into Bay Creek.

As you know, the role of the Plan Commission is to review and make a recommendation to the Common Council regarding a proposed zoning map amendment from a Planned Development General Development Plan (GDP) to Specific Implementation Plan (SIP). For the most part, the proposed SIP fits within the parameters of the approved GDP for 1004-1032 South Park Street. Much of the neighborhood's concern over general elements of this proposed development site were appropriate to the original GDP discussion, but are not your purview this evening. This is unfortunate, as many neighbors are frustrated over that past GDP process. This should remind us all of the importance of robust public input processes and involvement from broader neighborhoods when zoning designations are made.

Conditions of Approval: The staff report recommends several conditions on approval that result from the direct impact of this building on the site and surrounding community. I would like to reinforce some of those conditions for your approval and propose a few additional conditions that will help mitigate the impact of this project on the surrounding neighborhood and help it be an asset to our community:

- *Insert City Attorney Drafted Condition re: zoning conditional use for any restaurant/bar.*
- **Residential Parking Permits:** Condition 43 in the staff report acknowledges the limitations on commercial and residential parking for this development and notes that residents will not be granted residential parking permits for the area. This should be adopted.
- **Storm Water Management:** Conditions in the staff report ask that this project be as robustly sanctioned as city allows with regard to construction runoff and storm water management. Note that this is a place of high environmental impact due to proximity to Wingra Creek and Monona Bay, and the Urban Design Commission should continue to work with the development team on additional storm water management improvements on the site.
- **Left Turn from South Park Street into Development:** The Plan Commission should consider carefully whether it is necessary to add congestion to the intersection of Park Street and Fish Hatchery by making an entrance to the site off Park Street at West Lakeside Street, rather than moving the entrance to High Street, as originally proposed. I recognize that the developer would prefer to have the entrance at this intersection, but am not adequately convinced that it is necessary and appreciate that neighbors in the area would much prefer to move the entrance to High Street rather than conflate it with the West Lakeside Street intersection. If the Plan Commission agrees, a condition should be placed on this development to keep entrances/exits off main arterial roads.

Broader Policy Issues & Concerns: This project also reinforces that there are many broader policy issues and concerns that need to be addressed in the Bay Creek Neighborhood and at the Park and Fish Hatchery intersection. Though these issues and concerns will not all be solved through conditions of approval on this particular project, I want to highlight that they need to be addressed as soon as it feasible by our city. I look forward to being involved.

- Pedestrian and Bike Safety: The intersection of Park Street and Fish Hatchery continues to be a problem. This problem extends beyond the intersection of Park Street and West Lakeside, especially during high traffic volume periods. Traffic Engineering should continue to work with the neighborhood and myself to improve the pedestrian crossing where traffic merges from Park Street onto Fish Hatchery and where pedestrians will increasingly cross at West Lakeside and Emerson across Park Street.
 - Traffic Engineering has noted that they will create bike share arrows where the bike lane ends on Fish Hatchery to allow bikes to cross the intersection at South Park more safely.
 - Traffic Engineering should continue to work with the alder and north-end Bay Creek residents to improve Fish Hatchery pedestrian crossings, paying particular attention to Brooks Street and the potential for a raised island there.
 - Traffic Engineering should continue to work with the alder and residents in the vicinity of West Lakeside Street to improve South Park pedestrian crossings.
- Parking: The city needs to continue exploring solutions to residential parking challenges beyond our current commuter RP3 program. The impact of increased density should be an asset to our neighborhoods. In order to do this, it needs to balance increased parking needs with the encouragement of multi-modal transit and limited car ownership. Of particular concern are visitors to apartment buildings with 1:1 residential unit:parking ratios and commercial spaces without adequate on-site parking. Our current residential parking program does not address the evening and overnight impacts of development in residential streets.
- Traffic: Lakeside Street residents have been in contact with me about the need for traffic calming to reduce speeds. Past attempts to calm the problems along this street have not been successful and new solutions need to be sought. This is something I will help the neighborhood to explore with Traffic Engineering.
- Environmental Sustainability: Our interaction with Monona Bay needs to be continuously monitored and improved. The stormwater management conditions for this and all future projects must be accountably followed. Increased attention to sustainable infill that mitigates environmental impact is critical to this area.
- Viable commercial space: The Park Street plans emphasize a reemergence of this artery as a place where people live, work, and play. This means that commercial space must be vibrant and responsive to the needs of the neighborhood. Residents have been in contact with me about many community business needs and we should use this and future projects to encourage commercial space uses that will add value to South Madison. This includes planning for parking impacts from new businesses.
- Continued Development along South Park/Neighborhood Plan: It has been 11 years since the city engaged with Bay Creek on the development of a neighborhood plan. Given the focus on South Park as the next area for development in the city it is crucial to engage with residents of this community now to solicit their on-the-ground knowledge of the needs and workings of and to include their vision in the plans for this neighborhood's future.

My comments are expansive, but I think it's important to put projects like this into broader context. I will *support* this project provided that the conditions noted above as well as those in the staff report are met. I also look forward to continuing to ensure that projects garner robust public input in

advance so that neighbors can work with developers to build the best projects possible for their neighborhoods and our entire community.

Thank you again for your thorough review of this project. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly with any questions.