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Sent: Monday, December 08, 2008 12:39 PM  
To: ptnajera@uwm.edu; jgrodman@ameritech.net  
Cc: Koster, Vanessa; bobg@uwm.edu; Julilly Kohler; Jeffrey Jordan; Andy Nunemaker; Pam Frautschi; Joe Klein; Else Ankel; Michael Groen; Michael Maierle; Joel Reinders; Teresa Kinis; Eileen Collins for PAA; Kit O'Meara; Peg Cotter; Lorraine Jacobs; Kovac, Nik; Horn, Sarah; Hamilton, Ashanti; Coggs, Milele; Dantzler, Akuwa; Jennifer Morales; sustainable\_se\_wisconsin@yahoogroups.com; Michael Rosen  
Subject: UWM Dorm proposal

Dear City Plan Commissioners,

I am objecting to the proposal to build a new UWM dorm on the Milwaukee River. I'm asking you to consider the consequences of this project, and take the long view.

I'm not sure why each of you are on the CPC—perhaps it's because you truly want to see better development in this city, and give a voice to citizen perspective, or maybe it's just to put another notch in your resume belt.

Right now, you have an extraordinary opportunity. You can rubber stamp this project and let it go the way of another “done deal,” or you can be heroes, and change the tide of what is surely coming upon us—the development of all of the Milwaukee River, north of North Ave.

Please be clear. Neighborhood leaders who have been meeting over the last several months on UWM and river issues do not want this development. The UWM dorms as proposed:

- Are too big, doubling the population of Riverside Park neighborhood without addressing infrastructure needs.
- Are environmentally shameful. High-density developments should never abut a primary environmental corridor.
- Open up development of all of the Milwaukee River at a time we are working to protect it.
- Don't meaningfully address resident concerns.
- Add more dorm density to North Ave. Three dorms is too many.
- Add more dorm density to the Milwaukee River for a total of almost 1200 students.
- Use public funds in the form of bonds to help finance it.

Accepting UWM's development will mean you are opening up the Milwaukee River to more development. We have a gem in the river corridor. It is still relatively pristine. It is a place of beauty and wildlife. What will be the long-term effect of developing it all? You must answer that question today.

Betsy Damon, the internationally renowned environmentalist was just in Milwaukee strategizing about our water. She said the most important thing is to “save as much greenspace around the river as you can.” She even went as far as saying, “Take back greenspace. It should never belong to developers.”

Water is not an endless resource. It is precious and becoming more coveted all over the world. More wars are being fought in this world over water than over oil. We can live without oil, but we cannot live without water.

If you cannot bring yourself to say “no,” at least postpone this project until further questions can be answered and until we, as residents and taxpayers, can be assured that the rest of the Milwaukee River will be protected. It is clear that the Overlay District will not do that.

I urge you to take the long view, put on your heroes' hats, upset a few developers now, and gain the respect from the residents you serve, not just for now, but for our wellbeing years down the road.

And if UWM wants to do something good for this city, let them follow in the footsteps of Marquette and build inclusive student housing in diverse neighborhoods, instead of shying away from the central city because it's "unsafe." We all know that code language. Let's turn the tide of Milwaukee's racism and environmental destruction and start off on a different and better track.

Sura Faraj, Community organizer, Riverwest Neighborhood Association Board member\*, 3rd District Neighborhood Association (3DNA) member, Milwaukee River Work Group (MRWG) member\*

\* for identification purposes only