

## Elmer, Linda

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**From:** Nicholson, Marcelia <Marcelia.Nicholson@milwaukeecountywi.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 03, 2018 2:28 PM  
**To:** Historic Preservation Commission  
**Cc:** Elmer, Linda; Bauman, Robert  
**Subject:** Washington Park Designation Application

Dear Members of the Historic Preservation Commission,

First and foremost, I apologize for the late communication. I expected to attend today's meeting to personally share my opinion, however unforeseen circumstances are preventing me from attending today. I hope that you will consider my request below. There is not much time, so I will try my best to be concise and to the point.

As the County Supervisor of District 5, I have spoken to countless constituents and neighbors in the Washington Park neighborhood. Based on these conversations, I am confident that many neighbors see Washington Park as a hub for activity, a refuge for both naturalists and sportsmen, a source of education, and a catalyst for building community. A portion of the park, leased by Milwaukee County to the Urban Ecology Center, has some of the brightest and awe-inspiring activity. That is because the Urban Ecology Center has served as a source of education about our environment, and the importance of conservation and sustainability- all issues that we know affect and impact urban residents especially if they aren't educated about them. On top of that, the UEC takes social justice issues head-on, and serves as safe place for Milwaukee's youth and their families who are sometimes forced to overcome incredible odds.

Without taking away from the rich legacy of Frederick L. Olmstead, it is important to note that the residents I serve would benefit more from the UEC's expansion than a historical designation. I say this not because I believe that these designations are not important, but because I see this as an attempt to halt, or at least slow down the UEC's intention to invest 12 million dollars into the park.

But don't take my word for it. I value the opinions of all District 5 residents. That is why I held multiple public meetings and solicited residents' views on the project. There was overwhelming support for this project, and my colleagues also agreed when they voted in favor of the project to move forward. Additionally, the applicant was in attendance and had the opportunity to have all concerns addressed. Though he was concerned that Olmstead's vision would be compromised, I believe we had alleviated that concern by clarifying the land usages and terms of the contract.

As a County Supervisor, I've had to make challenging decisions and I'm always most frustrated when we cannot provide our residents with the quality of services they deserve. I am confident the UEC will be a good and responsible steward of our land. That is why I support this partnership. Good public/ private partnerships like these, give the County more tools to invest into our parks- the same parks that we are often fighting to keep open, maintain, and staff.

I am not sure how a historic designation would impact this project, so I am asking that you deny the application until I do. It has been a short time to respond to the application, and I believe that we must honor both District 5's constituency that show overwhelming support for the project, and also honor the UEC, which has done years of hard work to see this project through.

Sincerely,

Supervisor Marcelia Nicholson

**Marcelia N. Nicholson**  
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