



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE

Milwaukee Branch
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March 8, 2004

Alderwoman Marlene Johnson-Odom
City Hall
200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202-3570

Re: Fond du Lac and North Comprehensive Plan

Dear Alderwoman Johnson-Odom:

We are excited about the opportunities presented by the Fond du Lac and North Comprehensive Plan. Nonetheless, we have one request pertaining to certain language in the plan. We are sending similar letters to Mayor Marvin Pratt, and Aldermen Fred Gordon, Willie Hines and Willie Wade.

As you may know, the NAACP is working in partnership with the Urban Open Space Foundation, Preserve our Parks, the African American World Cultural Center and others to build upon the proposed Fond du Lac and North Ave Comprehensive Neighborhood Plan by creating a detailed open space plan as the next step for neighborhood transformation. Based on results achieved in similar urban communities, strategic planning, acquisition, and development of open space would have a catalytic impact on the local economy and spur neighborhood reinvestment. It would improve air, water, and soil quality. Also, a well designed and maintained open space system would serve the social, cultural, recreational, and spiritual needs of residents who have experienced long-standing open-space inequities in Milwaukee County.

While there are many aspects of the current proposed Comprehensive Plan that we support, we continue to be troubled by one section and seek to have it removed. This is where we request your assistance.

On page 85 the plan states: "Public and private uses may be combined within neighborhood parks when it serves the broader interests of the neighborhood. When possible and appropriate, displaced park space should be replaced within the neighborhood." We request this language be stricken altogether for three important reasons.

- 1) This language was included in the Comprehensive Plan as a way to mitigate the impacts of the development proposed by the African American World Cultural Center. In a recent conversation with Rick Norris, our partners learned that the Center no longer intends to build in Johnson's Park. Their board has

responded to community input opposing the location within the park, and they have decided to downsize and refocus their program. Consequently, this language is no longer necessary.

2) We and our project partners are about to solicit and invest significant public and private resources in increasing the quantity and quality of open space in this neighborhood. The suggestion that the city would support development in public open spaces undermines the confidence of open space investor's in the long-term value of their investment.

3) It is counterproductive (and illogical) to have our partnership working to retrofit high quality open space into the neighborhood while the city encourages developing open space for other uses. If we work at cross-purposes, we will never gain ground in rectifying the serious open space inequity that exists.

On **March 16, 2004** the draft plan goes before the Zoning and Neighborhood Design Committee. We respectfully request that you take appropriate action to remove this language from the current plan.

Thank you for being attentive to the open space needs of the Fond du Lac and North Ave. Neighborhood down to this seemingly small but very important detail. With this change, we at the NAACP together with our project partners will enthusiastically place our full support behind the document.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jerry Ann Hamilton".

Jerry Ann Hamilton
President
NAACP