

Subject: [SASYNA-Discussions] Starkweather Square - Proposed Rezoning - 513 Jacobson Avenue & 3533 Furey Avenue PUBLIC HEARING - Monday September 13 6:00 PM - Room 201 City-County Building
From: "Julie A. Melton" <jmelton@facstaff.wisc.edu>
Date: Tue, 07 Sep 2004 08:06:43 -0500
To: SASYNA-Discussions@yahoogroups.com

To: Plan Commission members
Department of Planning & Development Planning Unit staff

From: Dan Melton, Chair, Schenk-Atwood-Starkweather-Yahara Neighborhood Association

Subject: Starkweather Square - Proposed Rezoning - 513 Jacobson Avenue & 3533 Furey Avenue
PUBLIC HEARING - Monday September 13 6:00 PM - Room 201 City-County Building

Schenk-Atwood-Starkweather-Yahara Neighborhood Association supports the proposed rezoning - from C2 Commercial and C3 Highway Commercial - to Planned Unit Development [PUD] - of property located at 513 Jacobson Avenue & 3533 Furey Avenue - near the Highway 30 - N Fair Oaks interchange - for the proposed Nelson Group Starkweather Square residential development.

We support urban infill development that is sensitive to its surroundings. Some suggest we should support no new development along or near Starkweather Creek until there is a comprehensive plan in place to deal with base flow issues with the creek. [Consider water use needed for home construction and lifetime residency. That water has to come from somewhere.] When we look at Starkweather Creek as a whole, we continue to be concerned about water demand, lack of a cohesive groundwater regeneration plan, and inadequate water storage capacity upstream. It's also important, though, to consider realistically how individual new development projects may effect the whole of the watershed. New development, if done well, can actually improve overall infiltration and slow the stormwater runoff rate. Making a significant improvement in the creek's low base flow and reducing the rate of runoff in storm events (slowing the flow) within the Starkweather watershed will depend on a variety of interlocking factors. Significant water retention upstream (reclaimed wetlands, meadow), for example, will be key. Remember: The few remaining Starkweather watershed springs are predicted to all be dry within about 15 years as build-out continues. Whether the new stormwater ordinances on the city and county level can prevent this, time will tell. If the remaining springs do dry up, cool water flow would be lost to the system, and remaining areas of indigenous microbiotic life would be gone for good. The entire creek would then become a slough.

However, in sum, while future health of Starkweather Creek is a continuing priority for our neighborhood, we don't feel it 's necessary to try to, in effect, hold all new development projects along or near the creek hostage until a comprehensive plan is in place to maintain and improve base flow and regenerate groundwater. We are confident we can put such a comprehensive plan in place in short order while, at the same time, we assess development projects, as they are submitted, and if one appears to be intelligently and sensitively planned, let it proceed - assuming, all the while, that a comprehensive plan to protect and improve the creek will be put in place soon.

We have three specific concerns - all relate to the site's proximity to the creek - that Commission members may want to ask the Nelsons about:

1. **Extension of Furey Avenue:** Furey Avenue should be as narrow as possible to minimize pavement surface - and stormwater should not run directly off Furey Avenue into the creek;
2. **Stormwater runoff from buildings:** A detailed, downspout-by-downspout plan for slowing stormwater runoff from each of the proposed buildings should be required; and
3. **Construction site runoff:** The Nelsons should be prepared to talk to each of their equipment operators about working so close to the creek. Of course, construction site runoff is an issue regardless of location but it is especially important on this site. Working so close to the creek, workers will need to be particularly careful about disturbing the land - and will need to have measures in place to prevent soil from being washed into the creek.

Planning Unit staff, Please circulate copies of this to Plan Commission members prior to the September 13 public hearing. Thanks!