

Dear Plan Commission Members,

I am a member of the Schenk/Atwood/Starkweather/Yahara (SASY) Garver Committee and former co-founder and co-chair of Friends of Starkweather Creek 2002-2013.

Please maintain a strong respect for the neighborhood use of the space around Garver in considering this document plan.

The neighborhood now uses the space around Garver more intensively than you might imagine, despite discouragement. The space effectively functions as wild space and houses habitat for many species. There we seek engagement with nature, dark sky and quiet, all within it's forested bounds. Some have named it the start of an east side arboretum. Most of us believe it is low quality wild space that could be significantly strengthened with careful species improvement and cleaning of filled landscape. It was used for years as an unofficial dump by some businesses.

The SASY Garver committee first proposed a ruin garden for Garver when the building was last threatened with demolition, as a strategy to preserve aspects of the historic structure, so we greatly support wise neighborhood sensitive re-use now. The old Olbrich Garden Master Plan needs to be viewed as out of date since Olbrich now has plans to expand to the ball fields east of creek by Thai Temple.

The **2013 Harvard Medical Conference on the New Science of Resiliency**, which I attended, highlighted the numerous and significant benefits of wild space on human wellness. The research is extensive and not to be overlooked. Were there more time I would share those details.

The lack of quality wild space on the east side is documented in Parker Jones 2014 North Plat/Garver Capstone Project:

<http://www.sasyna.org/index.php/recent-activities/garvercommittee/> on which SASY Garver Committee members worked for 9 months, embedding principles from previous community visioning on North Plat and Starkweather Creek, material dating from the years 2003- 2007.

Sincerely,

John Steines (Artist & RN working on wellness related issues)

3327 Chicago Ave

Madison, WI. 53714