

Marsh, Darren

From: Kyle Richmond <kylerrichmond@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, September 14, 2015 3:48 PM
To: Maria Powell
Cc: Park Commission Mail; Ritt, Michele
Subject: Re: Please confirm that you have received this! Thanks.

Maria:

I did indeed receive it, and have copied the Park Commission e-mail address (which is working, as far as I know).

Thank you for your persistence, and your comments.

Kyle

Supervisor Kyle R. Richmond
Dane County Board, District 4

Madison, Wisconsin, USA

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Dane County

2nd Vice Chair, Dane County Board

Member, Environment, Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee

Member, Parks Commission

Member, Food Council

City of Madison

Member, Allied Area Task Force

Vice Chair, Food Policy Council

Member, Local Food Committee

Non-Profit

V.P., Friends of Silverwood Park Board

From: Maria Powell <mariacpowell@gmail.com>
To: richmond.kyle@co.dane.wi.us
Cc: "Ritt, Michele" <Ritt.Michele@countyofdane.com>
Sent: Monday, September 14, 2015 12:54 PM
Subject: Please confirm that you have received this! Thanks.

Sup. Richmond:

I have tried to send this message twice now to the Park Commission for the Sept. 9 meeting . It has bounced back to me twice. I very frequently have problems with county emails, I don't know why.

Can you please let me know that you have received this and have it entered into the record as public comment for the Sept. 9 2015 Park Commission meeting? I have given up on having any voice in Lake View Hill decisions, but would still like this posted for the record.

Thank you,
Maria Powell

----- Forwarded Message -----

Subject: Sent yesterday for Parks Commission public comment

Date: Thu, 10 Sep 2015 08:42:33 -0500

From: Maria Powell <mariacpowell@gmail.com>

Dear Parks Commission: I sent this email yesterday before the meeting but it bounced back to me last night. So here it is again.

Please enter these comments into the public record for the Parks Commission meeting tonight. Thank you!

Sept. 9, 2015

Dear Dane County Parks Commissioners:

When my great-great grandparents came to Madison in 1851 from northern England, there were thousands of trees around the Yahara Lakes region over 100 feet tall and/or over 100 years old. In the next few decades, nearly all of these giant old trees in Dane County were cut down in the name of "progress"—as they were in England in the centuries before my ancestors left there.

Jump forward many decades and several generations. I grew up in the Green Bay area, and moved to Madison in 1998 for graduate school after finishing a BA in Biology at University of California, Santa Barbara. In 2005, after finishing a M.S. and Ph.D in Environmental Studies from UW-Madison's Nelson Institute, my family purchased a house surrounded on three sides by Lake View Hill County Park.

Our daughter was eight when we moved to our house on Lake View hill. We were thrilled to be living next to such a beautiful park with so many gorgeous trees. The whole family jumped eagerly into ecological restoration work in the park. We co-founded the Friends of Lake View Hill with neighbors and worked to get the park zoned as conservancy so condos would not be built there. Our daughter often played in the park, especially around the big trees south of the "old Nurses Dorm" right next to our house.

Sadly, in the years after we moved to the hill, several of her favorite trees south of the dorm were cut down. We became aware of the frequent use of pesticides in areas where she liked to explore and build forts. Having read countless scientific studies on the toxicological effects of pesticides, we told her—with very heavy hearts—that she shouldn't play in some of her favorite special places in the park anymore because they had been treated with pesticides.

In time, we came to understand that conservation in Lake View Hill Park includes frequent spraying of toxic chemicals on plants—non-native and native—for a variety of reasons, some relevant to ecological restoration and others not. It also includes cutting down large trees, native or not, that have "poor form" or are "in decline" or are in the way or unwanted for other reasons.

We raised questions about over-reliance on pesticides, and suggested alternatives. We offered to remove unwanted plants manually ourselves (which we did, and still do). We asked if it was really necessary to cut down so many trees and whether it was the best for the wildlife and ecological health of the park to do so. All too often, we were dismissed (and sometimes ridiculed) by county managers and staff—or just ignored.

Last Thursday, we awoke to the sound of a large tree falling on the hill, hitting the ground, and being ground up. My daughter was so distraught that she got on her bike and went to the library for the day. Over the course of the day, seventeen huge pine trees—70 to 80 years old—were cut down and ground up on the hill. Why? Primarily to create a better "viewshed" for people. Several pines had already been removed in previous years.

So what has my daughter learned in the last ten years about "conservation" in Dane County Parks? Conservation means spraying toxic chemicals on unwanted plants (native or not) and cutting down unwanted trees (native or not). It means dismissing or ignoring citizens (like her parents) who ask-- Why? What are the alternatives? What is being lost?

Now, she is 18 and mostly avoids the park, especially those areas where many trees have been "removed." She is too sad to spend any time there, or even look at the denuded places where huge trees she loved used to be.

Is this really what we want Dane County Parks to teach our children about conservation? About democracy?

Is this really how "green" and "progressive" Dane County wants its public parks managers to approach conservation?

If we continue to treat trees as disposable because they are "in poor form" or "in decline" or in the way of somebody's "viewshed"—there will likely never again be many trees over 100 feet tall or over 100 years old in Dane County. My daughter and her children and grandchildren will never get to see majestic trees like those my great-great grandparents saw when they came here in 1851.

Further, if we continue to treat living beings with such disregard—to view trees that remove immeasurable pounds of CO₂ from the atmosphere as disposable—who knows what trees and other life will even remain 100 years from now?

In these times, we need large trees more than ever--native or not, "poor form" or not, "in decline" or not. It is utter hubris to kill giant trees because they might obstruct someone's "viewshed."

Thank you for reading my comments and entering them into the public record.

Maria Powell, PhD
1311 Lake View Ave.
Madison, WI 53704

