

Summary of Alliant Energy Center Community Focus Group Comments

On-going Update

The following notes are from meetings with neighbors and community groups. These notes are continuously updated as the community outreach initiative advances. In some case community notes may overlap stakeholder notes presented earlier. In other words, different groups may have mentioned the same/similar topics. All items are included in this document to ensure this is a comprehensive list.

Noise Issues

- Neighborhood was quiet from prior to 2003/4. But Willow Island has been commercialized (fireworks, festivals, Band Camp, Rock Fest, etc.) Rock Fest has 5 stages, 4 days of music and fireworks.
- Dane County Fair – loud music but worse is helicopter rides that fly low over residential areas – had convinced AEC to change routes, but now back to old residential rout. Several times/hour at low elevation.
- Even charity races and walks can use significant amplification that impacts the neighbors – really a public nuisance.
- AEC staff have only been partially responsive – hard to engage in conversation. Several years ago, there was some dialogue, and some of the issues were addressed (more noise meters, less impactful fireworks, etc.).
- Town of Madison Police Chief provides selective response to noise issues – reluctance to interfere in another jurisdiction (county controlled asset).
- Public input is of utmost priority, need to get a low cost sound meter to record events and publish the data on the website.
- At the recent Brat Fest, there were numerous (??) stages, often playing music simultaneously – this creates “just noise” for the neighbors. Noise was so loud (even for attendees) that it wasn’t comfortable, and there was a gang fight.
- Other events, including Goldwings, WDE and others do not create a noise issue, its’ just the events mentioned above.
- Noise meters would help to regulate noise in the neighborhood. 16 people from Bay Creek have complained about noise.
- Use of amplified sound at the new horse ring was not supposed to take place, however this did happen at a recent event. This may simply be due to the Pavilions project, and is only temporary, but it would be helpful to have communication on this issue.

Drainage and Major Flooding

- There are very significant water runoff issues that have created flooding on residential sites adjacent to the AEC. Residents have taken responsibility for clearing debris from the major intake water runoff intake pipe near Bram Street. During rains, the inflow from the AEC near Bram Street absorbs all or most of the capacity of the drainage system in the area, and as a result runoff from the neighborhood backs up causing significant neighborhood flooding. The directing of AEC runoff to this area is fairly recent. Years ago, where was a wetland buffer, but this was paved over.

Dog Park Issues

- Quann Dog Park. There is a contract that gives AEC use of space for overflow parking for certain events. In past practice, the fence closest to AEC would be taken down and not put back up until the city took care of it. The dog park was effectively closed for 2 weeks for a 4 day event. In some cases the park was closed to accommodate as few as 30 cars or a handful of campers. More recently, AEC has done a much better job of keeping the park open, using the gates in the fence for access versus taking the entire fence down, and not closing the park for minor uses.

- A concern is that there really isn't an institutional memory at the AEC, and no written policies regarding these issues. Bad practices could emerge again.
- Management should keep an eye on trailers that knock over the maintenance or off-gassing pipes, the deep ruts caused by trailers, and the manure generated when horses are in the park.
- The web site is not very effective. Closing times are listed in Greenwich Mean Time! There is relatively little in terms of elaboration on closing of the park.
- There is a very large contingent of people that use the park, not just area residents. It is the largest space in the city park system for dogs. It has become a very important quality of life amenity for the entire metro area.

Transit

- Almost no public transit connections to the site, tough to get to without a car
- AEC is a dead zone when no event is taking place.

Other Issues

- Consider adding playground equipment in park. *Lickberg* This could be an asset for show exhibitors and attendees.
- More consistent outreach from AEC to the neighbors would be very helpful. [note the funding for AEC operations is so limited, there may be a challenge in having sufficient time to dedicate to credible community outreach].
- Some of the charity and for-profit walks/runs cause significant foot traffic, in effect closing streets in the area. Events can close bike paths in the area, causing a 3 mile detour.
- For future commercial development, don't want very high end, or "McDonalds". Focus on locally owned, unique establishments.
- Significant high rise commercial development adjacent to existing neighborhoods (should that take place) would negatively impact the community.