

March 8, 2021

Re: Support for the Protection of Mounds, Archaeological Sites, and Cultural Resources in Vilas and Bear Mound Parks

Dear Board of Park Commissioners,

We support greater protection of the mounds, archaeological sites, and cultural resources in Vilas and Bear Mound Parks. The City of Madison should do more than what is minimally required under the law to protect mounds and cultural resources (per Ho-Chunk Nation Department of Heritage Preservation).

We ask that you:

- 1) Remove the proposed Zoo entrance/exit (Drake Street and Campbell Street) from the Vilas Park Master Plan to avoid additional degradation to a known burial mound site (Site DA-1193/BDA-0574) and adverse impacts to Bear Mound Park (DA-0185/BDA-0412). This entrance/exit change was in all three preliminary Vilas Park plan options, yet it was not discussed with the Ho-Chunk Nation Historic Preservation Officer Bill Quackenbush during planning meetings.
- 2) Require the Vilas Park Master Plan to include an archaeological identification survey of Vilas Park, in its entirety, as a prerequisite to any further park feature planning or ground disturbing activities. The identification survey should be conducted in partnership with the Ho-Chunk Nation Department of Heritage Preservation, the State of Wisconsin Office of Historic Preservation, and other Native American consultants. All parties should know what cultural resources are or are not present so planning decisions can be made in an informed and respectful manner that values the indigenous cultural heritage in this area.

Vilas Park is located within the Lake Wingra Mounds area, encompassing one of the densest known effigy mound grouping locations in North America; special consideration is necessary in Vilas Park due to its location along the shores of Lake Wingra and the former Dividing Ridge, once home to mound groupings that extended from Bear Mound Park and the Vilas Park Mound Group southeast between Lake Monona and Lake Wingra.

- 3) We believe that the Lake Wingra mounds, cultural resources, and archaeological sites in Vilas and Bear Mound Parks should be cherished and celebrated by the City of Madison Parks Department (including planners and landscape architects) and by neighborhood residents.

Thank you for your consideration,

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Vilas Neighborhood Association
Representative for the Bear Mound Park
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Madison Street

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Member¹ & Former District 13 Alder
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¹ Organization is listed for identification purposes only

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