

Dear Mayor and Councilors

After listening to the April Town Hall work session I have concerns. The approaches taken on the matrix do not seem to reflect the concerns raised by the petition of the neighborhood.

The boat ramp, nestled in a residential neighborhood, was not designed, structured or intended to be developed into a major access to the river, such as Brown's Ferry or Cook's Park. Our boat ramp is on a neighborhood park scale, unlike a large community or regional facility. There are some citizens who support more public access. The idea proposed is that the public is deprived of access to the river unless our boat ramp serves them. Our boat ramp is already over capacity at peak hours. Parks are designated based on what they can handle and ours is presently unable to sustain the crowds while maintaining safety. We have a small, one car width driveway, boat ramp in a very small neighborhood. The over use has deteriorated the quality of life in our whole neighborhood from traffic, noise, clogged streets, rude behavior by visitors, and blocked driveways. Multiple streets are impacted by the issues of off loading, pumping up paddle boards, and loud voices. I must add how I find the level of animosity, tied to this difference of opinion on the use of the boat ramp, very sad in a city of less than 550.

If the proposals are to offer the public more access to the river then we, as a city should look outside of this box. There were alternatives offered that seemed to have disappeared. I would think a feasibility study on possibilities would be appropriate to explore solutions. While the city is financially constrained, there are still unexplored grants, donations. The city should not easily give up on alternatives that would take the pressure off Stark Boat Ramp and provide more access to the river.

I also found Councilor Pierce's comment in the meeting very misleading. There are multiple requirements within the federal, state, county and city that require permit applications, approval, and permitting fees. Removing vegetation and making changes are contingent upon approval of flood way water flow restrictions and approved native plantings.

In conclusion, I would like to respectfully ask the mayor and councilors to reconsider the concerns of over crowding at the boat ramp. The crowds of last year will only be greater as history has taught us. That only adds to the the need for the neighbors to be treated with respect and compassion as their lives have changed so much each year. The residential neighborhood we moved into 25 years ago, with its rarely used boat ramp, is no more. Hopefully everyone can cooperate to create a more livable, peaceful and enjoyable boat ramp environment.

Thank you,
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