



6/21/2020

Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway  
Mayor's Office, City of Madison  
210 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd, Room 403

**RE: Support of the Voitlandia Project**

Dear Mayor Rhodes-Conway,

For 18 years the Friends of Starkweather Creek has protected 24 square miles of Starkweather Creek watershed. We have worked with you in the past and understand your commitment to this natural gem of East Madison. As our City grows and becomes more urbanized, our natural systems struggle to repair human-caused damage. The Starkweather Creek is polluted with run-off from impervious surfaces—growing with each development, PFAS from the airport, and many other pollutants caused by humans. We must not take our natural eco-systems for granted.

As you may know, a local group of several hundred Madisonians have created a nonprofit entitled Voitlandia, which wishes to purchase the 64-acre Voit Farm that borders the Starkweather Creek. Similar to Troy Gardens, Voitlandia wishes to preserve the land in harmony with nature, in a manner that restores ecosystems instead of degrading them. Their vision includes many of the same goals that have been laid out in the Milwaukee Street Special Area Plan, adopted by the Common Council in 2018; particularly affordable housing. However, rather than spreading such housing throughout the farm, which would require 12 roads and acres of additional impervious surface area, they would like to limit the housing to Milwaukee St frontage, with smaller footprint, high-density buildings. They also desire net-zero housing with biogas district heating, distributed solar generation, and electric vehicle carsharing. Finally, they are committed to inclusion and social justice, and have established key relationships with groups like the African Center for Community Development and S.S. Morris Church—a traditional African American Church directly across the street from Voit Farm, whose minister sits on their board of directors.

Equally important, this organization has a good relationship with the Voit Family themselves who have offered them a very reasonable purchase price for the land, should you—the Mayor of Madison, support the project. We fully endorse Voitlandia's vision and hope you will as well. We feel that placing land stewardship in the hands of the people will pay dividends for all aspects of our society, including added protection of the Starkweather Creek and its watershed.

Sincerely,

David Pulkowski  
Co-chair, Friends of Starkweather Creek

Carl Landsness  
Co-chair, Friends of Starkweather Creek