Information regarding the Proposed Construction of a Student Housing Complex on Ostrom Avenue, across from the Mills Rose Garden in Thornden Park

To SRS Members and friends of the EM Mills Rose Garden, Thornden Park, Syracuse

As you may know Syracuse University is planning to build a large 4-6 story dormitory that will begin across the street from the Garden on Ostrom Avenue, and extend southward to Euclid Ave. Sonia Kragh, Chair, Mills Garden Committee of the Syracuse Rose Society was asked by the Thornden Park Association and Syracuse Common Council about potential impacts on the Rose Garden.

Sonia submitted a comprehensive report, of which we will highlight major points, concerns and recommendations. For a full viewing of her comment, please contact a member of SRS who can share the full memo with you, or Sonia herself. Thank you for your time in reading this info.

* Regarding the Shade/Shadow Study: The current study looked at the growing season concluding with the Autumnal Equinox. It did not consider other shading of the garden from the surrounding trees on the other three sections of the garden. For the end of September and month of October, it is probable that one-half of the garden will be significantly shaded in Sections H, G, A, B that are closest to Ostrom. **I would request that the study analyze the full growing season dates and look at the actual sun exposure including existing shading from tree canopy. Please offer information about the impact of building 4 vs 5 vs 6 stories as well.**
	+ **Additionally,** some roses are shade tolerant, but ones along Ostrom are currently full sun. Significant time and money and personnel resources goes into the planting of new roses. **We request that Syracuse City Parks Department and the Syracuse Rose Society be consulted related to the potential financial impact of having to redesign the garden plantings to adjust for increased shade. This would include cost of roses, cost of labor and materials.**
* Regarding Environmental Impact, during construction and after construction is completed:
	+ Construction is scheduled to be 7 am - 9 pm, seven days a week, for a duration of two years. As the Rose Garden is a space of peace and tranquility, it will be impossible to host an event or wedding there during construction. The location of this project is non congruent with the neighborhood and has an industrial appearance.
	+ Additionally, after reviewing the EPA Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool regarding the project, it highlights Environmental burden of 90-100% of nitrogen dioxide, and 50-80% of diesel particulate and toxic releases to the air. It mentions hazardous waste proximity is 90-95% at the construction site although it is unclear what is hazardous there. Also, there is a 50-80% underground storage flagged in the report, which may impact the project plans for underground water retention basin. Also, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Environmental Resource Mapping highlights rare plants or animals in the proposed construction site. **We request that the project look at all building sustainability options to be fossil fuel free and low noise impact, and that they look at traffic and water quality and particulate matter issues, and SEQR/DEC lead agency analyze what animal and plant species are affected by the project.**
* Regarding the location of the Rose Garden in relation to the dormitory as a recreational green space for residents.
	+ There is concern in reviewing the dormitory draft document that  there is inadequate green space and setback of the dormitory along Ostrom, which means that there may be heightened use of the Rose Garden for recreation different from its current purpose with resulting negative consequences. **We request that the developers have a conversation with Syracuse Rose Society, Thornden Park Association, Syracuse City Parks Department about Green Space of the dorm project and potential impact of student use at the Rose Garden in Thornden Park.**

 In summary, this dormitory structure is non-congruent with the community experience of the rose garden within Thornden Park as a place for contemplation, celebration, relaxing walks to and from campus and work. There are significant concerns for the survival of the plants and existence of the garden as a clean air, clean water, healthy living for all place as mandated by the Environmental Amendment to the New York Constitution approved by over 70% of NYS voters in 2021.

* New York State's Green Amendment, Article 1, Section 19 of the state constitution, protects environmental rights by stating that "Each person shall have a right to clean air and water, and a healthful environment". The amendment was approved by voters in a statewide referendum in November 2021 with 70% of the vote and went into effect on January 1, 2022

What can you do?

* Submit your own comments to Common Council member Corey Williams at coreywilliams@syr.gov.
* Email Sonia at sykragh@yahoo.com and your comments will be compiled for submission to the Common Council, as well as Thornden Park Association. As the Common Council meeting is Monday 8/12, she needs comment by Saturday if possible.
* Attend the Common Council meeting Monday (board calendar/agenda here}:[Common Council Meetings and Agendas](https://www.syr.gov/Departments/Common-Council/Meetings-and-Agendas)

Thank you for reviewing this information and I am happy to answer questions as they arise, and review material as it is presented.

Sonia Kragh, MD

Chair, Mills Garden Commitee, Syracuse Rose Society

Chair, Sustainability Committee, Syracuse Rose Society

Treasurer, Climate Change Awareness and Action
Member, Dewitt Advisory Conservation Commission

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