

Shawn Murphy
Administrator
Village of Prairie du Sac
335 Galena Street
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June 2, 2006

Attention: Village of Prairie du Sac Plan Commission

The primary mission of Ferry Bluff Eagle Council (FBEC) is to conserve the Sauk Prairie Area Eagle Wintering Ground for both eagles and people. The success of this 20-year effort includes advising interested private landowners, brokering land acquisitions and easements, working with developers to identify and mitigate adverse impacts of their proposed projects, and providing information on eagle habitat issues to local governments. FBEC disseminates educational materials, offers eagle-viewing guidelines, and co-sponsors Eagle Days. The council also works to conserve eagle viewing for the community and its 50,000 annual eagle-watching visitors who spent \$1.2 million in the community in 2004. As a result of monitoring the wintering eagle population and conducting other research projects for almost 20 years*, Ferry Bluff Eagle Council has created the most comprehensive set of information and data on the eagles' use of the river and surrounding habitat in the Sauk Prairie area.

FBEC has been asked to comment on the Nonn Development in regard to the effects on wintering Bald Eagles. The following, after much consideration, is our conclusion.

The Council understands that development is a natural consequence of growth. The ongoing challenge is to do it in a place and manner that builds upon or complements the existing assets of the community. The proposed development creates a very serious concern because of its close proximity to Eagle Island. The Sauk Prairie Comprehensive Plan survey found that eagles are a valuable community resource and that 84.7% of the community sees wintering eagles as part of their future. We interpret this to mean that the community expects to have a place to view eagles within the village.

Our reason for this concern is that the extent of the proposal may impact the high quality of eagle viewing at the downtown site.

- ✓ Eagle Island is the anchor point of eagle watching activity between the Highway 60 Bridge and Oak Street.
- ✓ Eagle Island provides the best, most convenient and most consistent viewing opportunity for eagle watchers.
- ✓ The proposed development encroaches on the sensitivity/buffer zone tolerated by eagles.

The FBEC Eagle Overlook next to the municipal parking lot was deliberately located just beyond that buffer zone for eagles. We have observed repeated examples of eagles flying away from Eagle Island when people walk on the railroad track below the overlook just a few feet closer to the island, or when someone in one of the currently existing buildings lets a dog out into their back yard, which is also within that buffer zone. A significant percentage of the proposed project falls within this sensitivity zone.

It is our assessment that this development would have a significant, noticeable effect on the number of eagles using this core stretch of river and could restrict at best or eliminate at worst the most valuable community eagle watching resource we have. FBEC views development projects on a case-by-case basis. FBEC seeks to find alternatives, if necessary, that can be viewed as win-win outcomes (taking into account reasonable and enforceable mitigations to these projects). The source of our concerns with this project is human activity within the wintering eagles' tolerance zone such as:

- ✓ Parking on the river side
- ✓ The 29 condominium units with patios or balconies on the river side
- ✓ The maximum use of glass on the river side
- ✓ Public access to the river side of these buildings

The relatively high-density residential use poses greater concerns than some potential retail/commercial use that restricts river side activities.

Given the high probability of such significant impact for eagles with the Nonn development proposal, we want you to have this information before you make your decisions. There may be alternatives to the project as currently proposed. FBEC is willing to work with the village and the developer to try to mitigate the effects of so much activity so close to the crucial wintering habitat of Sauk Prairie's Bald Eagles.

Respectfully submitted,

Kay Roherty,
Ferry Bluff Eagle Council President
And Ferry Bluff Eagle Council Board of Directors

cc: Shawn Murphy

* See attached appendix for a report on the biological aspects of the Eagle Wintering Ground in Sauk Prairie, and potential effects of the proposed Nonn development on Bald Eagle viewing from downtown Prairie du Sac.