

Candidate states position on Schuetz land

I'm a candidate for Village Board Trustee. The Schuetz Parkland acquisition will be on the village board agenda in February, according to Chris Klar.

If I were on the board in February, I would vote "Yes" for the Schuetz Parkland acquisition.

A board member who votes

"No" favors these outcomes:

- The Schuetz property will never be a public park, accessible to all.
- It will never have woodland trails for families to enjoy.
- It will never connect to the Urso Parkland.
- It will never be part of the regional trail stretching from Lake Kegonsa to Lake Mendota.
- McFarland's eager volunteers, including Scouts, student groups and civic groups will never have the opportunity to help develop the parkland.
- Volunteers won't identify and remove the invasive species in the woodlands.
- Volunteers won't remove the dying apple trees and restore native plants.
- The DNR State Stewardship Fund, the Dane County Conservation Fund and the town of Dunn will spend their \$727,500 elsewhere.
- What happens then, no one can say.

I don't favor these outcomes. This is my position:

I agree with the board's commitment of \$163,500 for 19 acres for prime conservancy that will serve McFarland for generations.

I agree with successful pursuit of \$727,500 in grants and contributions toward the Schuetz Parkland acquisition. This pristine, historic and unique parkland can belong to all of us for \$10,000 per acre.

I value contributions to our parks from so many volunteers.

The current effort to replace playground equipment plus ongoing efforts in Indian Mound and McDaniel Parks saved us more than the \$35,000 needed for the Schuetz purchase.

Eighty-two percent of the money for the Schuetz Parkland acquisition comes from sources outside the village's budget. I would not walk away from a bargain like this. It just doesn't make sense.

To paraphrase Bobby Kennedy, Jr., good environmental policy is always good economic policy.

We can measure the economy on whether it preserves our community assets and provides jobs of dignity or we can do what polluters urge: treat our planet as if it were a business in liquidation and convert natural resources into cash as quickly as possible.

The Schuetz Parkland is a major investment in the environmental future of McFarland's children at a minor cost. We owe it to them.

Sharon Payne
McFarland