

**Concerning the matter of File # 18-0216**

Dear Mayor and Fellow Members of the La Crosse City Council,

You have before you an appeal made by Maria Norberg on behalf of her business, Grounded Specialty Coffee. I cannot be there with you tonight to vote, as much as I wish I could, but I can tell you how I would vote and why.

I urge you to grant this appeal, carefully considering the compromise design solution that was submitted by the city staff and agreed to by Downtown Mainstreet, Inc. and Ms. Norberg.

A successful appeal would allow Ms. Norberg to remodel the front of her business in a way that increases the interior space, allows for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, creates an opportunity for additional revenue, and maintains the spirit of the building's historical record.

With your positive vote, this compromise design would increase the aesthetics and function of an already beautiful, but limited and gnarly space. It would preserve a vital historical tradition while adding sophistication and appeal by accentuating the beauty of brick with modern glass and stainless steel, and creating elegant geometric forms and clean lines evocative of the building's original architecture.

If my description sounds like so much poetry or music in a chamber designed to dwell on prose or litany, it is because I believe that La Crosse is eager for the kind of positive, exciting energy we see in some of our newer downtown creations and re-creations.

Look at what Don Weber did with the Charmant, with its brilliant integration of old and new materials. Look at the LHI buildings that transformed Riverside: newer construction with a nod to past old style charms. Look at the transformation of the Bakalars sausage factory building, the Gund Brewery Loft Apartments, and some of the homes on Cass Street: all exquisite examples of La Crosse's love affair with time's paintbrush to mix the new and the old in unique ways.

I find Ms. Norberg's vision for her business to be in concert with the spirit of what La Crosse has been from its inception, and always has strived to become: A place that remembers and pays homage to the past, but reaches for the future. "Here is a town," Mark Twain wrote of La Crosse 135 years ago, "...with electric lighted streets, and with blocks of buildings which are stately enough, and also architecturally fine enough, to command respect in any city."

It appears clear to me that even Mark Twain would have voted in favor of Ms. Norberg's appeal .

Respectfully,

**David D. Marshall**  
Council Member, District 4  
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