

OBJECTION TO ISSUANCE OF  
CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT

I hereby object to the issuance of a Conditional Use Permit at the following location:  
3120 Farnam Street, tax parcel: 175030420

I object for the following reason(s): Please see attached letter.

I further certify that I am the owner of the following described lands (include legal description  
from tax bill): Harlan heights addition lot 6 (Assd w/ 17-50304-25)  
lot SZ: 13041 SF ; tax parcel 174013480  
1322 31st Place South

x  
x Wesley D Patterson  
Signature of Objector (in presence of Notary)

1322 31st Place S  
La Crosse, WI 54601

Address

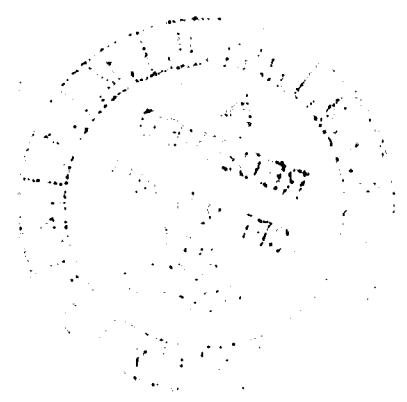


STATE OF WISCONSIN )  
 )ss.  
COUNTY OF LA CROSSE )

Personally appeared before me this 28 day of Sept, 2018, the above named  
Wesley J Patterson + Wesley D Patterson to me known to be the person  
who executed the foregoing instrument and acknowledged the same.



Myra M Hart  
Notary Public  
My Commission Expires: 7-15-2019



September 27, 2018

Via email

City of La Crosse Common Council Members  
400 La Crosse St  
La Crosse, WI 56401

Dear Council Members:

We're confident we can all agree that veterans deserve an extra measure of care, compassion and respect. We are thankful for their courageous service, as we are sure all of the members of our neighborhood are as well. We firmly desire all our veterans to find health and healing with whatever issues they are facing. However, we ask that with that desire you don't overlook the grave concerns we have with the Application of Tomah VA Medical Center for a Conditional Use Permit Allowing Community Living Arrangement at 3120 Farman St, File # 18-1255. We have been told multiple times as a neighborhood to have an open mind, and we have and still cannot reconcile our concerns with the proposed plan, so I ask that you as a council keep an open mind to us and our neighbors as we bring our concerns to you. It is extremely important to take note of the details provided in File # 18-1255.

We would like to bring your attention to the program criteria as listed in the Description of Transitional Residence Program (attachment 6 of the application). It states that the transitional residency program operates under the VHA Handbook 1162.02 "Mental Health Residential Treatment Program," section 34 (attachment 7 of the application). Please open the link and read section 34 in the VA Handbook, as this is the scope of practice that you would allow if you vote for in favor of this conditional use permit. Without reading this thoroughly you will not be able to make a responsible decision.

Section 34 is hugely concerning for us. It states in the handbook in that section that the target population for the Compensated Work Therapy-Transitional Residence are veterans with severe substance abuse disorders along with those with serious psychiatric disorders. Also in the program description (attachment 6 of the application) it states that the program assists veterans to learn or enhance anger management. In addition to that please make note of the information under the heading of Staffing and House Managers where it says residences may be minimally staffed and can have a staff to bed ratio of 1:10. According to Section 34 House Managers may be a senior resident or patient, a graduate of the program or a volunteer.

Based on the information presented on the application, the safety of the veterans and members in our neighborhood is my number one concern. How can the veterans be kept safe if on evenings and weekends they are overseen by a House Manager that has no professional credentials? The House Manager is not a licensed social worker, psychologist or counselor, but they are going to be overseeing up to 10 veterans with severe substance abuse disorders, severe psychiatric disorders and/or anger management issues. Our veterans with severe

disorders deserve better care and oversight than that, and their safety and our safety should not be left in such a compromised state.

With the information and parameters set in the program description and VA Handbook I question the wisdom of putting a mental health residential treatment facility in a neighborhood with many vulnerable children and older adults. We attended the meeting at the VA River Valley Outpatient Clinic in La Crosse on Wednesday, September 26, 2018. The program does state that there will be no residents as sexual offenders, but our question to them was if there could be veterans with a record of one or more violent offenses in the transitional residence and they did say that was a possibility. There are at least 13 children within 200 feet of the property. With the unpredictable nature of those with anger management issues, severe substance abuse disorders and severe psychiatric disorders, how will our children be protected? Putting 10 people with these serious mental health issues next door to young children put them in a place of unnecessary and unwise risk.

It is also important to note that the 2017 taxes for 3120 Farnam Street is \$12,751.83. If the VA acquires and uses the property for a Compensated Work Therapy Transitional Residency Program it will be tax-exempt. This means that the community would need to absorb the loss of tax revenue from this property to keep the same services provided by the city. Local property taxes would increase. At the same time as property taxes increase the neighbors would likely experience a decline in property values by having a mental health residential facility next door or nearby and have difficulty selling their properties if they desire to do so.

As much as we love and support our veterans, due to the elevated risks around a population with serious mental health concerns we cannot be in favor of putting a program of this type in a residential setting, ours or anyone else's.

Unfortunately, this proposal was put forth without considering how our neighborhood thought or felt about the matter, how it would affect the safety and security of the neighborhood, or negatively affect the home values nearby while increasing property taxes. Now we are put in the uncomfortable position of opposing this conditional use permit. I wish the members of the neighborhood had been respected and been involved in the original conversation, but our opinions were not considered.

We leave you with some questions we ask you to consider:

Have you thoroughly read the details in the Description of Transitional Residence and section 34 of the VHA Handbook – Mental Health Residential Treatment Program?

Would you place a facility that houses up to 10 people, a constantly changing population with people moving in and out of the home as they enter and leave the program, with serious psychiatric disorders, serious substance abuse disorders and anger management issues next to a school, especially when run by the Tomah VA which has had extensive investigations due to mismanagement?

Would you have chosen to purchase a home next door to the facility as described in the application?

Would you want your children or grandchildren moving in next door to a facility as described in the application?

Are you personally willing to be held liable for any physical or emotional harm to anyone that lives within 200 feet of 3120 Farman Street caused by any resident housed in the Compensated Work Therapy Transitional Residency Program if you vote in favor of a conditional use permit that allows this community living arrangement?

Don't veterans with serious mental health issues as outlined in the Description of Transitional Residence Program and VHA Handbook – Mental Health Residential Treatment Program deserve 24 hour care that always involves someone with licensure in an area related to mental health, especially with a such a high ratio of 1:10?

We are for veterans. We are not against veterans living in our neighborhood and in fact there are a few that live within the 200ft radius of the property in question. We are proud of them and glad to call them neighbors. We're not against veterans living on the property directly next door to us, but as described it would be an irresponsible decision with no recourse available to the current households in the neighborhood if you approve this conditional use permit. If you as a council are for veterans and healthy, safe, thriving neighborhoods then instead of pushing this through, let's come up with a solution that can ensure both. As described the parameters of the program in question is far too wide to ensure safe operation and we have been given no factual evidence by the VA that supports the safety or success of this program. Our veterans deserve better and we as a neighborhood deserve better.

Kind regards,



Lesley and Wes Patterson

State of Wisconsin  
County of La Crosse

This document was signed  
before me on 9-28-18 (date)  
by Lesley and Wes Patterson

Notary signature Myra M Hart  
Notary exp. Date 7-15-2019  
Notary seal

Cc: Mayor Tim Kabat (via email)  
Teri Lehrke, City Clerk (via email)  
Jason Gilman, Director of Planning and Development (via email)



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Notary exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_  
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by \_\_\_\_\_  
This document was signed  
before me on \_\_\_\_\_ (date)  
County of \_\_\_\_\_  
State of Wisconsin

