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MAY 02 2016
CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

OBJECTION TO ISSUANCE OF
CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT

I hereby object to the issuance of a Conditional Use Permit at the following location: 1120 Caledonia Street, La Crosse, WI, 54603

I object for the following reason(s): Please See Attached Statement.

I further certify that I am the owner of the following described lands (include legal description from tax bill): 1107 Caledonia Street (Parcel 17-10003-120) North La Crosse Lot 12 EXS 5 FT OF W 50 FT Block 8 EX W 8 FT TAKEN FOR ALLEY IN RESL DOC NO. 1381906 LOT SZ: IRR

Tiffany A Trimmer
Signature of Objector (in presence of Notary)

1107 Caledonia Street
La Crosse, WI 54603
Address

VICKI A. GILBERTSON NOTARY PUBLIC STATE OF WISCONSIN

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

Personally appeared before me this 2 day of May, 2016, the above named Tiffany Trimmer to me known to be the person who executed the foregoing instrument and acknowledged the same.

Vicki A. Gilbertson Vicki A. Gilbertson
Notary Public
My Commission Expires: 11-13-16

Rev. 01/2000

If the economic revitalization of the North Side is a goal of the Common Council and Mayor Kabat, it is counterproductive to convert the historic St. Clara's Convent (1893) into a Supportive Sober Housing Complex. Historically, Caledonia Street was an important commercial artery and the heart of the North Side. It could be that again. The city's Heritage Preservation Committee argues that our remaining historic buildings should play a role in the "social and economic prosperity of our community."[1] If that is the case, we need to work together to find a use for St. Clara's Convent that will benefit the people of La Crosse and not just the bottom line of RR Properties and Driftless Housing Services (DHS). I am deeply uncomfortable with the "Marketing Strategy" in the Operational Plan submitted by DHS. They may believe the market for sober housing is "wide open," but our neighborhood is already densely populated with 3 other community living arrangement facilities.[2] This oversaturation has been noted by the City Plan Commission's report on the DHS proposal.[3] One of these already-existing facilities (612-618 Rose St.) was set on fire by a tenant with mental health issues in January.[4] My neighborhood needs the city's help. Approving this proposal will hurt the fragile economic redevelopment currently underway on Caledonia Street. We can find a better use for St. Clara's Convent. The Common Council and Mayor Kabat must stand with the people of the North Side and help us find an alternative solution that strengthens our entire community, not just two private businesses.

-Tiffany Trimmer
1107 Caledonia Street

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[1] See: http://www.cityoflacrosse.org/HeritagePreservation.
[2] See Section 3.0, "Market Analysis Summary," in the Operation Plan submitted by Driftless Housing Services, p.4.
[3] See City Plan Commission, Report on Agenda Item 16-0334 (May 2, 2016), p.2, point 8.ii.A.
[4] See http://www.wxow.com/story/31025434/2016/01/21/suicide-attempt-by-fire-leads-to-arson-charges-against-man.

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OBJECTION TO ISSUANCE OF CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT

I hereby object to the issuance of a Conditional Use Permit at the following location:
1120 CALEDONIA STREET LA CROSSE WI 54603

I object for the following reason(s): GIVEN THE HISTORIC NATURE OF THIS STRUCTURE, AND ITS PROXIMITY TO OTHER BUSINESSES AND SCHOOLS, THE PROPOSED USE OF THIS STRUCTURE IS INNAPROPRIATE, AND WOULD HAVE A NEGATIVE ECONOMIC IMPACT AS WELL AS INCREASE SAFETY CONCERNS AFTER THE JAN. 2016 FIRE/SUICIDE ATTEMPT @ 614 ROSE ST, IN ADDITION TO OTHER CRIME. THE CITY SHOULD ONLY USE THESE HISTORIC STRUCTURES TO INCREASE TOURISM, COMMERCE, & ECONOMIC GROWTH. A HISTORIC HOTEL OR BED & BREAKFAST WOULD BE MORE APPROPRIATE AND BOOST THE LOCAL ECONOMY.

I further certify that I am the owner of the following described lands (include legal description from tax bill): 1107 CALEDONIA STREET (PARCEL 17-10003-120)
NORTH LACROSSE LOT 12 EX S 5 FT OF W 50 FT
BLOCK 8 EX W 8 FT TAKEN FOR ALLEY IN RESL
DOC NO. 1381906 LOT SZ: 1RR

David Riel
Signature of Objector (in presence of Notary)

1107 CALEDONIA STREET
LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN
54603
Address

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

Personally appeared before me this 29th day of April, 2016, the above named David Francis Riel to me known to be the person who executed the foregoing instrument and acknowledged the same.

Michelle M Wojtowicz
Notary Public
My Commission Expires: 1-31-2020

MICHELLE M WOJTOWICZ
NOTARY PUBLIC
STATE OF WISCONSIN

Rev. 01/2000

My name is David Riel. My wife Tiffany and I live at 1107 Caledonia Street, and I stand before you today to oppose the Conditional Use Permit sought by Driftless Housing Services for 1120 Caledonia Street, also known as St. Clara's Convent.

I do not oppose providing assistance to people suffering from addiction. My father suffered from alcoholism his entire life, and stayed in a halfway house for six months, which I visited on occasion. House rules were frequently broken or ignored, and he feared for his safety while he lived there. There is a stigma attached to halfway houses, and for good reason. Consider Ophelia's House, which costs taxpayers $200,000 a year and had a 55% failure rate in 2015. Or, consider a Rose Street apartment run by Attic Correctional Services, in which a man with mental health issues attempted suicide by setting his apartment on fire, leaving three families homeless in January. An objective look at recent history shows limited success at best, and it's no coincidence that these homes are primarily located in economically depressed areas. The Driftless Housing Operational Plan is entirely insufficient to guarantee the safety of the structure, its residents, or the neighboring community.

Furthermore, the North Side has been fighting its own stigma for many years. Using this historic 1893 structure for a halfway house is completely inappropriate, and creating a fourth Community Based Residential Facility in this neighborhood will only exacerbate the stigma North Side residents are trying to overcome. As the Heritage Preservation Commission states "Protection and enhancement of historic buildings and sites is a necessary component of the social and economic prosperity of a community." According to the library, this is one of only two remaining architecturally significant convent buildings in the city. The building is in good condition, and embodies the unique potential inherent in the North Side.

Imagine if this structure became a historic Bed & Breakfast, attracting tourism and commerce to the North Side. The city could work with investors to make it a reality. Or, imagine if this structure became the new home of the La County Historical Society, which is in desperate need of a new headquarters with better access and parking. The historic nature of Caledonia Street and Old Towne North would be an ideal setting for a historical museum. The city should deny this permit and work to secure the property for a better venture. With minimal investment, this could be accomplished. And that's exactly what the North Side needs, investment. Approval of this permit would only deter investment in the area.

These historic structures should be used to attract visitors and promote economic growth and opportunity for the existing businesses on Caledonia Street. Imagine if we did for Caledonia Street what we did for Pearl Street in recent decades. With its historic brick buildings and storefronts, Caledonia Street is the major economic thoroughfare of the North Side Business District. This is an opportunity the city cannot afford to miss. The city has a responsibility – and a compelling interest – to protect and develop economic opportunity for the entire city, including the residents of the North Side.

Do not approve this permit.