

Marlene Dewald, Onalaska, WI Statement: June 3, 2024 Meeting

I think most people know that a Mother Bear will protect their young. Well, I am one of those Mama Bears here today. Our daughter, Lara, is one of the residents affected by this property dispute. We adopted Lara when she was 18 months old and things had already been tough for her then. I want you to know I will do everything I can to protect her in this extremely unjust and unfair situation.

I am privileged to be working with these wonderful residents. They are all fighting to keep the homes they love near Pammel Creek. **But who else is fighting for them?** The dispute between the property owners and the City of La Crosse has far overshadowed working for these people who stand to lose everything. There does not seem to be any proof or documentation of major concerns with the Pammel Creek Wall nor any consistency with other properties along Pammel Creek. **What is so special about this small tract of land? Why have these 6 homes been singled out? Why have these people been placed in an impossible situation?** How could they move old mobile homes that could probably not withstand a move? Where would they go? Who would pay? They are lower income people and need affordable housing. They support themselves, most are still working, and all have contributed to our community. We thought our daughter's housing needs were taken care of for many years. **Do we really want to decrease affordable housing and increase homelessness? Do we really want to destroy people instead of affirming them?**

PLEASE people, especially those of you with decision-making power, please fix this unjust and unfair situation! The people are the ones who matter here. They did not make this dispute. They did nothing wrong. There are creative solutions that could be found. Involve the residents. Look at their list of ideas. Mark Neumann's resolution is a start but there could and should be many changes to address this situation further.

Let's live up to the City of La Crosse Vision. I quote: **"La Crosse is a city of choice--a community for a lifetime - that offers the highest possible quality of life."**

The community is watching....watching for you to do the right thing.... ***And I think there are some Mama Bears out there watching too.** Thank you.