

## Craig, Sondra

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**From:** Elsen, Nikki  
**Sent:** Friday, March 10, 2023 8:11 AM  
**To:** Craig, Sondra  
**Subject:** FW: Houska Park

This should be attached to 23-0203.

**NIKKI M. ELSEN, WCMC**

CITY CLERK

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CITY OF LA CROSSE (POPULATION 52,160)  
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**From:** Coulee Tenants United <couleetenantsunited@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 9, 2023 2:56 PM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members <zzcouncilmembers@cityoflacrosse.org>; Reynolds, Mitch <reynoldsm@cityoflacrosse.org>  
**Subject:** Houska Park

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [couleetenantsunited@gmail.com](mailto:couleetenantsunited@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

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Members of the La Crosse City Council, Mayor, and Director of Parks, Recreation & Forestry:

Coulee Tenants United is an organization which advocates for renters and decent housing for all. We are writing to express our grave concern with the current plan to evict the residents of the camp at Houska Park. Clearing camps does not solve any problems. People stay in these camps for one simple reason: They have nowhere better to go. The shelters are overloaded and rent in La Crosse remains unaffordable, if an empty apartment can even be found. Clearing camps routinely results in loss of property (including crucial documents) and the residents' last shreds of stability and dignity.

If La Crosse is serious about its Housing First policy, Houska and any other camps should not be cleared until every single resident has in their hands keys to an apartment or other long-term housing. Not hotels, not shelters, not warehousing- actual housing.

Furthermore, Coulee Tenants United recognizes the failure of the housing market to provide affordable housing for all, even with subsidies and requirements that a certain percentage of units in new apartment buildings be at affordable rates. We urge the City Council to consider a large-scale City-owned Social Housing construction program to create non-market-rate housing, open to all, under either local government or Co-op ownership, democratically controlled by the residents, with enough units in total to significantly lower rent and house prices in the overall local housing market.

Coulee Tenants United

Kevin Hundt, Chair  
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