

## Lehrke, Teri

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**From:** Rowan-Koenen, Kathleen J <KJRowank@gundersenhealth.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 27, 2020 4:36 PM  
**To:** Lehrke, Teri  
**Subject:** Changes in ordinance in 508 5th Ave from Residential to commercial use for Catholic Charities: Meeting Sept 1

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Dear Teri Lehrke,

We oppose transferring the property at 508 5<sup>th</sup> street from a residential property to commercial at the request of Catholic Charities. This is a less than optimal location to initiate programming for the homeless due to the negative impact on the Washburn family neighborhood. As we all recognize, this population is challenged by mental illness and addiction. We do support the goals of Catholic Charities and *La Crosse Collaborative To End Homelessness*, but not in residential neighborhood. The Washburn neighborhood has worked very hard to improve their property value and turn blighted areas into family homes. Families have taken a risk moving into Washburn neighborhood, many with the assistance of La Crosse Promise grants while revitalizing the neighborhood.

I live in the Washburn/ Downtown neighborhood and have been part of the revitalization process for the last 20 years. Our neighborhood already bears a heavy burden of social programming. Ophelia's House at 127 7<sup>th</sup> street houses women who are on bond, are serving a jail sentence or enrolled in drug or alcohol programming. I am proud to say I volunteer at St. Clare's Mission at 910 Ferry Street which serves the poor and underinsured. We provide free medical care there along with many volunteer physicians, nurses, social workers and pharmacists. The Salvation Army at 223 N 8<sup>th</sup> street does an outstanding job with the less fortunate and homeless population. Catholic Charities La Crosse Warming center is at 413 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> street provides overnight accommodations during winter for the homeless. The Franciscan Hospitality House at 114 6<sup>th</sup> street provides daytime services for the homeless. In the Washburn and Downtown neighborhood there are multiple outpatient services for drug and alcohol. There is a Behavioral health clinic at 212 11<sup>th</sup> street. I wonder how many La Crosse citizens can say they live within walking distance of so much programming for the homeless and underserved?

We have often heard the phrase "Not in my backyard" when dealing with the homeless and underserved. The Washburn/Downtown neighborhood is already saturated with programming for the homeless, mentally ill and individuals who suffer from drug and alcohol addiction. We are hopeful that there may be an alternative location that is not in a family neighborhood that is already struggling to turn around. We oppose transferring the property at 508 5<sup>th</sup> street from a residential property to commercial use.

Respectfully,

Scott and Katie (Rowan) Koenen

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