

Elsen, Nikki

From: Elsenn@cityoflacrosse.org
Subject: FW: Resolution 24-0683

-----Original Message-----

From: melissa crook <crook6@att.net>
Sent: Saturday, June 8, 2024 1:58 PM
To: Sleznikow, Larry <sleznikowl@cityoflacrosse.org>
Cc: Kahlow, Chris <kahlowc@cityoflacrosse.org>; Mindel, Mackenzie <mindelm@cityoflacrosse.org>; Janssen, Barb <janssenb@cityoflacrosse.org>; Goggin, Erin <goggine@cityoflacrosse.org>; Woodard, Chris <woodardc@cityoflacrosse.org>; Happel, Douglas <happeld@cityoflacrosse.org>; Neumann, Mark <neumannm@cityoflacrosse.org>; Kiel, Mac <kielm@cityoflacrosse.org>; Trost, Jennifer <trostj@cityoflacrosse.org>; Dickinson, Tamra <dickinsont@cityoflacrosse.org>; Schwarz, Rebecca <schwarzr@cityoflacrosse.org>
Subject: Resolution 24-0683

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Larry,

As a constituent of yours, I'm disappointed that you've chosen to sponsor resolution 24-0683. In doing so you have told citizens that Council is unwilling to advocate for residents and would rather defend a powerful, connected special interest group. At no time has the City given nearby residents to the REACH center a fair shake. Legitimate concerns relating to safety and security, historical preservation efforts, and the appropriateness of TND zoning for this parcel have been discounted. You've allowed false narratives to be pushed, facts to be misrepresented and citizens to be disparaged and disrespected simply for advocating for their own welfare. In this and many other cases, Council's majority vote is based solely on personal ideologies which rarely align with the interests of those most affected by their decisions. Council still insists it knows what's best and the rights of citizens to petition their representatives becomes merely a formality that falls on deaf ears.

The chain of events in the REACH Center rezoning is a particularly egregious example of Council's bias. While claiming that the following policy changes are merely coincidental, individuals at City Hall have ensured that affected citizens are not granted equal representation.

1. Public hearing rules were changed to stack the deck for Scenic Bluffs, Couleecap and the YWCA. At the J&A meeting in March long standing protocol of giving equal time to supporting and opposing viewpoints was abandoned. Instead, speaker's names were "randomly selected" from a long list of REACH service providers drowning out the voices of the few brave enough to speak in opposition of the zoning change.

2. After the surprising result of a zoning change denial by super majority at the March Common Council meeting, the very next Council cycle put forward an ordinance repealing the ability for zoning changes to be decided in this manner in the future. Even if this ordinance had been in the pipeline for some time, as stated, the Council chose not to adopt the proposed amendment that would have enacted this change go into effect in January 2025 in alignment with state requirements. This gave the appearance that the timing was reactionary rather than a thoughtful decision benefiting the community at large.

3. The latest proposed ordinance, will allow the REACH center to be granted the ability to reapply for rezoning before the one year stipulated in our current code. This will likely reverse the zoning change denial. Regardless of intent, the public perception is that Council is changing the rules to change this specific outcome. It is insulting to suggest that this is just another coincidence and not an intentional action meant to benefit the REACH center.

It is unjust to put residents through another divisive battle so soon after the last rezoning petition. Please reconsider sponsoring this resolution. Send the message that you are willing to defend the interests of residents just as vigorously as you've defended a special interest group up to this point.

Sincerely,

Melissa Crook