

Craig, Sondra

From: Becky Goche <pastorbecky@englishlutheran.org>
Sent: Monday, July 29, 2024 1:16 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Support of rezoning for the REACH Center

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Dear City Council Members,

I am writing today in support of the proposed rezoning of 212 11th Street South where the REACH Center is located such that the property be appropriately zoned as professional office space.

I live in the City of La Crosse and I also serve as a Pastor at English Lutheran Church, which is just blocks away from the REACH Center. Our congregation has a long history of assisting people in need, including those who are low income and/or are experiencing homelessness. Our congregation cannot do it alone, and we try to connect people who come to us with other organizations and agencies that can help. The REACH Center is an important part of our wider community support and care for members of the La Crosse Community who find themselves in situations of poverty and homelessness.

Adequate transportation is often an issue for people experiencing poverty and homelessness. It is of vital importance that services be located in one place to offer the best opportunity for lasting impact and transformative care. Those of us who are affluent cannot stand against easy-to-access care for those in our community who are poor and the most vulnerable. We cannot place our personal preferences related to our concerns with traffic patterns, parking, etc., above the mental health care, housing, and medical needs of those who need it most. Our community is made up of all kinds of people of varying circumstances and needs. If we want to be a community that offers the highest possible quality of life, we must include everyone in our community, including those who rely upon the services that the REACH Center provides.

The rezoning of this property is a logical and reasonable step to acknowledge the reality of how the building is and has always been used. When the area containing the REACH Center was rezoned as residential in the early 2000s, it was clear at that point that this building had never and would never be residential space. Rezoning the property with TND zoning will simply allow the owners to make necessary renovations to the interior of the building so that they can be appropriately configured for the services needed for our community without unnecessary red-tape. When things are zoned, it is easiest for all involved if they do not have to operate under a 'non-conforming' designation. If the property had been built and used as a single residential property in the past and then petitioned for non-conforming status, that would be a different issue. However, this non-congruent zoning status was placed upon the property after the fact. Rezoning simply acknowledges this reality and allows this important community service to do the good work for our most vulnerable population.

I urge you to vote YES to rezone 212 11th Street S from a non-profit professional office space to a professional office space so that we can live out the full potential of our community values and adequately recognize and give credit due for the positive and needed impact the REACH partners, including Coulecap and the YMCA - have already had in our community and will have going forward.

Thank you,
Rev. Becky Goche

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