

**Elsen, Nikki**

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**From:** Richard L Kyte <rlkyte@viterbo.edu>  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 30, 2020 5:28 PM  
**To:** Elsen, Nikki  
**Subject:** Support for Rezoning of Property at 508 South 5th Ave

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To Members of the La Crosse Common Council:

I would like to register my support for rezoning the property at 508 South 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to allow Catholic Charities to establish the Franciscan Community Resource Center at that location.

The services being proposed at that site will be invaluable for the city's overall efforts to reduce the amount and impact of homelessness in our community. The city has already made great strides under the coordinating efforts of the La Crosse Collaborative to End Homelessness, and to continue will require the combined efforts of all the participating organizations throughout the city. Catholic Charities is a key partner in that effort, and the types of services they are proposing for the new resource center, such as financial training, rent and utility assistance, and resource coordination, are precisely what we need in order to stem the longer term and more dire consequences of chronic homelessness. With the ongoing economic impacts of the pandemic, especially for those with marginal incomes, the need for services like this are going to be substantially greater over the coming months and years.

I realize there is resistance to this rezoning request, especially from those who live in the Washburn neighborhood, and that they would like new center to be located elsewhere. But I would ask the Council to consider whether denial of this request would be more likely to result in the timely relocation of the center or whether the center would not get done at all. Understanding that any feasible location for such a center would be likely to encounter resistance from those in the vicinity, the question is whether the establishment of the Franciscan Community Resource Center would represent a net gain or a net loss for the city as a whole. I think for anyone who has looked at the track record of the Collaborative in general, and of Catholic Charities in particular, the answer is that the new center would be a significant gain for the city.

Also, given what seems to me a sincere intention by the leadership of Catholic Charities to be good neighbors, wouldn't it be reasonable to work with them and residents of the surrounding neighborhood to create clear and firm guidelines under which the Center would operate? Such guidelines should be able to accommodate both the reasonable concerns of the neighbors regarding vagrancy and increased crime while also permitting the Center to do the work of preventing even more of those very problems for the city in the long term. If done properly, I see no reason why the new Center could not be a win-win for the Washburn neighborhood and the city as a whole.

Peace and all good,

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*Let me live in a house by the side of the road  
And be a friend to man.— Sam Walter Foss*