

Please put the legislation number from referred matters list beside the appropriate committee(s).

J&A   A  

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### COMMITTEE HEARING REGISTRATION SLIP

Name: Jari Johnson Date: 5-2-17

PLEASE PRINT

Address: 928 Island St.

I represent: self

Legislation: 17-0469, 17-0470, 17-0472

(Please fill out a separate sheet for each piece of legislation in which you are interested.)

Please check only one (1) of the following six (6):

( ) I wish to **speak** in favor of the legislation.

( ) I wish to **speak** in opposition of the legislation

( ) I wish to **register** in favor of the legislation

I wish to **register** in opposition of the legislation

( ) I'm in favor of the legislation, but only here to answer questions

I'm in opposition of the legislation, but only here to answer questions

**Subject:** Housing Rehab Board

**From:** jai johnson <jai.johnson.tns@gmail.com>

**Date:** 5/2/2017 3:07 PM

**To:** council@cityoflacrosse.org, tim kabat <kabatt@cityoflacrosse.org>, gilmanj@cityoflacrosse.org, "Gregerson, Caroline" <gregersonc@cityoflacrosse.org>

Items 17-0469  
17-0470  
17-0472

Honorable Members,

On your May J&A and Council agendas you will find an item proposing the combining of the Housing Rehabilitation Review Board and the CDBG committee. Having served on both, I oppose this change for the following reasons.

The only real connection I can see is funding. Otherwise, they have a very different scope and function and process. CDBG is better served by community and council members who have a diverse knowledge base and varied interests and back grounds. I think the current make-up, which includes standing committee chairs, the executive at-large member and Mayor, can best represent the entire council in these important decisions. CDBG allocations have such a far reaching impact. The portion of funding used for housing is typically just a pass-through. It is the public funding portion that requires extensive study and deliberation and public hearings.

On the other hand, Housing Rehab is narrow in it's focus and requires some depth and detail of understanding of the programs. And knowledge of construction, real estate, finance, platting, etc. They often partner with other organizations of which working knowledge is also needed. Given that HRRB mtgs now often last 90 minutes or more and we sometimes add special meetings in addition to monthly, it would be a substantial time commitment for community members to serve on both.

Again, there is not much common ground. I believe each body would be better served by individuals who are passionate about each body's respective purpose. Finally, I believe that HRRB will need to work more and more closely with the Floodplain Committee in the future which will add even more to their plate. Involvement with other departments in general continues to grow with the increased pace and complexity of the rehab program.

Five years ago, I proposed adding a citizen member to HRRB which I had to withdraw due to a conflict. However, now that the 17 is the 13, it is the ideal time to reconsider. I propose reducing Council Members to 2 or 3 and adding at least two citizen members. Although I had asked for an appointment - and this board is dear to my heart - I have withdrawn that request. I believe it is more important to the long term success of this program to create 2-3 citizen of La Crosse seats, appointing one each from the banking industry and real estate industry.

In closing, as Vice-Chair and then Chair of HRRB since 2005, I feel strongly about the continued growth, vitality and autonomy of this successful, historic city program. Housing Re-hab was improving the housing stock in our city decades before the broader community identified it as a priority. Thank you for acknowledging their work and for considering my point of view.

Best Regards,

Former CM Jai Johnson

5/2/2017 3:59 PM