

October 6th, 2021

Dear Council & Committee Members,

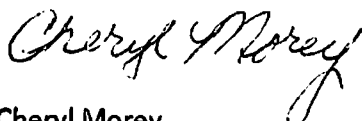
I respectfully write this letter in support of Hatchery LLC's proposal to restore the fish lab building in Riverside Park. I grew up in La Crosse during a time when all of the shopping was downtown. There were no Walmarts or Shopkos. Downtown was filled with good local family businesses like Brooks, Arnez Shoes, Fantles Dept. Store, Grants (the one that had baby chicks and bunnies at Easter time); Woolworths was the dime store. My dentist, my doctor, everything was downtown when I was young.

I so appreciate the committees that have and continue to support restoring and rebuilding a vibrant downtown for our future generations to enjoy. Before Rotary lights were in Riverside I remember driving through the downtown area where the street light poles were adorned with Christmas cheer. I remember that being quite magical. Fast forward several decades and look at what Rotary Lights has grown into - a nationally recognized destination. This twinkling wonderland now brings thousands of people to our park and this is good. La Crosse has always thrived on tourism. We have a unique combination of natural beauties such as the Mississippi River, the bluffs, miles of trails and parks that when coupled with a thriving downtown, attracts visitors from all over the world. Serenity and vibrancy can and should coexist. That is the magic in this! Hatchery LLCs proposal would be another example of creating a destination to grow tourism and share all that La Crosse has to offer.

While I no longer live in the city of La Crosse, I enjoy frequently returning to spend time with my friends, children, and grandchildren, who reside in La Crosse. The parks system and downtown are always a big part of our daily adventures. We typically visit Children's Museum and at least one or two of the parks or trails. We enjoy watching the ducks play and boats pass by in Riverside. My youngest granddaughter, age 4, can spend hours in the garden. How wonderful it would be to have a patio setting where we could give our legs a break and enjoy lunch right in the park! We would also support local vendors if there is an artisan type event around the holidays in this space. I have shared this proposal with my friends and asked for their thoughts – they have all expressed similar sentiments. It's been fun to reminisce the good old days and exciting to think about what is yet to come. I even spoke to one of the Santa's from Rotary Lights and he is also a big fan of the plan!

Lastly, I have read that parking is a concern. I always find ample parking in Riverside. Moon Tunes and other events bring thousands of people and I believe the developers have reaffirmed in several meetings that they are looking at intimate events with less than 100 people. I have been closely observing available parking spaces on days we have visited over the past couple months and there are always plenty of spots available. Often, there are at least 100 available spaces between the public lot and spaces around the loop. I encourage others to go look for themselves. I say, the more people the merrier. It's always fun to hear and see milestone event celebrations from afar. Let the joy become contagious and the park be full for all to enjoy.

Respectfully submitted,



Cheryl Morey
Westby, WI