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From: ragamuffins@charter.net
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To: ZZ Council Members
Cc: Chair@townofcampbellwi.gov; Supervisor2@townofcampbellwi.gov
Subject: Agenda Item 24-1068

Importance: High

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Dear La Crosse Council Members,

I am unable to attend the City Council Meeting on Thursday, August 8th, due to a previously scheduled commitment. Therefore, please enter my comments into the record.

According to the online agenda packet, under "Potential Sites – Indoor" for housing the homeless, *Norwood Inn & Suites* is listed as a potential site. As a taxpayer, a homeowner with children, and resident of French Island, this raises multiple, serious concerns.

According to a letter written on March 9, 2022 to the City of La Crosse Council Members by Major Alan Hellstrom, Corps Officer of the Salvation Army, when the homeless were housed at the *Econo Lodge*, many alarming concerns were brought to the Council's attention. Mentioned specifically in the letter was, "**rampant drug use, violence, sex trafficking, drug trafficking and other disturbing events.**" This is shocking! Why would the outcome of moving this population into the *Norwood Inn & Suites*, at the taxpayer's expense, have any different results?

Has the City of La Crosse and/or the Council Members taken into consideration that there is an elementary school **less than one mile** from the *Norwood Inn & Suites*? This presents a safety hazard to young children on numerous levels. Have the parents and staff of *Summit Environmental School* been notified that this is an option the City of La Crosse is considering?

Has the City of La Crosse and/or the Council Members taken into consideration that there are multiple neighborhoods with young children **directly across the street** from the *Norwood Inn & Suites*? There is also a footbridge next to the *Norwood Inn & Suites* that leads to multiple other neighborhoods with young children. Again, presenting a safety hazard to children on numerous levels. Have the homeowners and families in these neighborhoods been notified that this is an option the City of La Crosse is considering?

French Island is a small community and has an excellent police force that works tirelessly to keep this community safe. Has the City of La Crosse and/or the Council Members taken into consideration how this will strain the Town of Campbell Police resources?

Has the City of La Crosse and/or the Council Members taken into consideration that community resources (social services, healthcare, full-service grocery stores, etc...) are not within walking distance of the *Norwood Inn & Suites* (for those who do not have cars) and would require travel on and off French Island? How are people being transported to needed resources and how is it being paid for?

Relocating a homeless population into neighborhoods filled with young families less than a mile of an elementary school will impact crime rates, property values and the community's safety. How are the taxpayers and homeowners on French Island being represented, notified and involved in the decision-making process?

It is important to note that the majority of taxpayers *funding* housing the homeless, have lived in this La Crosse community for years, decades, and generations (my family goes back seven generations in this area). Longstanding taxpaying residents have not only invested monetarily in this city, but have grown families here, built businesses here, given back more than they take and care deeply about the La Crosse community. The homeless population is an undisputed problem not unique to the city of La Crosse. Many homeless are transients, moving from city to city, taking resources where they are available. Taking from cities they have no vested interest in. Taking from residents that care and have invested in their community. This attracts even more transients into the area seeking resources and the more that is given, all the more is taken. Sheltering people in hotels has proven to be extremely costly (in terms of money, safety and crime) and ***fails to treat the underlying cause*** of homelessness.

The reputation of La Crosse is becoming tarnished by a population that has no long term vested interest in this community. I understand this is a complicated issue, and as a longtime resident of La Crosse, I am extremely concerned about the options the City of La Crosse is considering and the impacts it will have on the taxpaying residents that do love this community and want to see it thrive. I would appreciate hearing a response back on the questions raised in my letter, as well as addressing them during this Thursday's meeting.

Thank you,

Krista Engholdt