Elsen, Nikki

Hello Nikki, I received your email from Andrea Trane and would like to pass along my concerns that I have that will be addressed at tonight's meeting regarding Norwood Inn housing. I've decided to reach out this way rather than speaking at meeting tonight. Any questions please let me know, thank you

  I have been a resident of French Island for 15 years. In the years my family has lived on the island we have felt a strong sense of community, friendships have been made, we've seen growth in different neighborhoods (including our own) and most importantly felt safe raising our children here. I am an inhome childcare provider and utilize our parks, spillway, walking trails, and library regularly with small children and have never felt in danger or in an unsafe situation under the care of the children I watch.
  My husband and I have two children, both of which are actively involved in our community schools, athletics, and church.
  We have been members of Olivet church, (which is a block from proposed homeless sheltering site) for almost 9 years and have formed a strong sense of community there as well.
  My husband an educator at Summit Elementary which is also only a few blocks from the proposed site to house many homeless. Our 8 year old goes to school there as well and regularly rides his bike around neighborhoods close by to friends houses or plays with friends at parks nearby.
  My biggest concern with sheltering homeless at Norwood Inn is SAFETY. Many families, just like mine have young children who ride bikes, go for walks, play at parks, and play sports at different facilities on the island.
  There is a huge amount of resources that need to be provided for dozens of homeless people that the island just does not have. Many of them rely on food banks in nutrition relief that come from resources located in LaCrosse like Wafer or the Salvation Army, These are not on French Island. Many of them do not have transportation or funds to take public transportation. Social services and healthcare needs are not available on the island either, which are crucial for success and helping them get back on their feet.
  The town of Campbell does not have the police force and resources to handle the increased crime that comes along with housing the homeless. The last hotel that they were placed in was 100% destroyed. Drugs, prostitution, and theft (the list goes on) all of which take resources away from other needs within our community.
  I am all for finding a solution for this growing problem but I also know that housing them at Norwood Inn, is not it. This building is in complete despair and when I called our city chairperson back in April with concern, I was told the health department was planning to condemn the building and it wasn't a suitable location for ANYONE to stay. And yet months later, the building is still standing and will house even more than it already does?
  French Island is filled with families who have chosen to raise our children in a low crime, safe area where they are free to ride their bikes and play at parks with no concern. Our little community grocery store is utilized regularly by our family and many families living close by and will also be highly affected. As will our neighborhood school, church, library, and many places open to the public community living here.

I don't want my children or any others having to walk thru housing encampments on a regular basis. We need to find another solution to this incredibly growing problem, and it's NOT on French Island!

Thank you
Katie OKeefe
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Sent from my iPhone