

## Craig, Sondra

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**From:** Elsen, Nikki  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 15, 2022 10:07 AM  
**To:** Craig, Sondra  
**Subject:** FW: Maple Grove

*Nikki M. Elsen, WCMC*

City Clerk  
City of La Crosse  
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**From:** pbrown1005@aol.com <pbrown1005@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 13, 2022 10:05 PM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members <ZZCouncilMembers@cityoflacrosse.org>  
**Cc:** Reynolds, Mitch <reynoldsm@cityoflacrosse.org>  
**Subject:** Maple Grove

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La Crosse City Council:

I read with great interest the recent letter submitted to City Council written by the Salvation Army. Everyone on our Neighborhood opposition committee has read it too. It was well publicized to the La Crosse community. I was particularly struck by the parallels between the Salvation Army and the views of our neighborhood group. There were numerous concerns cited by the Salvation Army: lack of transparency, wasting the resources of the Salvation Army by giving the Econo Lodge contract to a brand new organization that did not submit an RFP, bulldozing belongings of the homeless at Houska Park, a 60% increase in homelessness, the lack of appreciation for the complexities of serving the homeless, and the concerns they listed with regard to the Maple Grove project. That was quite a laundry list of concerns and failures on the part of city leadership.

I am aware the Salvation Army is in the best position to address homelessness and is truly the local expert having served the homeless for decades. Instead of working with the experts, city council thought it knew best. It is arrogant that you all think you all can solve this problem with government solutions instead of the solutions offered by Salvation Army and the existing system of social services and other programs. In the words of Ronald Reagan, when government subsidizes something, you get more of it. Look at the growth of homelessness in our area, the greater numbers with the Houska Park solution, the project of wintering at the Econo Lodge a year ago, a second winter at the Econo Lodge, and recently the request for an extension of 3 months compromised down to 1 month.

I know you are all trying to do good in your efforts to help the homeless, but central planning is not the answer. The ARPA money was printed by the federal government and tacked onto the national debt of \$30 trillion dollars. Blowing it in a non-sustainable fashion on ineffective projects is a horrible use of this money and you do not consider the unintended adverse consequences of your actions. If city council and the mayor want to do something effective and beneficial with the money ARPA money that is truly helpful to the homeless, I suggest that you pass it along to the Salvation Army. Charitable organizations and private business have a much better track record of good financial stewardship, cost effective solutions, positive outcomes, and sustainability than government (at all levels) ever will.

The mayor has found an avenue to extract the residents of La Crosse from the Maple Grove situation opposed by the neighborhood. As of 10:00 PM Sunday, there are over 600 signatures in opposition to your plans and I understand your plans are in chaos with the mayor saying and promising things members of city council were not aware of. With the results of the property inspection, you have the option to invoke the inspection contingency. I hope the residents of La Crosse can count on **each** of you to support the resolution to withdraw the offer to purchase the property.

**Paul Brown  
District #13  
4680 Brickyard Ln  
La Crosse, WI 54601**