

Craig, Sondra

From: Lisa Middleton <elisemid@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 27, 2024 4:48 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Letter of objection La Crosse, Wisconsin: where home owners are the enemy

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Dear Council people, Clerk, and Mayor

Please consider the 20 year effect after the Scenic Bluffs Health Center has moved in. Will people in crisis choose to get services in La Crosse instead of Madison, Milwaukee, Chicago, and Minneapolis? How will Scenic Bluffs make downtown La Crosse safer for students and travelers?

Washburn, downtown, and the 10th and Cass Historic Residential Districts are disproportionately earmarked as a regional center for services to those in crisis whether mental, physical, economic or addiction. The concern is not helping people, it is the saturation.

We lack law enforcement support. Neighbors no longer bother to report crimes to the Police Department because they are so frequent and the Police Department can do nothing. I have been working with the Police Department, and have found and they are unable to chart and report the past few years' crime rates and police effectiveness in the Washburn, Downtown, and 10th and Cass Historical Districts. How can The Police Department plan to support another growing multifaceted entity when they do not make a study of or be accountable for the rate of growth and the nature of the crimes at present?

The intended pharmacy and expansion is in the path of youth who are present all of the time. Polytech Middle School and High School, who walks to the YMCA 2-3 times a week, and youth participants who attend the YMCA, whose building is kiddy-corner to the REACH Center. Aquinas Middle and High School Students are present all day Monday-Friday. If Walgreens at West Avenue/Jackson St. is unable to clear the perimeter of its building from loiterers and panhandlers how then will the REACH Center be able to keep its perimeter free from loiterers who are waiting for their appointments and meds? The young people walking by will be in contact every day with people who may be a behavioral threat and be compromised with drug addiction. With weakened neighborhood law enforcement, we are creating the perfect storm for families in the greater community, not just our neighborhood.

We need to focus on the beautification of the riverfront and preserve what tourist attractions we have left. The King Street Greenway is off to a great start but its purpose would be defeated if we introduced a busy medical practice. We want to impress affluent travelers and make them feel safe here, to spend their money, visit again, and even better, move their families and businesses here.

Solar panels are expensive to maintain, batteries are an environmental hazard, and in addition to being unsightly, could fall into disrepair and only be another disappointment to the neighborhood. Amidst other concerns regarding glare, heat, and migrating birds, the solar panels will be expensive to remove responsibly, and may well not be cost effective.

The services offered by the REACH Center expansion are medical in nature and belong on a medical campus, and not at the overlapping point of three residential neighborhoods, many members of which it won't be serving.

The WI statutes for TND (sec 66.1027). On page 13 it says that all residents should be within a 5 minute walk to commercial spaces and that individual businesses should not exceed 6000sf in size. This zoning isn't appropriate here as the Reach Center will be drawing business region wide and that the facility is a great deal larger than 6000sq. Ft.

The REACH Center expansion and its associated zoning contradicts the La Crosse Comprehensive plan pg. 36 which states institutional uses are undesirable in the Downtown Neighborhood.

No, we don't want to see the building bulldozed, as is assumed by our council person Mackenzie Mindel and apparently the rest of La Crosse. I don't get satisfaction out of the thought of its materials wasted and sent to the municipal dump to decay for an eternity in a toxic rock pile. We know REACH is there to stay whether the zoning is approved or not. I would like to see its exterior redesigned to be an architectural complement to the neighborhood, and contain a flower shop, a bookstore, an art gallery, in addition to the services REACH offers.

There are a lot of other kinds of progressive neighborhood revival programs we can get excited about. We need to broaden our vision and look at the possibilities of what could be. We are a unique city with the potential to draw other thinkers, dreamers, and earners from the larger metropolitan cities that surround us. La Crosse potentially has the small town qualities that many people seek as their ideal place to live.

Our natural environment and vibrant outdoor clubs call to the next generation of world changers and innovators. Thanks to our abundance of young college educated people, La Crosse is the perfect place to attract companies who want to employ an educated, younger workforce. Let's find ways to encourage our young college graduates to stay in La Crosse, and not take their earning potential elsewhere. Let's make La Crosse as a "who's who" city and make it competitive to live here by creating a great quality of life.

Let's build up owner-occupied neighborhoods and not let landlord corporations and developers call the shots in our city. Homeowners who are Parents deserve weighted consideration, because they play multiple roles in our community and speak for the best interest of other human beings in their household. Homeowners make a several year financial commitment to their neighborhoods and the city. We need to give homeowners more victories so we know the council and the city are still on our side.

I don't study social law or public planning as a hobby, and I shouldn't have to, in order to prove to city council members that their actions are unfair or shortsighted. I work too hard to earn a living and pay my mortgage and property tax to have time to study statues and comprehensive city plans. I can't tell you the amount of hours I have spent reading and writing on so many facets when really I need to start worrying about my income due to ever increasing property taxes in this city, where I'm taxed as if it's a nice place to live, and where homeowners are the enemy.

I like the REACH Center as they are now, but any growth will make my property teter on the edge of an unknowable future that no one is willing to make projections for. If REACH Center's new zoning is approved, quality taxpayers and homeowners we need will move out of the neighborhood. New homeowners won't want to take the risk of purchasing an old home in a sketchy neighborhood. If responsible homeowners leave they will be replaced by irresponsible landlords and developers, making it even harder for homeowners to play their special role as the little guy in community revitalization. Please protect the neighborhoods that still remain before it's too late and the unique neighborhoods that make La Crosse unique are gone forever. We really care about our neighborhood. Let's find other solutions together.

Lisa Middleton
203 10th St. S. La Crosse WI 54601