

July 31, 2017

Dear City of La Crosse :

My family and I spent the last 9 months looking at real estate in the La Crosse area after we decided that this is where we would put our family roots down. My wife and I have 2 boys, ages 2 and 4. Early on in the search process we spoke with Kristen Lueth at La Crosse Promise as well as Dawn Reinhart from the city about city lots that were being targeted both by the city and the Promise program to be part of neighborhood revitalization projects going on. When the lot on 9th St. South came up we decided the lot as well as the neighborhood could be a perfect fit for what we were wanting for our future despite the higher property taxes and low home values in the area. The opportunity to live downtown, the opportunity to be part of the revitalization in the Washburn Neighborhood, the chance to live by many other families in the neighborhood with the same vision, and schools and other conveniences close by all weighed in. We closed the deal on the lot at the end of May agreeing to the city's counter offer which was above their listing price and we are currently in the middle of building our new home. The city is also currently holding an extra \$3000 deposit until we finish our building and hit all the criteria they required for building on one of these lots. The city needs to hold up its' end of the deal as well.

Only a week ago we received the letter from the city here at our current home in Colorado stating the petition for rezoning was being submitted by Coulee Council on Addictions to rezone the lots on Ferry Street. Needless to say we were shocked by the proposal and also could not believe the minimal timeline offered to respond. We took a leap of faith with the city to invest in a home that would not even appraise out at the cost we have into it initially, accepting that it would take some time for things to catch up and for the neighborhood to go through the revitalization phase. That leap of faith and all the decisions we made did not factor in an impending rezoning for an addicts' rehab facility being built in our backyard which could potentially affect the safety of our family and considerably lower our property value even further instead of growing it. All of us on 9th St. and beyond in the Washburn Neighborhood that have built or are currently building new homes took that leap of faith with the city to invest in the neighborhood and the city on the promise that the city would be working to continue on with rehabilitating the neighborhood with owner occupied residences, not clinics, commercial property or other like institutions.

We ourselves as well as everyone else who has taken that leap of faith with the city are hard working families who need the equity in our homes to survive financially. That coupled with all of us investing in the vision of the La Crosse Promise program along with the vision the city has portrayed both in words to us and even on their website led us to believe we would be rewarded and not punished for making that investment.

Regarding Coulee Council on Addictions, there's nothing we have against the institution or its' mission, in fact most of us are in full support of their mission. We are against them moving into our neighborhood for a host of reasons. I had a phone conversation with Cheryl Hancock the executive director of the Coulee Council and she also sent the homeowners in the area a letter. There was something very telling and concerning in her letter as well as the conversation we had. There were three very important words which were in response to us asking if they would be administering methadone or other like drug treatments or programs. Her response in the letter and in the conversation was that they do not implement anything like that "as of yet" or "at this time" which leaves the door open to future programs. Aren't there concerns about this as it relates to Lincoln Middle School and laws about drugs being present within a certain distance of a school? It

also concerns us as families potentially having people show up in our neighborhood to receive their methadone which is addictive in and of itself.

The other concerns are that of the size of the building, they are wanting to build a 13,000 sq. ft. facility which is much bigger, more than double of what they have now which only means one thing, a vision for growth resulting in much more activity and more clients which intensifies any and all concerns and adds many more variables. The hours of operation are another major concern, we will virtually have no reprieve from this entity operating both day, night and on weekends. And possible the biggest concern of all is what was revealed in my conversation with Cheryl was when I asked about the backgrounds of their clients/patients/participants. I asked for instance if any of their clients had a prior record for sexual abuse, assault, etc. and Cheryl told me she could not answer that as they don't have any background information on their patients. They only do background checks on their employees and volunteers. So on top of having many ex-addicts congregating only a couple of hundred feet away from our home and the middle school, no one at the organization knows what prior records exist and who they are dealing with which in turn puts the stress on us as a neighborhood and community. It also puts these school children more in harm's way as they walk to and from school.

It is our hope that common sense and rationale will prevail here and that our city council people and planners will back up the citizens who have invested in the city and its' vision to revitalize downtown with rehabilitated homes that are owner occupied. When we purchased our properties and invested our hard earned dollars into our homes the property on Ferry St. was zoned residential and should remain that way if the city is going to keep its' promise. How can you honestly look us in the eyes and claim you are holding up your end of the deal? My family and I are prepared to hire legal representation if the city plans to take this any further than these initial hearings.

It is also our hope that you will all put yourselves in our shoes. Would you feel comfortable with this scenario had you made this deal with the city and with what is now going on? Most of us can't simply move and risk the loss of investment we have made, for probably most it's all we have. I know that myself and my family will be great assets to the city in terms of being productive citizens on many fronts. My wife is a teacher and I am a businessman who is investing in a new downtown business that will create jobs and could potentially bring millions of dollars in revenue to the city. I have been the executive director of a charity for ten years here in Colorado that raised tens of thousands of dollars for after school arts programs and other programs for disadvantaged children by organizing an annual holiday charity concert from which all the proceeds went to these programs. We understand the plight of these addicts and the help they need but we don't agree with placing this facility in this neighborhood. We are here to help our new city and community. We are an asset to the city, we will help this city become better for we believe in the city and its' vision. Please keep your promise to us, we have taken this leap of faith with you and have invested greatly in the city with much more to come.

With nothing but the best intentions for all,  
Chad, Michelle, Booker and Ethan Staehly