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From: Maureen Freedland <maureenfreedland@gmail.com>
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To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: REACH Center rezoning to support neighborhood and community

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July 28, 2024

Dear Honorable Members of the La Crosse City Council,

I serve on the Executive Committee of Couleecap, Inc. I am proud that for over 60 years we have been promoting self-sufficiency and helping people's lives and families in La Crosse. The YWCA goes back 120 years in La Crosse. We are part of the community core, not at all special interest groups, and we are always rising to meet urgent community needs. That now includes the challenge of homelessness.

The REACH Center agencies want to be and will do everything they can to be a good neighbor, and our Couleecap Board will insist on that, including carefully limiting its allowable services and honoring agreements it makes. We are highly eager to cooperatively and openly work with neighbors as partners toward the same goals in ways that are reasonable and fair to all parties.

It is delightful that many people who turned away from our historic urban core in the last decades, and also newcomers, are choosing to live in our historic urban center, the downtown area, and to bring back dignified, delightful homes. Nevertheless, let's recognize that the REACH Center is in a mixed neighborhood with a mixture of incomes, people and situations. Let's not try to shut out residents or elevate the priorities of some against others. Let's try to recognize that we can work together as a community and with our dedicated social agencies such as Couleecap and the YWCA, and also the City of La Crosse/County of La Crosse Pathways Home comprehensive plan to end homelessness, to continue to make the neighborhood around the REACH Center a thriving neighborhood for all its residents, and to serve the greater community too. Together we can continue to be a part of positive change, making better this neighborhood and also the community at large – turning the ship around for all so to speak -- but that will take time and it will take many combined efforts. It is simply unfair in my opinion to see the REACH Center as somehow making worse or spreading out La Crosse's issues with people who may be homeless or in other need of social services, or to somehow suggest that adding limited lanes of dental services (for people of various financial means and income including working people with insurance), will somehow degrade the building or its neighborhood. I am aware of no documented evidence of that, either.

Please permit us to accomplish these neighborhood and community goals, giving our clients a dignified, calming environment to visit, and allowing us to modernize the building to also keep our approximately 1.3M asset intact, as any property owner should have the right to do.

Respectfully, in spirit of collaboration,

Maureen Freedland
Resident; also La Crosse County Board Supervisor, D. 4

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