

6-3-2025

Dear Finance and Personnel Committee Members,

My name is Marlis O'Brien. I am a resident of the City of La Crosse and live on the North Side. My address is: 2431 Prospect Street, La Crosse, WI 54603. In August of this year, I will have worked at St. Francis/Mayo for 36 years. My son, Erik O'Brien, is 23 years old. He has attended public school in the City of La Crosse his entire life. He was born with a genetic disorder called 1p36 Deletion Syndrome. He is missing a chunk of DNA on his first pair of chromosomes. This results in symptoms that are like Parkinson's Disease. It affects his speech, fine motor skills, gross motor skills, and coordination.

I am writing in support of the TIF Development Agreement for Haven on Main. Like most parents, I worry about what will happen to my son when I die. This is especially true for me because my son is an only child, and he is disabled. Historically, there have been very few options for someone like my son. Many special needs/disabled individuals live with their parents until their parents die. They then typically have to choose between living in a group home or an institution. All special needs individuals are different and have different abilities and this cookie cutter approach is not in the best interest of everyone. Like all normal developing peers, special needs people flourish in an environment that encourages self-sufficiency and independence.

I believe La Crosse and Haven on Main is going to lead the way in creating a true community for everyone in every sense of the word. I hope that my son will be able to live there. In fact, I would love to live there also. It is close to where I work and workforce housing has always been a struggle here. At Haven on Main, I can control who provides services for my son. He can learn to live independently while I am still on this earth to help him navigate the change. Haven on Main is close to the bus route, grocery stores, convenience stores, the bike trail, and many work opportunities. Haven on Main will offer activities, fitness, and social events that anyone would be welcome to participate in regardless of their abilities. Tenants of all ages and walks of life living in the perfect setting.

Please consider the importance of such a unique living space for our community and the impact it will have on those of us who have chosen to make La Crosse our home.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Marlis O'Brien