

1. Why did Firehouse Commons offer \$100,000?

We carefully considered the unique challenges and opportunities of this incredible space:

- **Flood Zone Limitations:** Being in a flood zone means we can only do maintenance renovations, so we had to think carefully about how to maximize this space despite its restrictions.
- **High Flood Insurance Costs:** The flood zone also comes with significant costs—flood insurance alone adds \$7,000 annually per \$100,000 spent, on top of standard mortgage insurance. It's a challenge, but one we're ready to tackle for the good of the community.
- **Fair Tax Contribution:** As an LLC, Firehouse Commons contributes full property taxes. This means we're doing our part to give back to the city we love.
- **Affordable Rent:** Affordable rent starts with an affordable purchase price. By keeping our costs low, we can offset expenses and truly be a place where small businesses can grow their roots and thrive in La Crosse.

2. How Will We Create Separate Business Spaces Within Flood Zone Restrictions?

We fully respect the strict flood zone regulations, which allow for zero permitted renovations—only maintenance is permitted. Despite this challenge, we've developed creative, compliant approaches to bring this vision to life:

- **Restructure Without Modifications:** The building will remain exactly as it is. We'll repurpose existing spaces, such as the former captain's quarters and firefighter sleeping areas, into smaller units, while utilizing the already separated larger bay spaces to accommodate businesses with varying needs.
- **Flexible Exterior Solutions:** The parking lot will be divided to create opportunities for inside tenants who require parking solutions, as well as a few spaces for mobile businesses that just need a parking spot. The more small businesses we can serve, the more La Crosse wins.

No matter the approach, Firehouse Commons is poised for success. We're ready to meet this challenge head-on, ensuring the project delivers on its promise to support the dreamers and doers of our community. **See attachment A1 for property map.**

3. How Does Firehouse Commons Differ From the Coulee Region Business Center (CRBC)?

Firehouse Commons complements CRBC by filling key gaps for businesses needing flexible, industrial-ready commercial spaces.

Key differences include:

- **Ceiling Height:** Higher ceilings to accommodate operations requiring vertical space—perfect for businesses with big ideas and even bigger equipment (For example a fork lift).
- **Durable Floors:** Designed to support heavier equipment and handle increased traffic, ideal for robust industrial needs.
- **Tailored Infrastructure:** Access to water, floor drains, and open, adaptable layouts to support a wide range of businesses and operations.

Together, Firehouse Commons and CRBC create a thriving ecosystem for La Crosse’s small businesses, ensuring there’s a perfect space for every entrepreneur to grow.

4. Why Did We Offer the Opposing Party \$50,000–\$100,000?

The opposing party made accusations that we offered them \$50,000–\$100,000 above the asking price for the fire station. **Let us be unequivocal: this is not true.**

When you’ve poured your heart into building a business since you were 16, you’ll do whatever it takes to keep it alive. Securing the space was for the survival of my business and the businesses we’ve spoken to who are also struggling for space.

After consulting with the Planning Department, we saw a chance to move forward if the opposing party withdrew. We didn’t offer above the property’s value; we offered to help remove their bid so we could secure our future. If it took an extra \$50,000–\$100,000 to ensure that future, that’s exactly what we had to try.

La Crosse’s small businesses are in desperate need of space, and we were willing to give everything we had to make it happen. The city still received the full value we proposed for the property. This was about staying in business and giving Firehouse Commons a chance to create something vital for the survival of small businesses in La Crosse.

Tenant Layout

Attachment: A1

Parking Only Tennate	Suite 4 Parking	Suite 3 Parking	Bay 2 Parking	Bay 1 Parking
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Community Utility Room	Bay 2 (Market)	Bay 1 (Subsidized)
Suite 3 (Market Rate)		
Suite 4 (Subsidized)		
Community Break Room		
Community Conference Room		

Attachment A2, Opposing offer Communication Transparency

Fire Station



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Wed, Oct 30, 3:56 PM ☆ 😊 ↶ ⋮

Hi Karl,

I wanted to reach out after reflecting on our recent call. Thanks again for getting back to me—I really enjoyed getting to know you a bit. While out here with the North Dakota dust and sun, I thought about our conversation and felt I should give you my best offer.

To keep it straightforward, I'm prepared to offer \$100,000 to secure the bid on the fire station. As a young investor passionate about creating something lasting, this fire station would be an ideal workspace for my business (which I started at sixteen) and for Real Wood. We're both in serious need of a dedicated, well-suited space to grow.

This investment is personal to me, and our conversation made me all the more appreciative of you for even considering it. I'd love the chance to follow in your footsteps; you're clearly making strides in the investment world. If nothing else, I'd be thrilled to invite you down to the Hatchery Lounge for a drink sometime—just to talk shop.

Thanks for considering my offer, Karl. I'm looking forward to the chance to work together.

Warmly,
Marty Walleser



