

Elsen, Nikki

From: James Longhurst <jlonghur@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 21, 2024 3:20 PM
To: Elsen, Nikki
Subject: Item 24-0563, support housing proposals for "Former South Community Library"

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Hello, please attach the following email to Item 24-0563, "Former South Community Library"

My name is James Longhurst; I live one block away from the former South Community Library site. I'm also a longstanding member of the Holy Trinity Longfellow Neighborhood Association and worked over the years not only in support of its founding, but to mount a past campaign to defend the South Branch Library from closure.

I write to encourage the committee to prioritize housing on the site of the former library. Housing is and should be the priority for the city. I especially mean new housing that adds to the availability, variety, and therefore the affordability of housing in the city. All new and infill housing projects add to the supply of housing, which is a significant factor in market prices. This parcel, on an MTU stop, is an excellent location for multi-unit housing, townhomes, shared-wall construction and the like. Amidst a housing crisis, an affordability crisis, and in a policy system that prioritizes unaffordable, large single-family construction, we need to take every opportunity to build more missing-middle housing.

Secondarily, I would ask the committee to pay attention to the proposals with guaranteed taxable revenue for use of this publicly-owned site. Building the capacity of the city to respond to the housing crisis includes increasing the tax base where possible, which is why the RFP specified that the proposals "must be taxable." To keep property taxes at attractive levels for future La Crosse residents, we need to spread the burden across an expanded tax base. It is a responsibility of the committee members to get the most significant return on this public property.

I find it unfortunate that I have split with the neighborhood association on this topic, but I find that the response of the neighborhood association was largely anti-housing. In my opinion, the wording and promotion of the petition was misleading and manipulative, and brought out the worst tendencies among current residents who work against adding new residents; this dynamic is one of the greatest causes of the housing crisis in our city and the nation. Unfortunately I have to write to tell you that the neighborhood association does not speak for me on this topic.

James Longhurst
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