

1/21/2016

I live in the SASYNA neighborhood. Just a block from a "juvenile group home" and just down the road from Head Start, another local juvenile facility. And my wife, Kimberly Wilson, is the art teacher at Lapham Elementary School. (My wife teaches many children who are homeless. It's one of the aspects of her job she loves the most.) When our daughter was younger, we attended regular events at the Tenney Nursery & Parent Center. And we love the Isthmus neighborhoods. I so value the community feeling that has been build on the near east side of Madison.

I am writing to express my support for the day shelter. I realize there are valid concerns about the siting of the day shelter. But I believe there are ways to address those concerns and still welcome such an important facility into our neighborhoods. I think it is incumbent upon all our citizens to consider those less fortunate. For those who are concerned about safety (and I'm not even sure it is fair or accurate to consider the homeless any more violent or dangerous than any other citizens), I think it makes the community more safe—not less safe—to have a central and cohesive location to serve the needs of these underprivileged and needy members of our community.

I hope that the committee and others involved in working on this can appreciate that this day shelter could actually be an asset to the community, and something we can showcase and be proud of.

I wish you well again express my thanks for your efforts on this.

Yours in community,
Brian Lavendel

10/23/2015

Hi Patty,

As noted, I won't be able to make this important meeting, but I'll share my thoughts for the council:

My main interest/concern: How the dayshelter (and lack of on-site nighttime shelter) will impact our many nearby parks. This seems like it could have a potentially huge spillover effect. The main concern is likely safety, especially the safety of the very vulnerable homeless population that would be put out on the streets and into the parks.

I doubt I can vote since I won't be at the meeting, but if I could (and my general inclination at this point in time is that) I wouldn't be supportive unless the County/City could demonstrate they have a sufficient plan and resources in place to help address the added pressure on the parks and open spaces.

Thanks!

-Tyler Lark, TLNA Parks Chair

Heidi,

I want to echo my wife's comments on the meeting Wednesday.

I support the day shelter, I see the humanitarian need and am happy to have my neighborhood step to the plate; however, I am not satisfied with the approach that is being taken.

Maybe my expectations were a bit high, but I expected some concrete "This is what the day shelter looks like" from an operations standpoint. I expected the County Executive to be there to lend weight to the cause. I expected a range of providers (that should be working on the RFP right now) to give insight into what services would be provided. I expected all these things before public comment in order to alleviate the fears/concerns that people have.

I hope that you will take into consideration the need to sell this to the neighborhood; we deserve better than what we were given Wednesday night.

I understand that more is forthcoming, and I hope that it is put together in a better way.

Nick Balazs
211 N. Ingersoll St.

Dear County Board Supervisors,

I am writing about the offer to purchase the Messner building on East Washington to be used by Dane County as a homeless day shelter. I appreciate that, after years of trying to open a day shelter to respond to a stated need, additional money was budgeted that has made this purchase possible.

Why This Location? I live in the neighborhood and was surprised by the choice to put a day shelter next to a nursery school, between two bars, and in a residential neighborhood. I have been told the location is suitable because it is on the bus line, not too far from existing overnight shelters, and because the owner is willing to sell.

I attended the public meeting last week and had hoped to be able to ask questions to gain some insight to address my other concerns about the location. Because my daughter attends Tenney Nursery School, I have followed the Board's process as they have sought council and expertise from other professionals who serve young children, work in law enforcement, or serve the homeless.

Unfortunately, the information the board has gathered has caused the board members to unanimously vote not to support the day shelter in that location. Repeatedly, board members were told that it was not advisable to place a homeless day shelter next to a nursery school.

Because you all are poised to vote on the purchase of the Messner building, I ask you to consider if this is an ideal location. Please do the work to determine, for yourselves, if other experts in early childhood education, law enforcement, and homeless services would advocate for placing a day shelter next to a nursery school, between two bars, and in a residential neighborhood.

For this day shelter to be successful in the long run, all the pieces of the puzzle need to work.

Thank you for your time and service,
Jessica Becker
1143 E. Dayton Street

Dear Members of the Dane County Personnel and Finance Committee

The location of a day center on the 1300 block of E Washington Ave presents many challenges. The first is the process by which the County is pursuing this site. It is sad to see how little regard my county government has respected process and community. At no point during the real estate negotiations did the County engage any neighborhood where the properties were being considered. We saw this with the Bellini site and we are experiencing it now with the Messner site. Both times the County completely disregarded the process that they had defined for locating a day shelter. Ultimately the acquisition of the Messner site was done in secret, without consideration for how the site integrates into a neighborhood and community.

We know from Madison police Capt. Gloede that the day shelter will bring Dane County residents with AODA and mental health issues. Most of these people will never present a problem to the neighborhood where the day shelter is ultimately located. However up to 10% of the users of a day shelter will generate problems, many resulting in police calls. This means that we are drawing up to 20 people a day into a residential neighborhood who will challenge the smooth integration of the day shelter into a community.

There are positive aspects of locating a day shelter in a neighborhood like Tenney-Lapham. Homes are mostly owner occupied and there is a broad range of retail services. But the neighborhood does not benefit from the crime and harassment that the day shelter will assuredly bring. At no point has the County addressed these deleterious impacts. At no point has the County proposed how these issues will be addressed. Neighbors and community members have not been presented with a complete plan.

As a county supervisor, you have the responsibility to involve neighbors and community members in county government decisions that impact their interests. Democracy happens before events are a *fait accompli*. The process that you are voting on tonight should have happened long before the county executive decided to buy a building in a residential neighborhood. Approving the acquisition of the Messner site for the day shelter in your committee meeting acknowledges that your committee has no input in this process. Rejecting it sends a message that the democratic process needs to be respected and that the neighbors and community need to be involved.

Sincerely,

Bob Klebba
Traffic and Safety Chair, Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Association

704 E Gorham St

OPEN LETTER TO DANE COUNTY SUPERVISORS AND MADISON PLAN COMMISSION
LOCATION OF A PERMANENT DAY RESOURCE CENTER FOR THE HOMELESS
October 26, 2015

Dane County has been trying to site the day center for the homeless since at least February 1, 2013, when it published *Recommendations for a Permanent Day Resource Center for the Homeless*. Given the geographical constraints in that report, this has been difficult. Siting of such a land use is never simple, but this has been further complicated by the real estate area in question being very expensive relative to areas farther from central Madison. However, it has been only in the past few months that the county drastically increased the funds available for this purchase. The search for a site using the higher budget has been inappropriately short.

What appears to have happened is that the county discovered that the Messner site was for sale and quickly made an offer without following its own rules regarding such a purchase. The county's Resolution 72, which raised the project budget, also requires a report to the county board detailing the properties investigated and the costs and benefits associated with each. To my knowledge, there was no kind of quantitative cost-benefit analysis done with respect to any of the properties considered, including the Messner site. Instead, I have only seen a less than one-page email dated 10/16/2015 from Laura Hicklin. This lays out in a qualitative and superficial way several properties under consideration and treats the Messner site like it was being considered all along. She states that a key part of the negotiation was that the seller wanted a closing date in 2015. I do not believe that there is a precedent for such a compressed time frame for a project this large and contentious; there are five county meetings in a 23-day period, and there has been only one community meeting. Ms. Hicklin also states that the seller had received multiple offers and continues to receive them. I have seen no evidence for this, and it's important to point out that such tactics are often used in real estate negotiations. In addition, I have not seen a copy of the accepted offer to purchase.

The accepted offer was not contingent upon the county receiving a conditional use permit from the city. This is unusual. If a private party, say a developer, tried to get a bank loan under such circumstances, he or she would be denied. The proposed development (a day center) goes against the current zoning and therefore violates the appraisal principle of highest and best use.

Much of what follows here would have come to light had the county followed its own procedures for this project, and obtained a fuller exposition of the costs and benefits, including economics.

The day center will be a nuisance as defined in land use and real estate. This is the use of property that substantially interferes with the enjoyment or use of another's property without a physical invasion of the land. The difficulty in the siting of the project, as shown by the opposition voiced at public meetings, indicates that this is the case.

It is a given that the day center is necessary and must be sited someplace. However, the proposed location would sit directly adjacent to the Tenney Nursery and Parent Center (TNPC). The TNPC has been a neighborhood fixture for over 20 years. Fully 30 percent of the TNPC lot line will be shared with the day center, running along two sides of the TNPC's rectangular lot. I can find no precedent for such diametrically opposed land uses sitting not simply close but directly *adjacent* to each other. This seems to go against the principle in zoning of grouping similar land uses together and thereby avoiding the need for extensive nuisance actions. Thus the current situation, because of the lack of precedent, can only be considered an "experiment" by the zoning authority. And it may be a costly one.

The TNPC will carry a disproportionate economic and safety burden if the day center is built at the Messner location. It is probable that the day center project will deeply harm the TNPC economically, if not drive it out of business.

No one denies that the vast majority of clients at the day center will be peaceful and no problem at all. However, some clients could very well pose a danger. This safety issue was acknowledged in an email from Heidi Wegleitner to the TNPC dated 9/23/2015:

I will be advocating for county funding security improvements for the Tenney Parent Nursery Center as we provided with the Rainbow Project when we operated a day shelter at 827 E. Washington Ave. A tall fence on the back property line and center policies against wandering on Mifflin Street come to mind immediately. There would be precedent for surveillance video and electronic locks. Maybe outdoor lighting.

Let me illustrate the safety risk with an analogy, a kind of thought experiment. The question is a matter of probability. What constitutes an acceptable safety risk? 1 in 100? 1 in 1,000? 1 in 10,000? 1 in 100,000? Let's say 100,000. Now imagine a gun, a revolver, with a single bullet and that number of chambers. Now spin the cylinder and pull the trigger, and keep pulling.

Suppose the day center opens, and 150 clients per day come through as planned. That is 54,750 per year, 109,500 every two years. Returning to the gun analogy, if you pull the trigger for every visit, the gun will go off every other year.

You may argue that security has been beefed up, as per the Wegleitner quote above. Yes, that is true. So all that is required is that the security works every time with no mistakes *forever*. I would speculate that no security in the world is that good.

Do the county and the zoning authority consider this to be acceptable risk? Would incidents, potentially very harmful incidents, however rare, just be considered "collateral damage" by those signing off on this decision?

Parents have a choice about care for their children. Generally, given the choice, most would prefer a daycare or school that isn't near a land use such as the one proposed. Their fear may be misplaced, but most parents will err on the side caution. The result will be dwindling enrollment at TPNC. It would only be a matter of time before the TNPC would have to close.

The risk is small but present. At the only neighborhood meeting on October 7, a representative of Wil-Mar food pantry, which has child care, said homeless individuals use their bathroom. He said there were maybe 10 incidents over 40 years. While he stated it like it should be a positive, it is reasonable to believe many parents would interpret that as, "That is not zero."

It appears that the county rushed into a purchase contract and the city's potential change in zoning will create a nuisance land use and in so doing expose the TNPC to a safety risk it did not choose, and extensively harm the TNPC as a business. The day center should be sited at a location that does not disproportionately affect a single neighboring landowner.

Thomas Kapper, Ph.D.
PAG@surveybird.com

I run Peregrine Aesthetics Group, which deals with issues of land use and the valuation of real estate. My doctorate is in land resources and my M.A. and B.S. degrees are in economics. I am also a certified residential real estate appraiser.

Back during the height of the protests over Act 10, Dane County Executive Candidate Joe Parisi posted the following on Facebook:

“We cannot stop fighting for working families. We must send a message that in our community we will do things the Dane County way, not the Governor Walker way.”

What is the Dane County way? It might be hard to define exactly, but it encompasses community involvement, transparency and careful deliberation. Here are some examples:

1) As a new County Executive, Parisi encouraged public input on the county’s 2012-2017 Parks and Open Space Plan - <https://www.countyofdane.com/press/details.aspx?id=2647>

Prior to making any decisions, the County held multiple public meetings and listening sessions in order to formulate recommendations, which were “based on a variety of planning criteria including local and regional recreation trends, public and stakeholder input, comments gathered through an online feedback form, related planning efforts, population demographics, partnership opportunities and land management considerations.”

2) A few days later, Parisi highlighted the “next step” in making a proposed "Regional Food Hub" a reality. The "next step" came after the county completed a comprehensive analysis that included public input, the results of which were outlined in a 75 page “Southern Wisconsin Food Hub Feasibility Study” - <http://fyi.uwex.edu/danefoodsystem/files/2011/10/SoWisFoodHubStudy-HR.pdf>

3) In 2014, Dane County released the results of the Dane County Jail and Sheriff’s Office Needs Assessment and Master Plan - https://pdf.countyofdane.com/sheriff/DCSO_Final_Jail_Study_062514.pdf

In that instance the county conducted “a comprehensive Jail Study to gather and impartially assess the current and future needs of Dane County Jail System. The conclusion was to make recommendations regarding facilities and operational needs and provide master planning options that address the long term requirements for the Sheriff’s office and Jail.”

4) And earlier this year, Dane County hosted a series of listening sessions regarding area-wide transit in the greater Madison area – <http://mononaeastside.com/event/dane-county-transit-listening-session/>

Elected officials actively sought public input, going so far as to describe the listening sessions as an opportunity for them to “learn about your values and your vision,” before making decisions.

5) And although not a Dane County project, the process the City of Madison went through to make decisions on the Public Market epitomizes the “Dane County way.” Three years of research, analysis, listening, and planning went into choosing the location for the Madison Public Market. City staff met publically with the countless stakeholders and community

members and conducted thousands of surveys before deciding on what the market would entail. Existing Markets in other cities were identified and studied to determine what would work in Madison. There were four public meetings held on possible sites before a location was chosen.

When the County made an offer to purchase the former Messner's building for a day shelter, it was not operating in the "Dane County way." Isn't the success of a day shelter as important as the success of a regional food hub or a public market? Don't the homeless deserve better than to be shoehorned into a building and a neighborhood where a significant number of residents are not ready to accept them? All because the building happened to be available and affordable?

It is time to go back and follow the Dane County way. Put the purchase on hold until the public is presented with a comprehensive analysis of need and possible options. Seeking public input and studying potential models in other cities first will go a long way towards making sure that the day center is successful in moving people as quickly as possible from homelessness to permanent housing. And it will go a long way towards making sure that the center and the people using it will be welcomed by the neighborhood.

Thanks for listening.

Joe Hoey
1318 East Mifflin Street

Dear neighbors,

Last week I asked the police department for a log of calls from the homeless day center that was operated at 827 East Washington the winter of 2012/2013. Captain Carl Gloede, from the central district, provided a log and also agreed to meet with me and a few neighbors to discuss the contents.

We learned from Captain Gloede that approximately 100 people per day used the facility at 827. There were 93 calls for police service from Dec. 1, 2013 until the closing on March 31, 2013. Capt. Gloede indicated the number was about what would be expected from such a facility. There were 5 calls for service from The Rainbow Project, a center that provides services to children and their families located next door. The Messner site is expected to serve 150 per day.

Captain Gloede mentioned that when a temporary shelter was run the prior year, on the 700 block, in the abandoned Don Miller auto show room, that situation had no programming, no structure and only one staff, and was in fact, far more dangerous and "scary" because of the lack of oversight. During the operation of the 700 block shelter, the Johnson St businesses, a few blocks away, saw a significant increase in problems.

By comparison, the shelter run on the 800 block was run by a couple of individuals who were exceptionally good at making the shelter run smoothly. There were regular communications between shelter staff and the police department. Problem people were turned away or asked to leave when they became a problem.

Bob Klebba, who lives 3 blocks from the 827 shelter, asked if there was a way to determine what calls to service were directly related to the shelter. He relayed a story from that time period when he witnessed two men going through his back yard, and then the yard of his neighbors. He called the police and one individual was arrested for a prior warrant but the other man was never caught but was identified at the shelter a week later. Captain Gloede indicated there was no way to determine how many calls to service in the area were directly attributed to the population using the shelter.

Captain Gloede then characterized the typical calls related to this population as “Quality of Life” issues – public intoxication, public urination, yelling and swearing. He said that approximately 10% of the homeless population are responsible for these types of calls to the police. The people in this 10% are mostly struggling with severe mental health challenges and/or alcohol and drug addictions.

When asked about theft, Captain Gloede indicated that those supporting an addiction will participate in crimes of opportunity –taking anything not bolted down from unlocked cars, unlocked houses, anything that can turn a quick profit. When asked about drug dealing, Captain Gloede indicated that the population does attract those who prey on them, such as drug dealers, the more people, the more chance of making a sale.

When asked about whether or not the underpasses on the Yahara River path would be a problem, Captain Gloede indicated that areas that are out of sight could potentially be a problem. He indicated that to address the problem, the neighborhood would have to lobby for city ordinances that would ban certain behaviors -- much like those in the news recently with targeting the homeless for using public benches.

One neighbor, with a child at the Tenney Nursery and Parent Center, directly behind the site, indicated that she had called around to other shelters listed as models for the Messner site, and was told by more than one person that it was not a good idea to site a shelter close to a daycare. Captain Gloede relayed that at the Rainbow Project, steps were taken to minimize issues. He felt similar precautions could be taken for the Tenney center.

When asked if the location, near where children walk to Marquette for school, and directly adjacent to a nursery and 3 blocks from an elementary school, and bordering a residential neighborhood, if that was a good site. Captain Gloede admitted while it may not be ideal, it is on a bus line and not too far from downtown where most services are provided. When pressed with perhaps where a better location might be, he indicated the county was limited to what is on the market and within budget. A site closer to the services downtown would be the ideal.

Captain Gloede will be attending the Oct. 7th public meeting to be held at the Messner building. I appreciated the time he spent with us.

Best

David Waugh

704 East Gorham

October 22, 2015

Dane County Personnel and Finance Committee

Dear Committee members,

To purchase property for a day center without following process is just plain wrong. As a resident of the Tenney Lapham Neighborhood, I am deeply troubled by the process in play here, but I also have concerns about the shelter itself that apparently will not be addressed until after the deal goes through. I am a firm believer in a participatory democracy, and while the erosion on the state level is disheartening, to see it play out on a county level is frightening. To me, it feels like the county is going through the motions, but this heavy handed decision to purchase simply out of expediency of a land deal, fails the democracy stink test. Process must be respected or we have nothing.

I care deeply that everyone has a home. But I also care that my neighborhood has a say about development near our homes. As with any development, the neighborhood needs a clear understanding of the use and how it will affect the neighborhood before we move forward. At this point, we know very little about this facility. But we have lived with day shelters before and we know there can be problems.

It is a fact that shelters log a high number of calls to the police. I recently sat down with Madison central police department captain Carl Gloede. From him I learned that the very well run day center that operated at 827 east Washington during the winter months for 2012/2013, logged 93 calls over the 4 months of operation. And that only included call directly to the facility address, and not from addresses surrounding the facility. While that seems like a lot, it was nowhere near the number of calls logged the year before from the temporary day shelter in the Don Miller show room. Captain Gloede characterized that facility as "scary." Because Messner's is very near a school walk route and bordering a nursery and parent center, all this police activity is concerning. If you can't see that, then you have never been a parent, or you simply don't understand how parents think. The county needs to be very clear about what is in the plan, and what remedies are in place if things don't go as planned.

In closing, I hear advocates say the neighborhood is heartless when we even dare to question this facility. They point out that the same neighborhood concerns were leveled at the very successful Tiny House facility on E. Johnson. I am not heartless, everyone deserves shelter. But the Tiny house village is not even remotely similar. It is in fact, a housing first type initiative, and one spear headed completely through private efforts and funding. Our first priority should be housing, then a day center.

Kind Regards,

David Waugh

704 East Gorham

I happened to be talking to a friend of mine who lives in St. Paul and asked her about the Dorothy Day Center that had been cited in these e-mails as a model program.

She said that they do good work including providing beds for the night, but building is situated at the gateway to Downtown St. Paul and has been problematic, especially since it is near the Children's Hospital and Xcel Energy Center Hockey Arena. There are plans to move it several blocks away.

She reported that there is typically 20-40 homeless people around the building during the day. Recently, she had to walk pass the building to get to a meeting, and while it wasn't dangerous, "it didn't feel completely safe either".

I hope we can find a location that is safe and convenient for the people using the facility, and that also feels safe and appropriate for the neighborhood.

- Jackie Kaplan

For nearly 3 decades, my family has lived in the Tenney Park neighborhood in Madison. It is well known as a welcoming neighborhood where diversity is appreciated and generosity towards our neighbors is the norm. I have previously written about how our neighbors [build community](#) by opening up their front yards to neighborhood children, and how our [sidewalks](#) facilitate community building.

But, last week my neighbors, elected officials and I were all surprised when we read the news that the County had signed a contract to purchase a recently closed restaurant supply store to use as a permanent [day resource center](#) for people who are homeless. The surprise announcement resulted in many of my neighbors immediately [questioning the process](#) amid concerns about how it will impact the neighborhood.

Fortunately, our city alder, Ledell Zellers, and County Board Supervisors Heidi Wegleitner and John Hendrick, have agreed to convene a neighborhood meeting at the Messner's site on October 7th at 7 PM. This morning I met with Supervisory Wegleitner to learn how this project has the potential for being an integral component to address the needs of Madison's chronic homeless population, and I plan to attend the October 7th meeting to learn more. She expects County staff and a facilitator to help the meeting run well.

As an attorney, I am well aware that process is important. But, I am equally aware that it can be used destructively. In this case, the County failed to engage the neighborhood before announcing the purchase and plan publicly, which was a genuine breach of good neighborhood planning. However, while my neighbors have every right to complain about the bombshell manner in which this project was announced, that initial mistake should not be used as a cover for yet another neighborhood to invoke the NIMBY (not in my backyard) syndrome to kill a project that our community desperately needs.

Today's front page news included both our community's ability and inability to effectively deal with the people who are homeless in our midst. The positive: the first [shelter for homeless teens](#) will open tomorrow. The negative: those who are homeless will be no longer be allowed to sleep on the [City-County building's front porch](#), coincidentally also starting tomorrow.

As I observed some of my neighbors raise the genuine process problems, and other siting concerns, rather than welcoming a needed service into our community, I have chosen to learn more and while questions remain, I am cautiously optimistic that this new day resource center could be an integral piece of solving the long term needs of our neighbors who need housing and other services.

First, some facts:

- The County board has not yet approved this purchase, and will not consider it until November;
- The City of Madison must issue a conditional use permit in order for the resource center to operate, and fortunately our Alder serves on the Planning Commission;
- There is neither a design plan yet, nor an operator for the proposed resource center; and
- We have had a temporary, but inadequate, resource center just a few blocks closer to the Capitol that has operated without significant problems.

Next, some possibilities:

- The shelter is intended to provide needed and centralized resources in order to connect people to the services that are integral to gaining housing for them;
- There is a prioritized wait list for the most vulnerable people who need housing, and local service provider [Housing Initiatives](#), run by Madison school board member Dean Luomos, has had great success providing housing for 550 people who have a mental

illness, and will hopefully work with this resource center to provide more housing for those in need;

- Given the proximity to elementary schools, middle school and a high school, the school district can potentially bring educational support services into the resource center; and
- There are good models, such as [Carpenter's Place](#) in Rockford, and the [Dorothy Day Center](#) in St. Paul. We should learn from them.

Of course, proper planning needs to be done, including how to make effective use of the large parking lot next to the building, which could include **recreational space** and **community gardens**. But, this planning should be done with a mindset towards making this project a model of success to help our neighbors in need, rather than pushing them away. It was not that long ago that many of my neighbors opposed the siting a village of [tiny houses](#) for the homeless near East High school, but the project is now widely considered a success.

Madison is a wonderful place to live: for most of us. But too many of our neighbors struggle every day just to survive and put a roof over their heads. Indeed, when it comes to many quality of life indicators examined through racial disparities, Madison is the worst place in the nation. So, as I have long advocated, let's use this new resource center as another opportunity to move Madison from [worst to first](#).

Jeff Spitzer-Resnick
