

Madison Plan Commission

From: Mayor
Sent: Monday, February 12, 2024 1:33 PM
To: Nicole Schell; Madison Plan Commission
Subject: Fwd: Homeless Center

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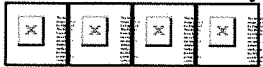
Bob G Courtney

Madison's Mayor

City of Madison, Indiana

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From: Jonathon Simpson <jonathon.simpson@icloud.com>
Sent: Monday, February 12, 2024 1:11:50 PM
To: Patrick Thevenow <pthevenow@madison-in.gov>; Carla Krebs <ckrebs@madison-in.gov>; Lucy Dattilo <ldattilo@madison-in.gov>; Joshua Schafer <jschafer@madison-in.gov>; Joel Storm <jstorm@madison-in.gov>; Dan Dattilo <ddattilo@madison-in.gov>; Jim Bartlett <jbartlett@madison-in.gov>; Mayor <Mayor@madison-in.gov>
Subject: Homeless Center

Mayor and City Council,

My name is Jonathon Simpson. I am the President of the Jefferson House located at 526 and 522 Jefferson Street in Madison Indiana. Those not familiar, the Jefferson House is a faith based residential transitional program for men in recovery who are suffering from alcohol/substance abuse. The program aides in reforming these men as they transition back into society either admitting themselves voluntarily or placed into our residence by the courts. The Jefferson House provides the necessary living skills and supportive services and resources for sobriety, which enables them to become independent and free from a life of addiction, and transitioning into citizens positively impacting our community.

I write this letter to address a concern to our program, based on information that we have received. It is my understanding that there is potential interest from the property owner, located at 524 Jefferson Street, and the City of Madison, to entertain the proposal of a homeless center at this location. The homeowner will seek local, state, and federal grants to seek funding for this project.

As representatives of our government and our people, I ask that you reject these requests and to seek other solutions to the homelessness/unhoused people in our area. One must understand that we are not against to the homeless being housed, we just have an opposition to the homeless being housed at this location.

Jefferson Street is in a residential area close to parks, schools, and businesses. The city has done a fantastic job in addressing the blight and crime issues in and around the area. As a result, property values have increased and the overall investments in this area have risen. Based on this, it is ludicrous to pretend that there will be no negative consequences for residents and businesses in that area in having a homeless center on their doorstep.

According to SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) 38% of homeless people abuse alcohol while 26% abuse other drugs. According to the National Center for Drug Abuse Statistics, 80% of the prison population have abused drugs and alcohol. I am sure if you have a conversation with Madison Police Chief Shawn Scudder, he will provide you with personal and statistical data, that the majority of arrests in Madison and Jefferson County area are based on drug and alcohol abuse. Having an homeless center in this area will immediately cause concerns for residents who now become afraid that things like burglary, theft, robbery, and drug related arrests will have potential to drastically increase in this area.

One cannot overlook habits tend to be left around the neighborhood by homeless or their associations. Take a quick drive around Firemans Park, Salvation Army, the area around Circle K gas station and one will immediately see alcohol containers, syringes, and drug paraphernalia. In many cases, children often come into contact with these items.

With the reasons mentioned above, is clear that a homeless center at this location is unwarranted and that other possible areas could be considered. One must also look at the motive in why the homeowner would seek funding for this program and for this location. If Council Members would inspect the residence, they would quickly see that the building is deteriorating and currently uninhabitable. By seeking government funding for a government program, this would allow the individual to repair and replace this property with little or no out of pocket expense.

The last part I'd like to address concerning the reasons the centers location is the overall impact on recovery for our residents who are battling drug and alcohol abuse. Prior to being accepted into our program, the individual must have 30 days of sobriety and continued sobriety to be successful. The men in this program work hard to achieve this goal in hopes of being admitted to our program. However, this is not easy for new and current men at our home. The drug addiction behavior they encounter is tested based on their environment. Our residents face daily challenges with sobriety by seeing, experiencing, and being influenced by triggers and dependency. If the City of Madison agrees to a Homeless Center at this location, they do not take and consider our program to be of value. By having known persons using and abusing drug and alcohol within within feet of our residents in recovery, makes it very challenging for the men in our program to succeed.

In conclusion, I'd like to thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. I hope that our letter has provided you with some understanding of our concerns and has lightened you on the unwanted affect the Homeless Center would have at this location. We hope that you can be transparent in the process concerning the proposal of the homeless center in our community and we believe that we are not the only parties involved who feel that 524 Jefferson Street is not an acceptable location. If there is anything we can do to assist, please do not hesitate to contact.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jonathon Simpson

President Jefferson House

526 Jefferson Street

Madison, Indiana 47250

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