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Subject: Why the Canopy Nightclub should not be approved
Date: Saturday, January 11, 2020 8:01:33 AM

Date: January 11, 2020
To: Members of the ALRC, Alder Marsha Rummel, Matt Tucker
From: David and Leigh Mollenhoff
Subject: Legistar 58773, Proposed Canopy Nightclub, 924 Williamson Street

My wife and I regret that we cannot attend your meeting on January 15 on the above matter, so we wanted to share our views by letter.

We have lived in the area for 56 years and were founders, office holders, and activists in the Marquette Neighborhood Association. In the 1960s our area was rapidly becoming a student ghetto so the Association took strong positions to restore our neighborhood's attractiveness to families. Our main strategy was to get families to buy and fix up our old homes from absentee landlords. In addition, we implemented neighborhood-nurturing goals. They included:

- saving our elementary school from closing
- working to get traffic out of our residentially zoned streets
- down-zoning areas where density policies were taking us in in the wrong direction
- creating the Third Lake Ridge Historic District
- starting Central Park, now McPike Park, and
- working to keep neighborhood businesses on Williamson.

These victories were hard won and took decades, but they restored our neighborhood's attractiveness to families and long-term residents.

However, some Williamson Street building owners and their tenants are attempting to subvert all of our work by turning the street into an alcohol and entertainment district. The latest case in point in the Canopy Nightclub which seeks your approval for up to 375 alcohol-serving seats. Such a facility is a *wildly inappropriate size* for Williamson Street. Consider these facts:

- Our three oldest bars (Wisco, Mickey's, and Crystal Corners) have a *total* seating capacity of 288 persons.
- Only three Williamson bars are licensed for over 100: Sardines, I-O Arcade Bar, and Jolly Bobs.
- Our two newest bars are Gib's Bar (49 seats approved in 2014) and Tiny Tap House

(30 seats approved in 2018).

We hope you can see from these facts, that a nightclub with a capacity of 250 to 400 persons simply doesn't fit with the Williamson Street neighborhood.

Our neighborhood learned this lesson the hard way with Plan B, a business that turned out to be a public nuisance. Look at the problems that Plan B created at the same location! Our neighbors were subjected to an unrelenting barrage of wall-penetrating thumping from huge bass speakers. Plan B's owners clearly did not understand that such irresponsible behavior had a corrosive effect on its neighbors.

But it wasn't just the booming bass noise, it was also the nightly yelling and screaming of alcohol-sated patrons leaving the establishment at bar time.

Our neighborhood is entitled to reasonable peace and quiet and this means being able to sleep without being kept awake from a thumping nightclub and its yelling patrons.

Yes, we have turned our neighborhood around from what it was in the 1960s, but that doesn't mean that our residents will stay if they are subjected disruptive and irresponsible behavior from alcohol-related businesses. Ask anyone who had to endure the Plan B problems.

Newspaper reports say that the 25-year old Canopy applicant has been doing outreach to students and community members at the clubs where he has been DJing and that he is expecting a "warm" reception. "Warm" sounds bad to us. Can we predict what will happen when 300 young men and women party at Canopy? Yes, we can! Been there. Done that!

We attended the meeting at the Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center last Wednesday and were appalled to hear a Canopy stand-in for Austin Carl, the owner, say that they want to open on the nightclub on January 18 under a provisional license! This is *before* anyone has seen their business plan, their background check, and their lease. This is *before* they have been vetted by City zoning, fire, building inspection, and public health. We were astounded to hear that the owners are investing money in the premises with only a four-month lease from the building owner. Does that make sense to anyone except the landlord? Too many key facts remain unclear.

In summary, we do not believe that Canopy can meet a key ALRC test for an 18+ entertainment license:

"The appropriateness of the location and premises... and whether the location would create undesirable neighborhood problems."

Williamson Street is appropriate for *small* neighborhood bars, not large-capacity nightclubs.

We plead with you to reject Canopy's application because it is inappropriately large for Williamson Street and because it will cause "undesirable neighborhood problems"—again.

Thank you, David and Leigh Mollenhoff,

, Madison, WI 53703