

To: City of Madison Housing Committee
From: Greg Rosenberg
Date: September 30, 2009
Subject: Accessible Housing Subcommittee

Background: With the aging of the baby boomer generation, Madison will face some challenges it has not faced before, namely an ever expanding group of residents who will need housing in which they can age in place as they grow older. The need for “housing for the lifespan” will continue to grow, and at present we are ill prepared to meet it. Many of our aging residents live in housing that requires them to negotiate a number of stairs just to get in the front door, and much of our older housing stock does not have a bathroom on the first floor.

In the past, our notion of “accessible housing” has focused only on persons who use wheelchairs, but that is too narrow a focus when it comes to accessibility. All of us will need housing with accessibility features at some point in our lives, whether we are trying to get a stroller in the front door, recovering from knee surgery, hosting a grandparent, or growing older ourselves. Simply put, our housing stock is a poor match for the accessibility needs – present and future – of our community.

Why This Subcommittee? We need a place to begin the conversation about accessible housing, where we can assess the need, research best practices from Madison and other communities, and make recommendations on how we as a community can meet the challenge of making our housing fit the accessibility needs of our residents.

Does It Have to Be a Subcommittee? Again, we just need a place to begin the conversation, which can be a subcommittee or something more information like a workgroup.

Who Will Be Around the Table? My intention is to invite members of other City committees and commissions to join us in this conversation, because the issue of accessible housing cuts across a wide range of committees and commissions.

Who Will Serve as Chair? I am certainly ready, willing and able to do it. If another candidate steps forward who would enthusiastically take on this responsibility, that would be great as well.