

Rolfs, Daniel

From: David Waugh [dwaugh@library.wisc.edu]
Sent: Sunday, April 08, 2012 9:26 PM
To: ALL ALDERS; Mayor; Rolfs, Daniel; Fields, Debbie; Bob Klebba; 'David Waugh'
Subject: Klebba/Waugh response -- Agenda item#20 (Collins House)
Attachments: waugh-klebba.pdf

April 8, 2012

Dear Mayor Soglin and Members of the Common Council:

I feel it is important to address some of the misinformation that has been submitted to you about our proposal to purchase the Collins House.

First, as you know, the city created a surplus property committee tasked with finding buyers for the 3 city-owned houses in James Madison Park. The committee consisted of 3 neighborhood residents, 3 public officials and one city staff. The process was extensive, open and publicly vetted. The committee selected our Bed and Breakfast proposal. While I champion our city's processes, I also feel that much of what we have been subjected to since being selected has been unfair and arbitrary. But, as my mother always said, nothing of value comes without hard work. I just hope that the neighborhood's voice that selected us, is not drowned out of the discussion.

Our proposal offers the highest long-term revenue to the city as documented in a report by city staff (report attached.) With the room tax revenues generated by the B&B, the two proposals are financially equal (a wash) at 5-6 years, and by 10 years, we will have contributed \$40K more to the city than the single family proposal submitted by Barbara Fant of Washington DC.

In total, the selection committee was tasked with finding owners for three city-owned properties. Their final selection included one single family, one multi-family owner occupied, and our B&B. This is completely in line with the downtown plan (new and old) and the neighborhood plans. Both designate this area as R5 multi family dwellings. A B&B is an allowed use under zoning. As city staff, Dan Rolfs, told us: At the end of the day, it is the land use the committee chose, and for which the city must decide upon. The Chef's Night off Dinners and Farm to Fork catering are just extras.

The core of our plan is to restore the building to the highest historical restoration standards and then open a Bed and Breakfast business. My family, which includes my husband and high school-age son will live there. The committee had as their highest selection criteria a proposal with a public access component. The other two proposals for a single-family residence and an apartment building simply cannot offer the same level of public accommodation. The highest and best use of this building as noted in both appraisals is as a Bed and Breakfast. The house has already been modified to accommodate this use. It has 5 guest rooms each with private bath, 2 additional baths, and the kitchen was moved to the basement.

Our project team of Gary Tipler, Jim Glueck and Ken Adams have extensive, award winning restorations in the Madison area. You know several of the buildings in town they have worked on, such as The Mansion Hill Inn, The Hotel Ruby Marie, Coach Yard Square, the Bernard-Hoover Boathouse and many more. We are fully committed to investing whatever it takes to restore the Collins House. We have Park Bank on board for the financing.

Ours is clearly the most detailed proposal (see attached letter from committee member and architect, Andrew Braman-Wanek.) Our restoration experts went through the building on multiple occasions. Ms. Fant simply hired a home inspector. She did not do due diligence as requested in the RFP.

We are accused by Ms. Fant's lawyer, Bill White, of changing our minds. We have not. The only thing that has changed is whether we rent 5 rooms or 4. We have been working with city staff to fine tune the intricate details in what is allowed and what is not allowed on this property. We are sticking with our original proposal to open a 4-room Bed and Breakfast. A zoning change to remove a use buffer was specifically allowed in the RFP, and we are pursuing that change which is item#5 on your agenda. There is nothing "illegal" to our plan as per Mr. White's statement about the zoning.

Another false statement is that our proposal is contingent on the sale of our home. Our proposal clearly states on page 10: "We will finance the purchase of the Collins house using a bank loan and use the cash from the sale of our home to finance the rehabilitation and restoration." If the City Council accepts our proposal on April 10th, we will negotiate the land lease and move forward with the purchase immediately.

Our opponents are upset over a scoring mechanism the committee used in order to provide a framework for discussion. I recommend committee members review the scoring and you will note irregularities. Two members gave proposals they favored a perfect score - essentially not scoring them at all. Dawn O'Croley's proposal for the property at 646 also received a lower score than the single family proposal for that property. The committee selected Dawn's multi-family proposal despite the lower score. Dan Rolfs stressed to the committee that by law, the city allows each committee member to choose the proposal he or she felt was in the best interests of the neighborhood and city independent of the aggregate score.

Finally, we are experienced in Farm to Fork dinners. We were doing them in our home for 5 years with produce supplied by the organic vegetable farm that we operate as part of our plant nursery business, Morningwood Farm, near Mount Horeb. Madison has many such organizations and is a pioneer in this area. This is obviously one reason the Gallo family moved back to the area and I wish them luck in their dream to operate a commercial catering business.

In closing, my family is committed to this neighborhood and our commitment is proven. I have lived in the same house in this neighborhood for 21 years and offer the same level of commitment to the Collins House. Please see the attached letters of support. The alternate proposal cannot give you this security. By contrast, the last time Ms. Fant bought her daughter a home in Madison on Morrison street, the city assessor's website show she resold it within 2 years. Please support the decision of the committee that wishes to see the Collins House reopened as a Bed and Breakfast.

Sincerely,

David Waugh and Bob Klebba
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