

From: [Alexander Sherwood](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#); [Tucker, Matthew](#); [Kirchgatter, Jenny](#); [Wells, Chris](#)
Subject: Potential Conflict of Interest – MBC CUP Review and Recommendation
Date: Friday, April 25, 2025 9:40:30 AM

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Dear Members of the Plan Commission,

In light of upcoming decisions and past approvals, I am writing to inquire about a potential conflict of interest regarding Alder Dina Nina Martinez-Rutherford in the ongoing review of conditional use permits for the Minocqua Brewing Company (MBC) site at 2927 E Washington Avenue.

Alder Martinez-Rutherford, who has publicly supported the project and provided the final recommendation to approve several past expansions, has also promoted and performed stand-up comedy events hosted at the MBC venue during the time that these decisions were being made. As the current application and prior approvals involve expanded use of the space for performances and public events, this connection raises a reasonable question as to whether she may stand to benefit from those approvals. I would like to respectfully ask whether this constitutes a conflict of interest under City guidelines, and whether it should have warranted recusal in past decisions—or should in this current one.

Sincerely,

Alex Sherwood

242 Oak Street



Laughing Liberally Milwaukee · [Follow](#)

October 19, 2024 · 🌐



Madison!!! Laughing Liberally is heading your way NEXT MONDAY October 28th at [Minocqua Brewing Company](#)! Don't miss the hysterical Dina Nina Martinez-Rutherford!



4

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Details

 108 people responded

 Event by **Minocqua Brewing Company** and **Laughing Liberally Milwaukee**

 **Minocqua Brewing Company (Madison Tap Room)**

 Public · Anyone on or off Facebook

Laughing Liberally Madison

Monday October 28th, 2024, 7pm, \$10 suggested donation

Minocqua Brewing Company - Madison Taproom

2927 E. Washington Ave, Madison, WI 53704

With a high stakes election just around the corner and rising right wing attacks on LGBTQ rights, abortion rights, voting rights and more, we need progressive laughs now more than ever. That's why we're excited to present Laughing Liberally Madison, a one night only progressive political comedy show featuring the area's top liberal and progressive comedians at Minocqua Brewing Company's Madison Taproom.

Laughing Liberally Madison is hosted by comedian, cartoonist and satirist Matthew Filipowicz. Matthew's work has been featured by CNN, NPR, PBS, HBO, BBC, the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, the Atlantic, the Nation, the London Times, Ain't It Cool News, and the Huffington Post. Matthew also hosts the creatively titled Laughing Liberally Milwaukee Podcast.

Comedians on the October 28th bill include Dina Nina, Sasha Rosser, Syed, Josh Fred, and sketch comedy troupe The Accountants Of Homeland Security.

Laughing Liberally Madison is a one night spin-off show of Laughing Liberally Milwaukee, a critically acclaimed show that plays to excited progressive audiences every month in Milwaukee. It is the local chapter of Laughing Liberally, a national organization of progressive comedians who use humor and laughter to spread understanding of liberal ideas and advance progressive values.

More info can be found at <https://laughingliberallymke.com>

See less

Madison, Wisconsin



From: [Planning](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Conditional Use Permit, 2927 East Washington Ave (ID 87634)
Date: Monday, April 21, 2025 3:07:11 PM

From: Doug Johnson <johnson.douglas.n@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 21, 2025 8:40 AM
To: Planning <planning@cityofmadison.com>
Cc: Martinez-Rutherford, Dina Nina <district15@cityofmadison.com>; SASYNA Board <sasy-board@googlegroups.com>
Subject: Conditional Use Permit, 2927 East Washington Ave (ID 87634)

You don't often get email from johnson.douglas.n@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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To City of Madison Plan Commission:

We are writing to you regarding the application from Minocqua Brewing Company for a Conditional Use Permit to allow amplified outdoor sound and music in the outdoor beer garden adjacent to their taproom at 2927 E. Washington Avenue.

This location is part of the Schenk-Atwood-Starkweather-Yahara neighborhood and the Neighborhood Association is familiar with the circumstances surrounding this application. We have listened to the concerns of the neighbors and agree with them that this is not a suitable use and that the application should therefore be denied.

This outdoor beer garden is located in a very small yard at the rear of the building and faces the adjacent residential neighborhood. Any noise generated by the patrons and staff of the taproom is funneled by the shape of the building directly at the house next door and will also impact the many other houses in the area. The beer garden itself already creates noise issues for neighboring homes and adding amplified sound to the mix will make the situation intolerable for the neighborhood.

We believe that it should be found that this proposal fails to satisfy the Conditional Use Standards of MGO §28.183(6) that must be met, specifically #3 *The uses, values and enjoyment of other property in the neighborhood for purposes already established will not be substantially impaired or diminished in any foreseeable manner.*

Thank you for your attention to this and we ask you to deny the application.

Doug Johnson

Vice-President, SASY Neighborhood Association

Preservation & Development Committee

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Martinez-Rutherford, Dina Nina](#); [Wells, Chris](#); [Planning](#); [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: Opposition to CUP for MBC
Date: Friday, April 18, 2025 8:57:19 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

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Please do not publicly disclose my name or email address in the record or discussion due to concerns about retaliation.

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the conditional use permit (CUP) request by Minocqua Brewing Company to allow amplified sound at its location at 2927 E Washington Avenue. For context, I live in this neighborhood.

Everything I have seen and read about the owner of this company has been negative towards neighbors and community members, including taunts and threats directly from the owner himself. He is currently involved in a lawsuit alleging that he uses donations to his PAC to pay for his own expenses. He has been found to lie, defame, and steal. Even just last week on facebook, someone left the company a poor review of their beer, so he posted a picture of this person's teenage daughters. The owner of MBC is nothing but a narcissist.

If there needs to be other reasons not to allow the CUP, we as a community do not need amplified music right next to our homes. There are no other businesses with amplified music along E Washington and why would we start the precedent now with this business owner who cares so little about our communities and neighbors. Our city is struggling to house all of the people who live here already -- we are in an extreme housing shortage. Do we really want to start putting amplified music spaces alongside the homes we have thereby making them inaccessible for the majority of people?

Please consider the long-term impact this decision will have on those who live and work in this area every day. I urge you to deny this permit request.

Sincerely,
A Very Concerned Neighbor

From: [Alexander Sherwood](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Cc: [Martinez-Rutherford, Dina Nina](#); sasyna-discussion@googlegroups.com; [Kirchgatter, Jenny](#); [Tucker, Matthew](#); [Wells, Chris](#); [Doug Johnson](#); [Davy Mayer](#)
Subject: Re: Opposition to Minocqua Brewing Company Conditional Use Permit for Amplified Sound at 2927 E Washington Avenue (Legistar #87634)
Date: Wednesday, April 16, 2025 10:00:13 PM

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Dear Members of the Plan Commission,

To be included in the public record, we are writing to express our vehement objection to the Conditional Use Permit requested by the Minocqua Brewing Company (MBC) to allow amplified sound in the outdoor beer garden directly adjacent to our home.

As residents living within 25 feet of this business, we have endured an escalating series of disturbances, threats to safety, and documented harassment. The business's actions—both operational and interpersonal—demonstrate a consistent disregard for rules, neighbors, and good-faith community dialogue. These impacts are not speculative—they are documented, ongoing, and in direct contradiction to the applicant's stated intention of being a "good neighbor."

While businesses can and often do contribute positively to neighborhood vitality, that potential depends greatly on how the business is operated and how its leadership engages with the surrounding community. In this case, the applicant presents the permit as a means of "enhancing" the neighborhood. However, our lived experience suggests the opposite. Rather than fostering connection or goodwill, the business has introduced persistent tension and conflict. Instead of serving as a community asset, it has become a source of disruption. The burden of preserving peace, safety, and basic neighborhood livability has fallen disproportionately on nearby residents—us included—and that is simply not sustainable.

Documented Infractions and Disturbances

Below is a partial list of specific incidents and concerns experienced since the MBC opened in its East Side location:

§ Two separate oversized delivery truck incidents operated by MBC that damaged overhead utility lines—first on December 7, 2023,

requiring emergency services, and again more recently, which knocked out internet service to our home.

§ Unpermitted construction of an outdoor stage that was red-tagged by the city and later dismantled—only after we reported it.

§ Repeated, unauthorized parking on our private driveway, including large concrete trucks, preventing us from leaving our home (January 30 and 31, 2024).

§ Amplified music events held without a permit, leading to police response.

§ Customers smoking and roughhousing in the beer garden past midnight recently on Tuesday April 8th, 2025, waking us up. This was documented on timestamped video (available upon request).

§ Ongoing public sidewalk blockages by business vehicles, including one incident where the owner verbally accosted us for asking him to move (footage available on request).

§ In one instance a neighbor on crutches was witnessed being forced to enter the busy street as a direct result of MBC delivery vehicles parked over the sidewalk (numerous records available upon request).

§ Trash and debris—beer cans, food containers—regularly ending up on our and neighbor's property, escalating with the addition of food trucks.

§ Encouragement of customer behavior that violates fire and safety protocol and disrespect of neighboring properties, such as patrons exiting through “emergency exit only” doors, with patrons then urinating on the fence in view of our kitchen window and exiting the establishment through shared driveway (footage available on request).

§ Public harassment and antagonism by the business owner, including mocking and dismissive behavior on social media platforms and public forums in response to legitimate concerns raised by

neighbors. Some of the most concerning comments were later deleted but have been archived and are available upon request.

§ A documented conversation with former MBC manager “TC,” in which they relayed direct messages from Kirk expressing a desire to retaliate against us specifically for opposing the project—threatening to “host screaming practice” outside our windows and to “go killdozer on everyone.” (Recording and transcript available upon request.)

§ Both TC and another manager, JC, resigned simultaneously in December, citing the owner’s behavior. These were the last staff members with whom we had any functional communication.

§ Recent vandalism incident at the taproom, which—while disturbing—was immediately exploited by the owner less than eight hours later as a publicity tool to promote this amplified music permit. This cynical response illustrates a broader pattern: sowing conflict and then attempting to profit from it. We, and others, had warned of escalating tension and feared such incidents would occur. Unfortunately, that fear was realized.

§ Numerous neighbors have asked for their letters to be anonymized, citing fear of retaliation from the business owner. We ask the Plan Commission to reflect on this: How common is it for residents to fear retribution for opposing a local business’s permit request? What does that say about the applicant?

These incidents are not isolated. They represent a consistent pattern of behavior that shows either indifference or open hostility toward city rules, public safety, and neighborhood livability. The request for a conditional use permit to further expand the business’s reach—this time through amplified sound—should be evaluated in the context of that track record.

Beyond the events described above, we remain concerned by a broader pattern of regulatory circumvention and uneven enforcement:

§ The applicant advanced the outdoor beer garden as a “minor alteration” to the taproom CUP which was initially presented to neighbors as “operating in near silence” subsequently bypassing public comment entirely.

§ The business currently serves alcohol solely under a state brewer's permit, which allows it to sidestep applying for a local liquor license through the city. This stands in paradoxical contrast to the previous business at this same location—Growlers—who was required to go through the full city licensure process. MBC, by comparison, is now offering more services than Growlers ever did—outdoor service, live entertainment, food trucks, and alcohol—yet faces less local scrutiny by the city of Madison.

§ To make matters more questionable, MBC does not actually brew beer at this location, or at all. All brewing is contracted elsewhere. The ability to claim “brewery” status while outsourcing all production and sidestepping city oversight defies logic and undermines the regulatory framework meant to ensure community standards are upheld.

§ Given past behavior, we anticipate a “creative interpretation” of what constitutes amplified music if this permit is approved. Prior events at this location have included karaoke (which rarely improves with volume), political speeches, live radio show call-ins, rallying for protests, and improv comedy performances. This goes well beyond what most residents reasonably associate with a “tasting room hosting live music.”

§ The inherently political branding of the business makes it even more likely that amplified sound would be used not just for music, but for message amplification—literally. The resulting events would further blur the line between business, performance space, and political platform, with outsized impact on adjacent residential properties.

The applicant has made clear—through word and deed—that community wellbeing is not the priority. The “savior” narrative often presented at meetings and online is not just misleading—it's manipulative. This permit request would further entrench a disruptive presence in a quirky and unique East Side neighborhood of this city and reward a business that has actively degraded trust with its neighbors.

We recognize that this situation is nuanced, and perhaps unprecedented in some ways. As such, we're deeply grateful to the Plan Commission for its time and thoughtful evaluation of the concerns raised not only in this letter

but also by our neighbors—many of whom have spoken out despite fearing retaliation.

Finally, it's important to emphasize that our opposition to this permit is not politically motivated. The business owner often frames local conflict in those terms, but that narrative erases the lived experience of the people directly affected. Likewise, as musicians and long-time supporters of local arts and culture, it pains us personally to be in opposition to anything that touches the creative community. This is not NIMBY-ism—we understood what existed next to our house when we moved here. What we could not predict was a business that would build its brand around division, circumvent oversight, and antagonize the very neighborhood it claims to serve.

The Plan Commission's motto asks:

Who benefits? Who is burdened? Who does not have a voice?

In this case, the business alone stands to benefit, while surrounding residents continue to suffer. We ask that you stand with the community and deny this request.

We are available to provide documentation, video evidence, and testimony as needed.

Sincerely,
Alex Sherwood & Kristi Kaylo
242 Oak Street

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Plan Commission Comments; Martinez-Rutherford, Dina Nina](#)
Subject: Opposition to CUP Request – 2927 E Washington Avenue (Agenda Item 87634)
Date: Wednesday, April 16, 2025 4:46:58 PM

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Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the conditional use permit (CUP) request by Minocqua Brewing Company to allow amplified sound at its location at 2927 E Washington Avenue.

Although I am providing my name for the record, I respectfully request that my identity remain anonymous in any public materials or discussions due to concern over potential retaliation.

As a resident who lives near the property and frequently visits the area adjacent to the business, I have seen firsthand how the introduction of this Taproom has already impact the surrounding area. The increased litter, noise, and disruptive activity have changed the tone of what was once a relatively quiet residential block. Introducing amplified sound, especially in an outdoor space so close to homes, would only intensify those disruptions and diminish the quality of life for neighbors and friends.

I am also deeply troubled by the demeanor and public conduct of the applicant. At community meetings, the tone taken by Mr. Bangstad was often dismissive and confrontational, particularly toward those who raised valid concerns. He repeatedly positioned himself as a victim rather than a partner, and his self-described conflicts with officials in other municipalities raise serious concerns about whether he would respectfully adhere to any conditions placed on this permit.

A CUP for amplified sound requires a high degree of trust that the applicant will act in good faith and with accountability to the community. Based on what I've observed, that trust has not been earned.

Please consider the long-term impact this decision will have on those who live and work in this area every day. I urge you to deny this permit request.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Madison, WI 53704

Please do not publicly disclose my name or email address in the record or discussion due to concerns about retaliation.