



November 21, 2016

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To the Common Council and the City of Madison Staff:

The Board of Governors of *The Baskerville* Condominium Association and the undersigned individual residents of *The Baskerville* wish to express our position opposing the Fairchild Building site for any kind of homeless shelter, despite our sharing the concern for the plight of homeless in Madison and our sympathy with the difficulties of Porchlight in particular.

We at the Baskerville have been closely following discussions regarding the need to relocate the existing homeless shelter at the Grace Episcopal Church, to increase capacity, and to make way for Hovde Properties, Inc. to redevelop the block where the Grace shelter is currently located<sup>1</sup>. Baskerville residents have attended neighborhood meetings and have been in contact with other building owners and residents in the immediate area of the Fairchild Building.

We share the City's concern for the rising homelessness in Madison both from a humanitarian perspective and in view of the myriad attendant problems (strain on city services, dampening of tourism, cost to businesses, and decreased quality of life for all residents). However, we believe that the particular Fairchild Building site will not properly address the needs of homeless people nor solve many of the City's associated problems, while at the same time creating new problems for the City and the neighborhood at great cost. The building is without insulation, not designed for human habitation, on a busy street, aging, and located in one of the prime real estate markets in Madison. The great expense of retrofitting this building (not to mention the lost potential property tax revenues) would be better spent specifically designing

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<sup>1</sup> [http://host.madison.com/ct/news/local/writers/pat\\_schneider/madison-plan-could-move-homeless-men-s-shelter-from-grace/article\\_cd337ae6-976e-5485-969f-40f27c58cc10.html](http://host.madison.com/ct/news/local/writers/pat_schneider/madison-plan-could-move-homeless-men-s-shelter-from-grace/article_cd337ae6-976e-5485-969f-40f27c58cc10.html)

a building for a shelter or in pursuing other proven methods of solving homelessness such as Housing First. We certainly applaud the City for trying to find a constructive solution to the problem of homelessness, but this is not it.

This building is bound by busy city streets without adequate sidewalk space for more than a handful of users to line up for the shelter to open. The sidewalks currently teem with workers and visitors from sunrise to sunset and later. This is an active downtown corner due to these workers and visitors on top of the long hours of noisy trash trucks and street cleaning equipment that enter and exit the Fairchild Building, and transfer trash in front of it. Police and other city vehicles also enter and exit around the clock. This is no place for even a small number of homeless folks due to lack of sidewalk accessibility, noise from the City vehicles, noise from a high level of police and fire truck activity at the jail across the intersection, and regular traffic street noise. The plan of having a receiving area inside the building, while clearly a response to this problem, seemed wholly inadequate to deal with the actual dimensions of the issue. This is an unwise location to consider a 160+ bed homeless shelter due to these simple facts.

City government and its citizens need to take a hard look at this property to consider what is best for all city residents and visitors from within the county, around the state, and beyond. This city corner is prime real estate from the perspective of both taxpayers and developers. This location is exceptionally active for one of the largest and most successful Farmer's Markets in the country, for all other downtown activities such as Ironman, Art Fair on the Square, the Taste of Madison, and Concerts on the Square. We ask that the city have the foresight to consider what other uses for this property would positively outweigh its current use or the proposed homeless shelter. As neighbors that observe this corner in our everyday lives, we certainly can envision an excellent use of this property: a much-needed downtown hotel with underground parking - to name just one alternative.

We can describe first-hand the 24-hour activity outside of the Dane County Jail, with inmates being released and waiting on the sidewalk (often waiting for hours) to be picked up by family or friends, inmates leaving for and returning from work release, and visitors cycling in and out every day to visit inmates. In short, we at *The Baskerville* already endure a range of difficult activity next to us. Soon, approximately 125 residents of the multi-million dollar ULI high-rise apartment building<sup>2</sup> abutting our building also will experience this. Adding yet more

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<sup>2</sup> October 26<sup>th</sup> email exchange on approximate number of residents with Mark Blinkowski, Urban Land Interests

challenging activity at the same corner would be a terribly ill-sighted decision on the part of the City and Common Council. This is especially counterproductive after the City devoted a large amount of TIF funding to "activate Doty Street" with ULI's development project.

Several owners at *The Baskerville* have long supported Porchlight with financial contributions and volunteering. We expect the City of Madison and Dane County to work together with homeless service providers to address the root causes and insidious effects of homelessness here. However, we firmly encourage the Common Council to focus resources on proven decentralized residential solutions such as the Housing First Initiative in Madison - the same initiative that reduced homelessness by 91% in Utah<sup>3</sup>.

The city-ordered study of the Fairchild Building describes expensive options for retro-fitting the Fairchild Building to allow for a homeless shelter. This is an aging building that raises concerns about displacing police use and city parks and sanitation use at a high cost to taxpayers. Our understanding is that those departments currently in the building do not want to be relocated for good reasons. Further, our understanding is that a retrofit of the Fairchild Building would cost more than a new building designed as a homeless shelter in a location closer to other homeless providers.

It is not clear at all that this site was chosen after carefully surveying the alternatives. Madison needs homeless services and those services need to be thoughtfully designed with an eye toward the effect on the City ecosystem as a whole. In making this decision, the City at a minimum needs to consider other sites for this project. With the many inherent drawbacks to the Fairchild location, the City is poorly served by not investigating what other options are possible.

To conclude, we implore the City and the Common Council to seriously look at the negative effects of locating a homeless shelter at the Fairchild Building on potential homeless users, downtown residents, workers, visitors, and businesses. Also, to examine future opportunities for the City of Madison, its residents, taxpayers, and all future visitors to develop the site into something truly commensurate with positive growth and development to offset the challenges of the jail activity. It is incumbent upon the City and the Common Council study alternative locations - ideally to build

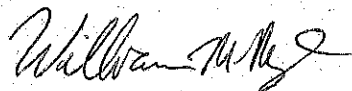
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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.npr.org/2015/12/10/459100751/utah-reduced-chronic-homelessness-by-91-percent-heres-how>

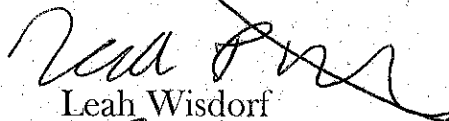
a new shelter designed for the express purpose - in the East Washington Avenue corridor closer to the day programs center and other homeless providers.

Respectfully,

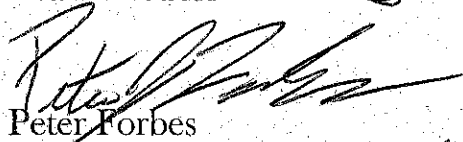
The Baskerville Board of Governors:



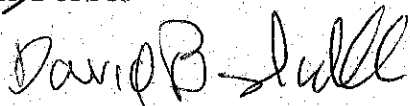
Will May (Chairperson)



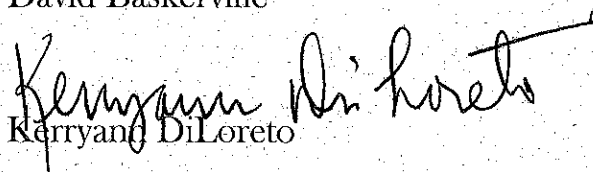
Leah Wisdorf



Peter Forbes



David Baskerville



Kerryann DiLoreto

Other residents and owners of *The Baskerville*:

Ann Deenan

Mr. Linn

Dan Scullin

Juniper Bork

David B. Bork

John Bork

John Bork

By Fuller

Delora Scullin

Marguerite De Mattos

Jacky Bork

Manuel Bork

Carly