

**From:** [Steve Ohlson](#)  
**To:** [Verbick, Jim](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: Canopy nightclub proposal for 924 Williamson Street - Legistar 58773  
**Date:** Friday, January 10, 2020 2:27:05 PM

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Dear Jim Verblick,

I have sent the following email to ALRC chair Mike Verveer pertaining to Legistar 58773, the licenses for Canopy nightclub scheduled for the Jan. 15 ALRC meeting. Please distribute it to the rest of the committee members.

Thank you,  
Steve Ohlson  
steve.ohlson@wisc.edu  
416 S Paterson St

**From:** Steve Ohlson <steve.ohlson@wisc.edu>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 10, 2020 2:15 PM  
**To:** Verveer, Michael <district4@cityofmadison.com>  
**Cc:** tlc@mailbag.com <tlc@mailbag.com>  
**Subject:** Canopy nightclub proposal for 924 Williamson Street

Dear Alder Verveer,

I have decided to contact you ahead of the Jan. 15 ALRC meeting as you are one of the only two members who were on the committee in 2009. I do not want my comments to only be received at the last minute by committee members. I will cc Thomas Landgraf and the rest of the committee. My primary intent is to copy to you the email that I sent to my alder, Marsha Rummel, soon after I learned that a new nightclub was proposed for the space previously occupied by Plan B and then Prism nightclubs.

Thank you for coming to the informational meeting Wed. Jan. 8 on the proposed nightclub at 924 Williamson St. The compressed timeline for the assessment of the business by the neighbors and the Marquette Neighborhood Association is quite distressing to a number of us who know that we will be negatively impacted by the presence of yet another nightclub in this location.

I intend to register to speak at the Jan. 15 ALRC meeting. But, I feel I should offer my concerns to you in writing here also. My wife and I am completely opposed to the existence of a 296 person capacity nightclub at 924 Williamson St. There are apartments and homes directly across the street from the building....as close as 80 feet. The initial version of the nightclub as Plan B should never have been approved by the city. Madison now has a chance to correct

the error that it made in 2009. I do not oppose the presence of Canopy nightclub in the Marquette neighborhood. It just can not have a capacity of 296 persons directly adjacent to residential properties. All of East Main Street is a more appropriate location to consider for a business of this type. A socially responsible landlord would have never offered up this property for lease to a business such as this. The low point of the arrival of Plan B to the 900 block of Williamson Street was the nightly crowd of yelling, laughing drunks that poured out onto the street at bar time, interrupting the night time sleep of an ordinary working person.

A few years ago the Frank Productions people made their first proposal for a large music venue on East Washington Ave.....in the 1000 block directly next to Lapham Elementary School. I attended the information session for the neighborhood at Lapham School with the developer and the Frank Productions representatives. The neighborhood very clearly said, "we don't want this next to our homes and elementary school." What did Frank Productions do? They kept looking until they found an appropriate location for their project: now the Sylvee at 25 South Livingston Street! This is exactly what the individuals proposing the Canopy nightclub should do: find an appropriate location. I believe the 924 Williamson Street proposal is a situation where the landlord is just wanting some easy rent money without any concern for how the immediate neighbors are impacted.

Below is the email that I sent to Alder Rummel on 12/27/19, soon after I first saw the Canopy city license applications:

Marsha,

I was quite surprised and disappointed to very recently get information on the planned imminent opening of a nightclub at 924 Williamson St. My wife and I are VERY strongly opposed to an activity of this type with the capacity of 375 people on the 900 block of Williamson St. Furthermore, with the percentage of Williamson St. that is residential properties, a nightclub of this capacity should NOT be located anywhere on Williamson St. The former Star Photo should NEVER have been approved as a location for a large capacity nightclub.

What effect does a business like this have on a residential neighborhood? The Wisco Bar at 852 Williamson St. has 1/4 of the proposed capacity of Canopy nightclub and they have proven themselves to be unable to handle the patio and after-hours crowd noise of their patrons ever since the owners added live music and then later a "beer garden" to their business. This has necessitated repeated contact by myself with the customers, employees, and

owners of the Wisco in addition to multiple contacts with the Madison Police Department. These problems with crowd noise from the Wisco have had a hugely detrimental effect on the quality of life at our nearby home. Compared to now, the earlier time when the infamous C C Riders Motorcycle Club had their clubhouse behind the Wisco Bar at 308 S Paterson St. and before the Alexanders had purchased the Wisco was a period of quiet and calm. Similarly, when Plan B nightclub opened we were treated to endless nights of noise outside our windows of the yelling from crowds of drunks as they poured out of the nightclub onto Williamson St. at bar time.

Is it the goal of the city of Madison to convert Williamson St. into an entertainment corridor like some of the areas near the UW campus? The Wil-Mar neighborhood has successfully been built into a highly regarded, family friendly area after an earlier period of great decline. Businesses that subvert our superb mix of business and residential properties into a Bourbon-St-style entertainment zone destination would do great damage to our neighborhood. Importantly though, I do feel that the Canopy nightclub type of business does have the right to exist. However, such business should be located away from homes and residences. East Washington St. and East Main St. are two corridors that are far more appropriate for this type of business. If you feel that you need to offer your assistance to the promoters of Canopy, I suggest that you encourage to locate their business ventures there.

Yours,  
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