

From: Heidi Wegleitner [<mailto:heidimayree@gmail.com>]

Sent: Monday, March 04, 2013 5:18 PM

To: King, Steve; Rummel, Marsha; Schmidt, Chris; erics@cow.s.org; avandrzejews@wisc.edu; Michael Heifetz; hiwayman@chorus.net; bacantrell@charter.net; melissaberger2@gmail.com; tonyalhn@aol.com; jfinnmore@madison.k12.wi.us; Fruhling, William

Subject: #6-Dayton Square Project - Stop the Loss of Affordable Rental Housing

Dear Honorable Commissioners,

This email is to register my concern with the Dayton Square proposal to demolish three buildings of relatively affordable rental housing downtown. It is my understanding that the rents in the units slated for demolition are in the range of \$550-\$750, which is significantly less than the rents expected at the new development. There are 128 units facing demolition and accordingly, up to 128 families facing homelessness.

Please consider the impact this gentrification will have on the substantial affordable housing shortage and homelessness crisis we are currently experiencing. Since 2010, we have seen a 43% increase in the number of homeless in Dane County. For the first time in memory, the City of Madison CDA is closing the wait list for public housing because it is years long. We have the lowest rental vacancy rates (2% in the Madison area and 1.5% downtown) we've had in 8 years. Our ability to expand housing access to low-income people with housing barriers has been greatly limited by 2011 WI Act 108, which prevents enforcement of local minimum income and arrest and conviction record regulations. Last week I learned that 60 families receiving federal section 8 rent assistance administered by Dane County Housing Authority will lose their rent assistance and face homelessness due to sequestration. A comparable number of Section 8 families served in the City of Madison may be cut off as well. What we cannot afford to do, at this critical juncture, is continue to demolish the limited number of rental units affordable to lower income people (without any commitment to replace them) and continue to increase the number of homeless persons in our community.

I expect there will be significant profits made off this project, but at whose expense? Will the developers include anything in their proposal for replacement units at similar rent levels for the current residents? Will they offer any relocation assistance to the folks who will be displaced and face homelessness? Can the project be scaled back to save some of the units? Please ask these questions and pursue some relief for those who currently live in these buildings.

In November, 2011, the City of Madison recognized Housing as a Human Right <http://madison.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=1775433&GUID=B82C4409-BF96-4361-A1A1-587ED424E4D6>. Your complicity in further net loss of lower cost rental units would contradict the objectives of this resolution. Please use your role to facilitate a better alternative.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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*Health & Human Needs Committee, Long Term Support Committee (Co-Chair),
Homeless Issues Committee (Vice Chair), Human Services Board, Equal Opportunities
Commission*