

16 January 2012

Dear Mayor Soglin, President Cnare and members of the Common Council:

We are excited by James Madison Park Surplus Committee's selection of our proposal for the Collins House at 704 E Gorham St. We look forward to restoring the Collins House to its previous use as a bed and breakfast later this year. Our purchase of the building, land lease, real estate tax, room tax and employment will provide the greatest long-term financial benefit to the City.

I'm writing in response to William White's letter of 13 January 2012. Mr. White makes several inaccurate assertions about our proposal. First, our proposal is legal as based on MGO Sec. 28.08(5)(c) 4. q. and as confirmed by zoning administrator, Matt Tucker. (See his email here: <http://legistar.cityofmadison.com/attachments/31216369-8aa0-4e68-ba86-e3cbae30a000.pdf>)

The zoning ordinance cited by Mr. White does not apply to our proposed use of the Collins House. When the owners of the Leitch Mansion opened their B&B as the Livingston Inn in 1999, the Collins House B&B was operating as a "transient guest lodging house", which is still permitted as a conditional use under the current zoning. Therefore the 500-foot rule as mentioned by Mr. White did not apply then and does not apply now. Our proposal is an allowed use and conforms to the Madison zoning code.

At the time that the RFP closed in November, we had submitted the most detailed and developed proposal for the property. Ours is a professional proposal and documents fully the historic restoration and rehabilitation that the Collins House needs. (A summary of our proposal can be read here: <http://legistar.cityofmadison.com/attachments/0aaf4644-5868-444a-af35-a1e4b6fa3ea3.pdf>, full proposal: <http://legistar.cityofmadison.com/attachments/0fc7d36d-273f-42de-ae99-4bfdfe56c316.pdf>). We are pleased that the JMP Surplus Committee recognize our hard work and trust us with their selection.

The process for disposal of city real property is defined in MGO 8.075. Following MGO 8.075(3)(d)2. the committee defined selection criteria that were used to score the submitted proposals. However MGO 8.075(3)(d)4. states "the Committee may select the bid proposal that it determines to be in the best interests of the City regardless of whether it has the highest point value."

The surplus committee selected our proposal by a 4-2 vote. Comments by the committee members emphasized our commitment to the community, our better developed proposal and overall appropriateness for the neighborhood. The surplus committee had legitimate reasons for selecting our proposal, gave no preferential treatment and ensured that our proposal follows the neighborhood plan. There is no reason for remanding this selection to the JMP Surplus Committee.

Our proposal has a long list of neighborhood supporters. For example, at the last JMP Surplus Committee meeting, more than 20 people registered and testified in support of the Klebba/Waugh proposal whereas the Fant proposal had one.

Lastly, I must correct the assertion about “highest and best use.” Mr. White is referring to the City’s appraisal of the Collins House from July 2011. It states “HIGHEST AND BEST USE: As improved for single family owner occupancy or potentially bed and breakfast use.” (The appraisal can be read here: http://www.cityofmadison.com/planning/pdf/JMP_Appraisals.pdf)

We are looking forward to the City’s finalizing our selection and our moving forward with reopening the Collins House as a B&B.

Sincerely,

Bob Klebba & David Waugh

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