

Dear Room Tax Commission:

My name is Josh Johnson and I'm a local architect and volunteer who works with Heather Sabin on the Wright Design Series and Terrace Town. I'm writing to ask you to please continue to make an important and substantial investment in Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center by funding this essential institution at current levels, adjusted for the shortfall. This is the most equitable solution during these times of financial hardship for all.

When Monona Terrace was finally built after nearly 60 years, the promise to the community was that the facility would be a community and convention center, and today the building operates with three key mandates: To be a catalyst for economic activity, a community gathering place and a tourist destination for the City of Madison, Dane County and the State of Wisconsin.

I've volunteered with Monona Terrace for the past 20 years and I have helped to arrange over 85 (absolutely free) lectures for the Wright Design Series. The Monona Terrace staff and facility has been absolutely essential in our shared mission of providing design education opportunities for people of all ages. We have drawn speakers and visitors from around the country and consistently provided an exceptional and inspirational experience. Through my experience with the American Institute of Architects I have worked with fellow volunteers from around the country to try and replicate this rewarding public design outreach success that we have enjoyed at the Monona Terrace. Frankly, the challenge in other communities is that they do not have a facility and staff that is as dedicated and excellent at the Monona Terrace.

Annually, we are providing free and low cost community programming for nearly 40,000 people and tours of our famous facility designed by renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright to visitors from around the world.

It saddens me that due to COVID-19, Monona Terrace has had to make drastic and unsustainable cuts to their operating budget. And I'm concerned about the potential implications of additional cuts to room tax funding, and that it will impact Monona Terrace's ability to bring tourists and future events to Madison, as well as the building's ability to serve its mandate as an important community gathering place.

Adequately funding Monona Terrace's future is a necessary investment in our local economy and our community. Please continue to fund Monona Terrace at current levels adjusted for the room tax shortfall so it can continue to be an important community gathering place, catalyst for economic activity and a place where tourists want to come to visit.

Sincerely,

Josh Johnson AIA NCARB