

Joseph  
Hoey handout

## What Democracy Looks Like

I can't find the words to adequately express how undemocratic the process the County has followed (or more accurately did not follow) by making an offer to purchase the Messner's site has been.

By choosing to go ahead and make this offer, the County Executive has violated 2015 County Resolution 072 and ignored the process outlined in the City County Homeless Issues Committee Report.

2015 RES-072 –

<https://dane.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=3759676&GUID=1D6B32BF-A47B-4F68-8A4A-8FFF003D397A> –

called for Dane County real estate staff to identify “properties available in the downtown area which meet the criteria specified in the Day Center Report,” and to issue their own report to the County Board by September 1, 2015 outlining “the costs and benefits associated with each property.”

There is no record that any type of comprehensive effort was undertaken to identify available properties in the greater downtown area and the required report was never prepared or delivered to the County Board. The evaluation of costs and benefits should have been used to make a rational, informed decision on where to locate the center. Purchasing the Messner's site without that information is a violation of the County's own resolution and makes a mockery of the idea of rational and transparent public policy decision making.

The City County Homeless Issues Committee's Report underlying this whole effort –

<http://www.forwardlookout.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/FINAL-REPORTtoHHN2-1-13.pdf>

calls for a robust and open siting process, one that involves the neighborhoods of any proposed sites:

In determining a location for the permanent center, adequate notice to the public and affected neighborhood is important, as well as beginning the approval process as early as possible, if necessary for zoning compliance.

### PROCESS FOR SITING

- County real estate staff search
- Consult with local officials to identify potential sites
- Request for Proposals (optional)
- Input from temporary resource center operator
- Public hearing(s) prior to acquisition to get community input on general location or specific sites
- Neighborhood meetings for each prospective site

- Identify location – seek county board approval
- Application for zoning/conditional use if necessary (10 weeks lead time)"

The residents of the Tenney Lapham Neighborhood were not given "adequate notice" nor were we allowed to provide "community input" on either general location or a specific site.

Instead we were told that the County is going to buy this property because it is on a bus line, somewhat near downtown and is for sale. This is the extent of the plan. When we ask questions, we are told that we won't know how the center will operate, what services will be provided, how security will be handled, nor how many people will use the center. We are told we have to wait until a provider is chosen through the RFP process.

You don't purchase property before you have a business plan. It is time to put the purchase of the Messner's site on hold. The public, and the homeless, deserve to have the information that RES-072 called for before a decision is made. It is time to follow the Day Center Report recommendations and include the residents of the neighborhood in the siting process. If you don't, there is a good chance that the neighborhood will never fully welcome the shelter or the people that use it.

I am asking you as a member of the Personnel and Finance Committee, to act responsibly and vote against the resolution authorizing the purchase.

Thanks for your time.

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