

October 14, 2021

David and Malia Huntsman
7077 Applewood Drive

Dear Dane County Zoning & Land Regulation Committee,

We are writing today to voice our opposition to the approval of the proposed conditional use permit to run a daycare out of 7069 Applewood Drive, which is our immediate next door neighbor on the eastern border of our home.

Applewood Hill is a community of neighbors—we have picnics and holiday parties; our kids babysit one another—it is a cherished and rare enclave of personal relationships and old midwestern values. Those of you among the commission who are homeowners yourselves can certainly empathize with our great alarm at the prospect of having a long-time and wonderful neighbor replaced by a business.

A business belongs in commercial zones. Residential zoning exists almost exclusively to provide the assurance that a homeowner's lifestyle is safeguarded to be consistent with that of a suburban community. And while residential zones may be stretched for conditional use, in Applewood's case those conditions should not be permitted. While the committee reviews this application, we hope you will keep the following in mind.

1. It is well-publicized that the Middleton and Madison real estate markets are densely saturated. Home inventory is low and costs are skyrocketing. This business paid \$70,000 over the asking price of the home, squeezing out traditional applicants who would use traditional financing to house their family. Allowing for this kind of conditional use sets a precedent that further exacerbates our housing crisis, keeping commercial vacancies while closing the market to legitimate homeowners.
2. We have two young children and there are three houses across the street from us, all with young children. Together have seen a marked increase in traffic near 8am and 4pm. Our neighborhood has no sidewalks and only one entrance/exit, all of which compounds to additional and unnecessary risk.
3. There is an unusually high volume of stay-at-home parents in our neighborhood, ourselves included. Where a daycare might propose they could bring value and convenience, I would counter that I do not believe customers will actually come from Applewood locally.
4. Applewood has a unique water system that has proven fragile. In the past, we lost potable water for weeks in a scenario that would have shut the daycare down and majorly disrupted its clients. This was a frightening time for the neighborhood; Madison was not prepared to furnish us with water and we had folks questioning whether we would be able to get the system operational again. We are very concerned about the additional strain that this business will have on this system. It's designed for single-family use, but 8 infants/children and 2 caretakers is akin to setting two homes down on one plot. If we run out of water in our well or otherwise overstrain the system, it is clear that there is no contingency plan.
5. On a more personal level, we are really upset at what this may mean for our family life. Another Bright Beginnings facility has engulfed nearly the entire yard with an enormous, unfenced playground. Imagine what it will be like for us to tell our three year old boy that he cannot go and play with the other kids literally next door because, even though it used to be a

house, it's not anymore. We are already combatting social anxiety onset by the pandemic for him. Must we really tell him that our neighbors are not our playmates?

6. Our neighborhood is not a good match for a daycare simply given some of the general requirements set out in Wisconsin Administrative Code. The property abuts a forest where kids could wonder off, and which is lined with poisonous nightshade. The required outdoor play space is required to be fenced, though fencing is controlled through the HOA covenants. The fire hydrants are insufficient for emergencies, instead requiring special water trucks. And the property is literally right next to a water well (although it's admittedly locked). To us, it just does not seem like a good fit for the requested use.

7. Among all complaints and concerns you will hear, I urge you to remember that this business simply has **not** met the burden of proof necessary for the criteria of a CUP, particularly in regards to standard 2. *"The uses, values and enjoyment of other properties in the neighborhood already permitted shall be in no foreseeable manner be substantially impaired or diminished by establishment, maintenance or operation of the proposed conditional use."* Since the daycare has already begun operation (a move of which the legality is still in contestation with the county court) the neighborhood has ample evidence how how harm has already begun. It is your obligation to deny this cup based purely on this standard, if nothing else.

After all this, we hope that you will carefully scrutinize any claims the applicants make to merit the extraordinary circumstances that should be necessary to indefinitely upheave the unique community we enjoy. A business does not stop by and admire your garden or offer to watch your home while you're away. A business does not come to picnics and parties, does not stop by for coffee and stories, does not have kids that age with yours and ride the bus together. Our family is counting on you to preserve our trust in the zoning systems Dane County has in place to secure our ways of life.

Sincerely,
David and Malia Huntsman