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Date: April 5, 2018
To: [Timothy J. Frenzer, Village Manager](#)
From: [John Adler, Director of Community Development](#)
Subject: **2018-P-01 1925 Wilmette Avenue – Additional Materials**

Please find attached materials that were submitted after the March 6, 2018 Plan Commission meeting.

- 1.0 Letter from Alison Williams dated March 6, 2018.
- 2.0 Letter from Sharon Sachse, 235 Ridge Road, #4D, to Maria Urban, dated March 7, 2018 with email response from John Adler dated March 9, 2018.
- 3.0 Letter from Larry Craig, 1938 Schiller Avenue, dated March 15, 2018.
- 4.0 Email from Dave Wisel, Sandy Lane, dated March 29, 2018.

From: [Alison](#)
To: bielinkskib@wilmette.com; [Wolf, Julie](#); [Kurzman, Joel](#); [Plunkett, Senta](#); [Adler, John](#); [Retired Trustees](#); [Dodd, Kathy](#); [Leonard, Stephen M](#); [Sullivan, Dan](#)
Subject: Strong and supported objection to the Proposed development by HODC (by a very close neighbor)
Date: Tuesday, March 06, 2018 7:19:57 PM
Attachments: [Letter to the Board regarding HODC's Legion Hall proposal.docx](#)

To all,

Please read and forward the attached to Homa Ghaemi, Michael Bailey, Michael Taylor, Steven Schwab, Jeffrey Head, Christine Norrick, and Maria Choca Urban.

I appreciate your time and consideration in this matter.

Alison Williams

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

March 6, 2018

To the Wilmette Village Board,

I am a very close neighbor to the proposed HODC development of the Legion Hall property (I could throw a rock and hit the Legion Hall from my driveway). As a liberal democrat with a background in disability services and with family members who would qualify for this housing, I was initially very excited to learn that affordable housing was being proposed for the Legion Hall site. However, when I read HODC's original proposal (subsequently withdrawn, only to be resubmitted as an even less appealing proposal), I became alarmed by the project's specifics.

Before making a judgement, I decided to research affordable housing in general and also HODC's other 100% low income non-senior rental projects. To learn more about affordable housing in general, I turned to HODC director Richard Koenig's doctoral thesis for information. The majority of quotes included in this letter are from Richard Koenig's thesis. Mr. Koenig states in his thesis that "all developers create affordable housing to make money" (p.209) and "developers measure their success by how many units they develop" (p.27). I guess this explains why Mr. Koenig wants to squeeze 44 people onto a single family sized lot.

According to Mr. Koenig's thesis, whether an affordable housing development is successful can be measured by asking some very specific questions:

- 1) Has the development remained financially sound?

The answer to this with regard to HODC's other non-senior 100% low income rental housing is an objective, evidenced, and resounding "no". Ample evidence of this fact is detailed in the public record and in materials submitted to the Board and the Village on March 5th. Mr. Koenig's literature on the HODC website states that rents will cover operating expenses and reserves will be saved for future years. However, in HODC's other 100% low income, non-senior, rental developments this has not been the case. Just two examples of many: in March, 2017 HODC's Brummel building ran out of reserves and they asked Evanston for \$50,000 for necessary repairs, and in their Jackson building Mr. Koenig was quoted in meeting minutes found in the public record saying that rents do not provide a positive cash flow. Mr. Koenig writes in his thesis that "HUD's commitment to affordable rental housing is often questionable based on political leadership" (p.27). With the political climate in flux and federal and state budgets tightening, it is unclear whether in the long run HODC will be able to access the funds it needs to operate Cleland Place over the long term. To address what he would have done if host communities hadn't bailed HODC out financially so often, Mr. Koenig has stated he would have "restructure(ed) debt, (sold) the properties, or not (kept) them affordable." However, Mr. Koenig also insists that Cleland Place should get variances on both underground parking and number of parking

spaces because people who live in affordable housing often do not have cars... Sooooo..... what happens if Mr. Koenig decides down the road (when Cleland Place invariably runs into financial trouble as his other 100% low income, non-senior rental housing developments have done but this time Wilmette does not have access to the funds Evanston receives from the federal government to bail them out) that HODC will not be able to keep Cleland Place operating as affordable housing? Where will future tenants park when they live in a building located on an area of Wilmette Avenue that has no street parking?

2) Has the development been well maintained?

Again, as evidenced in the public record and in written materials previously submitted, the majority of HODC's non-senior, 100% low income rental properties have been riddled with ongoing, expensive maintenance issues which, because of HODC's poor financial picture, have required host communities to step in and foot repair and rehabilitation bills to the tune of many hundreds of thousands of dollars. One of HODC's developments was totally renovated and then had to be completely renovated again only five years later because the building had been completely destroyed by the tenants. Evanston footed the bill for this second renovation that totaled, again, in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Does this show adequate management or maintenance?

3) Have the residents been satisfied with the housing?

According to the public record, again as detailed in written materials previously submitted, the tenants of HODC's Claridge Apartment have been complaining to HODC and to the city of Evanston for many years about the conditions (both in terms of personal safety and in terms of building maintenance) in that building, and have found HODC management often non-responsive to their many concerns. Mr. Koenig has tried to deflect responsibility for the Claridge Apartment by stating that the building was "troubled" when he bought and developed it in 2002 and that it remains troubled due to holdover tenants, but HODC has had sixteen years to improve the situation at Claridge and has failed to do so. What does that say about HODC's tenant screening process or ability to adequately manage a 100% low income, non-senior rental building once it has been developed? Chief Richard Eddington of the Evanston Police wrote a letter to HODC recommending installing security cameras in their Claridge Apartment in the "best interest of the tenants, of HODC, and of the City of Evanston" to "improve overall safety in the building". Mary Poole of the City of Evanston was quoted in the public record as saying "we need to do something to curb this after hour activity". Ms. Poole also wrote of "dealing with community feedback regarding (Claridge Apartment)", and questioned HODC's "tenant selection plan and/or screening process". HODC itself wrote to the City of Evanston asking for help in evicting a tenant who would not answer his door, this after receiving complaint calls about him from neighbors and dealing with multiple police interventions.

According to Mr. Koenig's thesis, affordable housing which truly benefits tenants (and thereby increases tenant satisfaction with their housing) must include "access to basic needs, services, entitlements... transportation.... Providing sufficient space so that the family is not overcrowded" (p. 67)... and provide "quick repairs... (and) security measures" (p. 206). Cleland Place's proposed tiny apartments and

completely inadequate public space surely do not meet the standards set forth in Mr. Koenig's thesis. In addition, HODC's FAQ sheet on their own website states that Evanston Alderman Holmes had to "(talk) with staff and HODC about doing extra screening of the renter applications to be sure that they get people who will be supportive" of a safer neighborhood. Unfortunately, after Alderman Holmes spoke with HODC about beefing up the tenant screening process HODC still allowed a person with felony gun charges to live in one of their buildings, and someone who lived in one of HODC's buildings subsequently shot someone at Old Orchard Mall. These are not old issues, they occurred in 2013 and 2015.

What the answers to these three questions with regard to HODC's previously developed 100% low income, non-senior, rental housing is that they have all been dismal failures by the standards of Mr. Koenig's own doctoral thesis.

- 4) A question Mr. Koenig's thesis should have addressed but didn't is "what impact has the development had on the surrounding neighborhood?". Mr. Koenig explains in his thesis that "although individual case studies document various strategies for combining funding sources and subsidy mechanisms to get affordable housing built, few studies rigorously assess the impact of these efforts on..... neighborhoods" (p.6).

With this in mind I decided to go speak to the neighbors of the Claridge Apartment (which is the most similar property to what HODC would like to build in Wilmette) to find the answer to this question myself.

What I learned upon interviewing the neighbors to the Claridge Apartment was that those I spoke to find living in close proximity to the Claridge Apartment, for many reasons including ongoing drug dealing in the alley behind the building, excessive night noise, frequent visits by emergency services, and anxiety about their own personal safety and property has been a "hassle they would not wish on anyone". In fact the city of Evanston has, for years, discussed categorizing the Claridge Apartment as "a nuisance property". While Mr. Koenig's doctoral thesis specifies that "...once an affordable rental property is completed, exceptional property management is essential" (p.59), neighbors to the Claridge Apartment give HODC's management a "D or an F". Unfortunately, HODC acknowledges that their property management budget has room only for a few property managers who must "float" between all of HODC's developments, briefly visiting each one only about once per week. According to the neighbors of the Claridge Apartment, phone calls to property managers are typically answered by voice mail and sometimes calls can take weeks to be returned or are not returned at all, which is an experience shared by Claridge Apartment tenants. Necessary repairs to the building, requested by neighbors, have taken months or even years to fix.

Richard Koenig's thesis also sheds light on WHY his own 100% low income, non-senior rental properties have been such failures. According to Mr. Koenig in his thesis, "supportive services and appropriate

management are important components that need to be included if affordable housing is to be successful.... Properties with services outperformed those without in terms of vacancy loss, legal fees, and bad debt, all of which are reflections of tenants'.... stability" (p. 63). We have seen that HODC does not provide exceptional, appropriate, or even adequate management of their 100% low income, non-senior rental housing and unfortunately, HODC also neither provides tenants with supportive services nor ensures that tenants will receive needed services elsewhere. Instead, they "link to" services which are located mostly in Skokie and Northfield (reliable public transportation is lacking near the Legion Hall as buses do not run regularly during the day on Wilmette avenue), and these services are not a condition of tenancy. In other words, HODC does not provide services and does not assist or ensure that tenants who need such services receive them. Mary Poole of the City of Evanston has written in the public record that "there needs to be a stronger social service presence at this building (the Claridge Apartment)", and wondered how it would be "possible to have case managers there" as "the tenants do require more support than they are currently receiving".

As Mr. Koenig illustrates in his thesis, while directly providing supportive services is "arguably an important component of many affordable developments, many non-profits are too busy working on the next deal or raising funds to keep the doors open. The issue becomes how to allocate scarce resources. Buildings have to be managed, rents have to be collected and bills have to be paid. The next deal has to be put together. Money has to be raised to pay staff. No one funds nonprofits to increase tenants' quality of life. Without the ability to provide services to tenants that are poorer and struggling, less resource rich developments cannot be expected to overcome other shortfalls" (p. 218). This exactly describes the situation at HODC: a financially lean organization without the budget to pay full-time supportive or management staff at each facility or even to provide necessary maintenance and repairs at their existing buildings.

HODC's poor track record in adequately screening tenants or maintaining and managing their 100% low income, non-senior rental properties shows that their developing similar rental housing here in Wilmette would bring more risk than benefit to our community.

I fully support the idea of affordable housing, even in "my own backyard", if it is a proven model (communities across the nation have, for years, been moving away from 100% low income rental models in favor of mixed income models which better integrate people with low income into their communities), if it is developed responsibly, and if it is built and managed by a developer who has a successful track record of providing quality housing with quality management which enhances a neighborhood instead of detracting from it.

Thank you for considering my thoughts on HODC's proposal in your decision-making process.

Best,

Alison Williams



March 7, 2018

Wilmette Plan Commission
Attn: Maria Choca
1200 Wilmette Avenue
Wilmette, IL 60091

RE: Planned PUD for the American Legion Property

Dear Ms. Choca:

I attended the Plan Commission meeting last evening. I did not speak, but was there until the meeting ended. I understand the Village's goal of including low income housing options throughout the Village. I have two questions:

- Regarding the new apartment building on Greenbay Road, what justification did the Plan Commission use to allow that developer to opt out of providing low income units in that building? I think I read that in lieu of providing low income living space, the developer paid \$80,000 towards the fair housing initiative. Perhaps the property owners who are against a low income housing development of the size and scope of the planned PUD should initiate a "go fund me" website to raise \$80,000 to get the same relief as the developer of the Greenbay Road apartments?
- How many low income units did the Plan Commission require in the new apartment building on Greenleaf near Kashian's?

I look forward to your response. Thank you.

Cordially,

Sharon Sachse
235 Ridge Road, #4D
Wilmette, IL 60091
ssachse.10@gmail.com

From: Adler, John
To: ["ssachse.10@gmail.com"](mailto:ssachse.10@gmail.com)
Subject: Letter to Maria Choca Urban
Date: Friday, March 09, 2018 11:30:00 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)

Hi Ms. Sachse – I am in receipt of your letter to Ms. Urban. I will make sure she receives a copy of the letter but the questions you asked are more appropriately answered by staff.

The Planned Unit Development (PUD) process does not have a requirement for affordable housing. While affordable housing is recognized as a benefit one can provide when seeking zoning relief in PUD approval, there is no requirement that affordable housing be provided. Because of this the developer of 611 Green Bay did not need to be opted out of providing low income units.

The building under construction on Greenleaf is being built meeting all zoning requirements so that development was not required to go before the Plan Commission.

If you have any other questions please do hesitate to contact me.

Regards,

John

John Adler, AICP, LEED AP
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Thursday, March 15, 2018

RECEIVED MAR 20 2018

Wilmette Village Board
Wilmette Village Hall
Wilmette IL 60091

Re: affordable housing

Greetings!

I understand the Village Board will hear a case for an affordable housing development on April 10, 2018. I would like to express my opposition to the plan.

I only learned about this project and meeting from the latest Wilmette Life, so I have only the facts that article articulated. But my objections are two:

1) When you talk about affordable housing, you are either talking about housing that is cheaply made and thus costs less, or you are talking about subsidized housing. I am sure they mean the latter, and I would appreciate it if they would just be a little more straightforward about the nature of the project.

So, if it is subsidized, then it must be taxpayers who are paying toward it. The article mentions that they are seeking state and federal funding. That is like asking your drunk uncle for money. He probably won't turn you down, but he has no business giving you any money in that condition. The state is approaching \$200 billion in debt, while the federal government is over \$20 trillion in debt.

Neither has any intention of paying these debts off. They are content to just waste billions of dollars a year paying interest on these loans. They cannot be trusted anymore to make wise and responsible decisions, particularly when it comes to spending other people's money. Asking them for money is like asking them to use my credit card without asking me if that is how I want to spend my money. They are as complicit in this abuse of power as any politician.

Winning state and federal funding probably shouldn't be difficult, but their wasting of other people's money I find immoral and criminal.

To approve this project means that you are approving the government's total mismanagement of the public's resources. If your credit card is maxed out, you need to start passing on spending opportunities, even though someone may argue that the case is worthy.

2) My second objection relates to a comment the WL attributes to a supporter of the project. It is said that, quoting the article and not a person, "the project would bring needed diversity to Wilmette."

The project purports to be about the elderly and disabled of Wilmette, but it seems the larger intent is to bring more diversity to Wilmette. And so, my question is: why is this diversity needed? Needed for what? Is anybody asking for it? I have lived here since 1975, and I never thought to myself that what we need here is more diversity. Are we somehow diminished as a village without more diversity?

I object to the government and people telling me what I need and then deciding for me to give me what they think I need and then telling me to like it or I am somehow a bad person.

Perhaps it might sound like I am overreacting or seeing more in this than there is, but I have long learned that most change happens slowly. Either it is in the right direction or it is in the wrong direction. And because it happens slowly, even over generations, the changes are minimized, but for those who live long enough, the little changes add up to big changes. And then people wake up and ask, what happened?

So I am opposed to this project, and as opposed as I can be. I hope you will at least consider my objections when you discuss and vote on this project.

Thank you


Larry Craig
1938 Schiller Ave
Wilmette IL 60091
847-251-1324

From: [Dave Wisel](#)
To: [Bielinski, Bob](#); [Dodd, Kathy](#); [Kurzman, Joel](#); leonards@wilmette.com; [Plunkett, Senta](#); [Sullivan, Dan](#); [Wolf, Julie](#); [Adler, John](#)
Subject: Input for HODC Project Review on April 10th
Date: Thursday, March 29, 2018 8:36:39 AM

Along with many of my neighbors, I am opposed to the proposed HODC development. The results of the March 6th Plan Commission meeting regarding the HODC PUD proposal were very disappointing for a number of reasons. I am also concerned about the way the meeting was conducted.

- Two of the Commissioners did not attend even after the meeting was rescheduled from January 16th. This left only five commissioners to make a critical decision that has been in process for several years now.
- At least two of the Commissioners who ultimately voted to approve the PUD are involved in affordable housing as part of their business careers. They probably should have recused themselves from this decision.
- There was no explanation provided as to why the Commission was ultimately willing to approve the PUD despite the extensive variances required. Just because the proposal is for affordable housing doesn't negate the need to adhere to building codes.
- While many residents, both pro and con, were offered the opportunity to comment on the project, the Commissioners asked very few questions about the many concerns raised by a number of speakers.
- There were no questions asked about the significant documentation of concerns that was compiled and provided to the Commissioners prior to the meeting.
- There was no serious concern raised by the Commission that HODC's own real estate appraiser stated that there could be up to a 5% negative impact in property value to surrounding properties. The 5% figure seemed to be pulled out of the air when asked to provide a number instead of the term "no significant reduction in value." Others estimate the impact could be much higher but even a potential 5% decrease in home value is not insignificant to any homeowner.
- In the end, the outcome of the PUD meeting seemed to be predetermined. As soon as the public comments were complete, the Chairperson tried to go immediately to a vote with NO questions from the Commissioners. It seems that the comments and concerns from residents were merely a formality that had no possible impact on the decision.

Now we are asking the Village Board to seriously consider the concerns of the residents who live closest to the proposed project. None of the people who spoke in favor of the project at the PUD meeting live closer than 6/10 of a mile from the project site. While many of them may have been wearing "YIMBY" stickers, this project is closer to my backyard than their backyard.

Most of the people who voiced concerns at the meeting live closest to the site. These homeowners will be impacted the most if this development is allowed to move forward and is not the utopia the supporters believe it will be. HODC's similar projects in both Evanston and Skokie have experienced significant problems that have been well publicized. Their troubling track record cannot be ignored in the decision making for Wilmette.

As I stated in my previous letter, the village's own Affordable Housing Plan states on page 4, **“even in such (multi-family) buildings, it may well be necessary to limit the number of affordable units to, for example, 15% to 20%, because experience elsewhere has shown that, aside from specialized housing for senior citizens and persons with disabilities, a larger percentage of affordable housing units might make the project unsound from both a financial and social perspective”**.

While the Plan Commission chose to ignore this conflict, I hope the Village Board will not.

The approval of the Artis Senior Living project further impacts our neighborhood. Combined with the proposed HODC project, this would turn our neighborhood from the small town bedroom community it has always been into an institutional housing zone to the detriment of our neighborhood and our property values.

We expect the Village to apply the same rigorous criteria it does in the rest of the Village to attract development that **improves** our neighborhood instead of debating exactly how negative the potential impact will be for those closest to this project. The Village Board has a responsibility to the residents not to approve any project that potentially decreases the value of their homes for any reason.

Thank you for your consideration.

Dave Wisel