

From: Sue Abderholden [mailto:sabderholden@namimn.org]
Sent: Thursday, August 13, 2015 5:35 PM
To: #CI-StPaul_Ward4
Subject: Relocating the Diane Ahrens Residence

People Incorporated is seeking approval from the St Paul City Council to relocate their Diane Ahrens Crisis Residence from 1593 Hewitt Avenue to a former convent at 1784 La Crosse Avenue - a property that has been vacant and for sale for more than a year. The move would require a zoning change for the property from R4 to RT2. The change was recommended for approval by city staff and by the Planning Commission on July 10.

Since that meeting, some neighbors have vocalized their opposition to the relocation. They are stating that they are afraid of people with mental illnesses, that they may be violent, and that it could put children at risk. NAMI Minnesota, which is located in your ward, is saddened by these comments and unfounded fears.

Only 4% of the violent crimes in this country are by people who live with a serious mental illness. They are more likely to be victims and not perpetrators. Ironically they are most at risk of violence when they are not being treated. The current location has not had problems with its neighbors.

It is no secret that our city and state needs more mental health service to meet the needs. Crisis homes are an important part of our mental health system. They not only encourage people to seek treatment earlier but they also reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in our jails who are there for nonviolent crimes.

Mental illnesses are extremely common, affecting one in four people. You have many constituents who have a mental illness and who may need this service in the future.

I urge you to vote to allow People Incorporated to relocate the Diane Ahrens Crisis Residence to 1784 La Crosse Avenue. To deny this based on unfounded fears and a zoning classification when the Planning Commission already approved the change is discriminatory. Thank you.

Sue Abderholden, MPH
Executive Director
NAMI Minnesota
800 Transfer Road, Suite 31
St. Paul, MN 55114
651-645-2948 Ext. 105
612-202-3595 Cell Phone
1-888-NAMI-HELPS
www.namihelps.org