



# DANE COUNTY

**Joe Parisi**  
County Executive

May 15, 2014

To: Dane County Board of Supervisors

From: Dane County Executive Joe Parisi *JP*

Re: Day Resource Center

Sub. 1 to Resolution 305 before you this evening is the culmination of years of diligent review, detailed exploration of multiple alternatives, dozens of meetings and careful construction of a public/private partnership to help meet the needs of those facing housing challenges in our community.

Following an exhaustive search in which the county solicited and prospected more than two dozen sites, the potential for 1490 Martin Street was realized. The facility already serves many in the homeless community and by most accounts has been a good neighbor. It's adjacent to a bus line and much closer to the downtown than a previously vetted alternative on the far east side of Madison.

The county retained an architect to inform our decision on what modifications would be needed to the existing building to fulfill our shared objectives of having a day resource center that serves as a one stop shop to helping those who face housing challenges. The result of the architect's work - - with some renovation and opportunity to improve certain "green" features like showers and laundry facilities -- 1490 Martin Street was a viable location to help meet this need.

The Town of Madison Town Chair and other key stakeholders were brought into this conversation months ago. The Town Chair has confirmed he briefed his Public Works Director the day he was first notified - - back in late January or early February.

While recent questions about water, sewer, and transportation are important, it's equally important to remember that these types of questions exist with any building project. Just like any other building project, through focus, creative problem solving, and perhaps most importantly - - a willing attitude - - challenges that arise are addressed.

Upon double and triple checking with architects and experts like plumbers retained to work on this project, we are confident questions about water and sewer are just those, questions with feasible solutions; not obstacles.

Due to the compressed timeframe under which the acquisition and rehabilitation efforts have to occur in order to be open by this winter, answering the normal technical questions that arise during any property purchase is occurring on a parallel track with the acquisition process. In early March, the County's engineering consultant began investigating the water service to the building. In an email from March 5, the plumbing engineer under contract with the County reported that he had discussed the water service with the Town's Public Works Director and with the operator of the Lake Forest Water Cooperative. That report provided an initial determination that the domestic water system in the building could be supplied but that a sprinkler system could not. This initial determination was reinforced yesterday by the President of the Cooperative who indicated that the system would probably be sufficient to handle the additional proposed usage in the absence of a sprinkler system. In the meantime, staff have asked the architect on the project to design a fixture arrangement that will reduce the size of the proposed lateral serving the facility.

The initial study the County received in March also included a code review to determine the necessity of a sprinkler system. This report determined that a sprinkler system would not be required if the facility has a maximum occupancy of 99. The firm that conducted the code review discussed their interpretation with the Town Public Works Director and Building Inspector yesterday. The Building Inspector and the Public Works Director concurred the appropriate design and classification of the building could be below the threshold that would require it to include a sprinkler system in Sect. 3-7-50. The final design, building code study, and occupancy study will be the defining documents in this analysis, and they are currently under development by the architect. If a system is required, the County would discuss next steps which would include steps necessary to install a system or exercising the option not to execute the purchase agreement.

The crux of the issue is this: if we as county policymakers see value in ensuring the permanent day resource center we have discussed for nearly two years is open by next winter, the solution is before you.

Any acquisition will bring with it the same good questions now being asked - - is it big enough? Is it close enough? How big do we need it to be several years from now? How will it impact the neighborhood? Will the local unit of government support it? The last site reviewed for this potential use last fall quickly drew questions, concerns, and opposition - - similar to the county's current experience.

After two years of careful review, no one has come forward with a viable alternative to ensure our county doesn't go another winter without a day resource center.

This isn't a matter that becomes easier with additional resources. This effort wouldn't be smoother if we spent more money or invested more time. The perfect solution will continue to elude and more importantly a growing need left unmet if work is delayed.

Authorizing the acquisition of Martin Street, with protection through certain contingencies in the offer to purchase, is our smartest course to having a first of its kind day resource center open the next time the snow flies.

I ask you to support Sub. 1 to Resolution 305 this evening.

Thank you.