



January 7, 2018

Dear Planning Commission Members,

I have recently been contacted Deb Adamus, Manager of Addiction & Restorative Justice Programs with Lutheran Social Services. She asked if I would reach out to you and the Waukesha Common Council in support of rezoning a parcel of land in our community to service individuals with substance use disorders throughout Waukesha County.

Oh, my gosh ... I did not hesitate. LSS has been a blessing to our community for many years in the fight against substance use. The organization is responsible, caring, and committed to Waukesha county and its citizens. *Please, please, vote yes on rezoning a parcel of land at 2000 W. Bluemound Rd from Manufacturing to Institutional so that a treatment facility can be created there.*

I have been working with the Addiction Resource Council of Waukesha for the past two years facilitating a support group for family members and loved ones close to this issue. In those two years, I have met hundreds of mothers, fathers, other family members and friends whose lives have been turned upside down by this epidemic and I know, first hand, how badly our community needs more resources for those who struggle with substances.

I also know the arguments that some communities use to turn their backs on these people – they talk about choice. They worry about crime. They fear that having a recovery center in their community will somehow devalue the neighborhood. And they do things like refusing to re-zone. I certainly understand those concerns, yet I don't know a kinder way to point out that those same ideas apply to an America many decades past.

- They apply to a time before the US pharmaceutical industry introduced millions of Americans to highly addictive pain medication and weren't forthcoming to the medical community about it. [Drugs, I might add, developed in our own backyard: [see this Freeman series.](#)]
- They come from a time when we thought that we could incarcerate our way out of the problem [Even the UN is rethinking this policy: [see this article.](#)]
- And they come from an era when we knew so little (medically, emotionally, psychologically) about how to treat substance use disorders. [USA Today: Addiction Treatment hard to find even as overdose rates soar: [see this article.](#)]

Today, every leading thinker on the topic of substance use (even the President's recent council on the subject) recommends that we need caring communities to develop and support evidence-based treatment centers. We need you to join them, to understand how important this is and to help lead us out of this crisis.

Please let me know if you'd like to discuss this more in person. I am a Waukesha county resident, the mother of a person in recovery and I have lots of data on the subject I would be happy to forward and share.

Sincerely,

Sharon L. Kleppe  
1015 Dana Lane  
Waukesha, WI 53189