



## Office of the Common Council

Ald. Julia Kerr, District 13

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March 13, 2009

Dear Neighbors:

Earlier today I received a phone call letting me know that Porchlight **will not** be pursuing the acquisition of 1009 Vilas Avenue.

After completing their due diligence, Porchlight learned that the property contains three three-bedroom apartments as opposed to three four-bedroom apartments as they had originally believed. As a result, the building's legal occupancy is nine rather than twelve residents. The terms of their grant funding requires that they provide seven transitional housing spaces leaving them with only two available spaces for permanent residents. They feel that at least four permanent housing units are necessary for success at the site.

I heard from a wide-range of neighbors on this issue and appreciate many people's thoughtful participation, and I was very struck by concerns of some families nearest the building. However, if Porchlight had decided to move forward with this project, they would have had my support.

Many, many thoughts have run through my mind on both 'sides' of this issue, but one comment made to me by a former alder when I was first elected kept recurring to me: "You represent your district, but you serve the city."

I ultimately came to the conclusion that it is in Madison's best interest to provide low-cost housing with services for those who need it. Doing that makes us a healthier, safer, and more just community.

While Porchlight has decided to refocus relocation of this program to other parts of the city, they have expressed an interest in acquiring a building with four two-bedroom units in Greenbush for family housing. Porchlight operates a program called 'Housing First' in conjunction with the Madison Public School District. While I do not yet have detailed knowledge of the program, it is my understanding that the schools refer **families at risk for homelessness** to Porchlight and these apartments would be dedicated to that use.

I have told Porchlight that I am very likely support this program but am reserving final comment until I get fuller details on the properties that they might acquire. The 1009 Vilas Avenue building is not under consideration for this program.

Porchlight has told me that they welcome collaboration with Greenbush neighbors on implementing this program and I will let folks know what the next steps are as soon as I hear more. People interested in talking more to Porchlight about 1009 Vilas or the prospective family housing program should contact Steve directly at 257-2534 or at [schooler@tds.net](mailto:schooler@tds.net).

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Please also feel free to contact me directly if you are interested in my decision-making process related to 1009 Vilas or would like to share any thoughts related to Porchlight's family-oriented housing proposal.

Again, whether we agree or disagree on Porchlight's proposal, I appreciate your involvement in the future of this community.

Sincerely yours,

Julia S. Kerr, Alder  
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260-2661

P.S. Many thanks to Pastor Amanda Stein and the members of Trinity United Methodist for their wonderful hospitality in hosting our two neighborhood meetings.

P.P.S I am also very interested in supporting the reformation of the Greenbush Neighborhood Association and am ready to assist neighbors in any way.