

Public Testimony Given to the Arlington Heights Plan Commission on April 21, 2010

On behalf of the League of Women Voters Arlington Heights-Mount Prospect-Buffalo Grove Area, I wish to thank the Plan Commission for giving us this opportunity to make a public statement of our support for the development of supportive housing for individuals with mental illness.

The North/Northwest Suburban Task Force on Supportive Housing for Individuals with Mental Illness and its partners, Daveri Development Group and Thresholds, propose the development of a permanent, supportive, independent housing apartment building at 120 E. Boeger in Arlington Heights. The League of Women Voters urges the Village of Arlington Heights to support that effort.

In a previous letter to Mayor Mulder, the League addressed the need for housing that is both affordable and connected with supportive professional services. We also expressed our concern that the need for such housing far outweighs the supply.

The League of Women Voters' position on this issue is two-fold:

- The League supports a comprehensive and coordinated system of treatment and rehabilitation services for mentally ill adults and children.
- The League advocates that local governments should provide in their zoning ordinances for residential programs for mentally ill persons.

(The League's entire position can be found at <http://www.lwvil.org/mentalhealth.asp> .)

When a community applies for and accepts community development block grants, as Arlington Heights has done over the years, that community becomes obliged to address the housing needs of its residents. The League congratulates the Village of Arlington Heights for its efforts to begin meeting this obligation by working with Northwest Community Hospital and its program for those individuals needing a more institutionalized housing setting. But tragedy occurs when those who do not need institutional care are forced to endure the constrictions of such care as their only option. Surely the Village itself loses when these individuals are denied the opportunity for lives as independent, productive members of this community.

By working with The Task Force and its partners, the Village of Arlington Heights can take the first steps toward meeting the need for supportive, independent housing for individuals with mental illness. The Village can continue its efforts to meet the various housing needs of its residents as required under the Housing and Community Development Act, while becoming an example to neighboring communities on how to address the needs of their residents. In the end, the Village of Arlington Heights itself will benefit by offering housing that lets some of its residents start their new lives as independent, productive members of the community.

Thank you again for this opportunity to express our concerns and beliefs,

Judith Royal, Vice-President and Spokesperson for

League of Women Voters Arlington Heights-Mount Prospect-Buffalo Grove Area

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