

12/2/2024

Dear Members of the Appeal Board,

I, Hassan Sharif, owner of Tonic Home Care LLC, respectfully submit this appeal requesting a special exception to operate an Adult Family Home (AFH) within 2,500 feet of another AFH in the neighborhood. We recognize and regret that we were not initially aware of this regulation, which we only learned of after the Department of Planning informed us. Prior to this, we were provided with a list of licensing requirements by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (WI DHS) to operate an AFH, but the 2500-foot restriction was never mentioned.

We respectfully request the Appeal Board's understanding of this situation and present the following grounds for our appeal:

#### 1. Unawareness of the 2500-Foot Regulation

When we began the process of licensing Tonic Home Care LLC, the WI DHS provided us with the necessary guidelines and requirements for opening an Adult Family Home in Wisconsin. However, the regulation concerning a 2500-foot distance from another AFH was not mentioned in the documents we received. Furthermore, it is important to note that many surrounding municipalities, including Appleton, WI, do not enforce this 2500-foot regulation. This inconsistency has created ambiguity in the enforcement of this statute. Some Adult Family Homes (AFHs) are even licensed exclusively by Managed Care Organizations (MCOs), and therefore do not appear in the WI DHS database. As a result, we were not aware that such a regulation existed, which led to an honest mistake.

#### 2. EMS and 911 Concerns

We understand the city and neighbors' concerns regarding potential pressure on the EMS system and the possibility of 911 calls from the AFH. However, we want to assure the City that these concerns are unfounded. Our AFH operates as a small, private residential care home with a maximum of 2-3 residents. This is not a nursing home or Commercial Residential Building Service (CRBS) housing 9 or more clients. As such, we can carefully filter the clients we serve and ensure that only individuals who are a suitable fit for this setting are admitted.

For example, we will not admit clients with complex medical needs, those who may be prone to elopement, or those with a criminal background. Additionally, 24/7 trained staff will be present to provide supervision and support, ensuring the safety of the residents and minimizing any potential emergency situations. To further enhance the stability of our operations, we will also reserve one of the three beds for local respite care-givers to provide temporary relief for family caregivers, helping to prevent caregiver burnout.

#### 3. Benefits to the City of Kaukauna

We firmly believe that granting this special exception will benefit the City of Kaukauna in several important ways:

- **A Home-Like Environment for Seniors:** Our AFH will offer a warm, family-oriented environment for 2-3 seniors who need assistance with daily living. The care we provide is personalized, and unlike larger facilities, we are able to meet the individual needs of our residents in a more intimate, tailored setting.
- **Alignment with WI DHS Guidelines:** The WI DHS advocates that seniors be housed in residential neighborhoods so that they can enjoy access to community services such as parks, libraries, and other public amenities. Our AFH aligns perfectly with this approach, encouraging social interaction and community integration for our residents.
- **Job Creation:** Our AFH will create local employment opportunities, including positions for up to six caregivers, administrative support, and auxiliary staff such as those responsible

for meal preparation and shopping at local businesses.

- **Relieving Healthcare System Pressure:** By providing an alternative to long-term hospital stays, our AFH will help reduce the burden on local healthcare facilities and taxpayers. We provide a more cost-effective way of caring for the elderly while keeping them out of costly hospitals.
- **Residential Stability for Seniors:** Many elderly individuals struggle to live independently and often experience social isolation. Our AFH offers a safe, stable environment where elderly individuals can receive the care they need while maintaining their dignity and independence.
- **Volunteerism and Community Integration:** AFHs like ours often attract local volunteers who interact with residents, enriching both the lives of seniors and the broader community. These connections help foster a spirit of compassion and care throughout the neighborhood and the city at large.

#### 4. Personal Motivation

I started Tonic Home Care LLC after experiencing firsthand the challenges of caring for my father, who developed early-onset dementia in 2020. This experience highlighted the importance of personalized, compassionate care for elderly individuals and motivated me to open an AFH in our community. I fully understand the struggles families face when caring for aging loved ones, and I am committed to offering the same high level of care and support to other families in Kaukauna.

#### 5. Significant Investment in the Facility

To ensure that Tonic Home Care LLC meets all necessary requirements, we have invested over \$30,000 in renovating and preparing the home for the needs of our clients. This investment includes modifying the physical structure to accommodate the care of elderly individuals, as well as furnishing the home to create a comfortable and safe living environment.

#### 6. Apology for Oversight

We sincerely apologize for not being aware of the 2500-foot regulation until the Planning Department brought it to our attention. This was an honest mistake, and we assure the Board that we did not intentionally ignore any local laws. We are fully committed to complying with all local regulations and to being a responsible business in Kaukauna.

#### 7. Commitment to Being a Positive Community Asset

Tonic Home Care LLC is dedicated to being a positive addition to the Kaukauna community. We are committed to providing high-quality care for our residents, employing local workers, and contributing to the social and economic well-being of the city. We are confident that our AFH will be a valuable resource for elderly individuals and their families in Kaukauna.

#### Conclusion

We respectfully request that the Zoning Board of Appeals approve our request for a special exception to operate within the 2,500-foot radius of another Adult Family Home. We believe that granting this exception will benefit the city in terms of providing quality care, job creation, healthcare savings, and community integration. We understand the concerns that have been raised and are committed to addressing them responsibly. We ask for your understanding and support as we seek to provide essential services to our aging community members.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Hassan Sharif

Tonic Home Care LLC

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Signature:

