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FOR INFORMATION CALL

March 23, 2007

Ald. Robert J. Bauman
286-2886

Order On West Samaria Facility Preserves Status Quo, Enables County To Continue Shirking Its Responsibility

The unanimous vote yesterday by the city Board of Zoning Appeals to uphold an order to close the West Samaria rooming house has the effect of preserving the “deplorable” status quo, Ald. Robert J. Bauman said today.

The BOZA vote Thursday to uphold the Department of Neighborhood Services order requiring West Samaria to vacate the premises at 2713 W. Richardson Pl. because recent events, including the death of Joseph Droese in January, violated its plan of operation, includes a provision staying the enforcement of the DNS order and allowing Tri Corp Housing, Inc., the owner and operator of West Samaria, to stay open indefinitely provided it amends its plan of operation and adopts several reporting requirements.

“The problem with BOZA’s action is that West Samaria has repeatedly demonstrated that they are unwilling or unable to provide quality care to the mentally disabled residents who live there,” Ald. Bauman said. “Over the years they have repeatedly promised to do a better job yet nothing improves. The BOZA action last night essentially permits West Samaria to continue business as usual once they have amended some documents and agree to submit reports. But there is still no accountability. There are no consequences if West Samaria fails to improve.”

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BOZA Action/ADD ONE

The alderman said it was also apparent from last night's hearing before BOZA that Milwaukee County does not know what goes on at West Samaria despite the fact that most of the facility's residents are under the care of the county's Division of Behavioral Services.

"Milwaukee County officials from Scott Walker on down have their head stuck in the sand. The residents of West Samaria are Milwaukee County clients. Milwaukee County is ultimately responsible for their care and treatment. Unfortunately Scott Walker and Milwaukee County have abdicated their responsibility," said Ald. Bauman, whose 4th Aldermanic District includes the West Samaria facility.

"I once again call upon Scott Walker to step up to the plate and immediately act to assume ownership and control of West Samaria," he said, adding: "Someone needs to be accountable for what goes on at West Samaria. It should be Milwaukee County."

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