

SUMMARY

Royal Capital Group is proposing a 200+ unit housing development in Milwaukee. However, their track record managing The Harmony Apartments in Madison, WI raises significant red flags. A review of hundreds of documents obtained via open records requests reveals a **consistent and egregious pattern of public safety threats, neglected maintenance, fire and health code violations, and open hostility or non-responsiveness to city officials.**

Most alarmingly, **two homicides occurred at The Harmony within four months of each other in 2023.** These were not isolated incidents, but the culmination of **years of inaction**, failed security upgrades, and repeated tenant and police complaints (FLAT 3 – Evidence of Concerns).

I. PUBLIC SAFETY FAILURES AND POLICE RESOURCE STRAIN

“This is the second homicide at The Harmony in less than four months.” — ACA Zilavy (FLAT 3 – Evidence of Concerns)

“We are nearing a tipping point... the City will be forced to consider legal action.” — ACA Zilavy (FLAT 3 – Evidence of Concerns)

“MPD has responded to The Harmony over 20 times in a 3-month period.” — MPD South District, December 2024 (4-4-2025 Evidence of Concerns)

Police reports and internal city correspondence reveal a **pattern of chronic violent crime**, including:

- Shots fired incidents and domestic violence arrests
- Repeated calls for trespassing, armed disturbances, and mental health crises
- Ongoing loitering, open drug use, and unresolved lighting and security failures (Police Report Summary)

Despite repeated MPD requests for improvements, the developer failed to act in a timely or meaningful way (4-4-2025 Evidence of Concerns).

II. VIOLATIONS OF BUILDING, FIRE, AND HEALTH CODES

City inspection records and code enforcement notices document:

- **Blocked fire exits, non-functional fire panels, and disabled smoke detectors** (4-4-2025 Evidence of Concerns)
- Trash accumulation, mold outbreaks, and lack of hot water or heat in multiple units (Police Report Summary)
- Pest infestations, broken elevators, and unsecured doors (FLAT 2 – Evidence of Concerns)

One inspector stated:

“Even after citation and extension, still not done. Please prosecute.” — (Police Report Summary)

Another inspector noted:

“The management tends to make excuses more than producing results.” — (Police Report Summary)

These violations were not addressed proactively — instead, the City had to pursue **reinspections, court citations, and added fines to the tax roll** just to secure basic compliance (Code Enforcement Worksheets & Generic Citations).

III. FAILURE TO COOPERATE WITH CITY OFFICIALS

Emails show Royal Capital repeatedly **evaded, delayed, or refused cooperation** with City staff:

“We’ve asked repeatedly for your team to send us repair timelines... we are now formally requesting this under ordinance authority.” — ACA Zilavy (4-4-2025 Evidence of Concerns)

“Residents continue to report broken security doors, hallway lights out, and rodent sightings.” — Alder Lemmer (4-4-2025 Evidence of Concerns)

In other correspondence, management dismissed concerns outright:

“We’re busy and can’t respond to every small issue in real-time.” — Royal Capital representative (FLAT 1 – Evidence of Concerns)

This attitude was consistent across all communication threads reviewed — not just delays, but a clear **pattern of minimizing issues, ignoring inspection deadlines, and leaving City staff without answers or follow-up** (11-8-2023 Evidence of Patterns).

IV. ABSENCE OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT OR RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT

- No regular tenant meetings, community engagement, or youth programming existed until the City demanded it (FLAT 3 – Evidence of Concerns)
- Residents reported **unreachable emergency contacts**, unanswered voicemails, and unresolved maintenance requests
- One tenant, with two children, reported:

“Still no heat in our unit. I’ve called maintenance three times. Nothing. This is inhumane.” — (4-4-2025 Evidence of Concerns)

City staff had to coordinate basic resident communications themselves — just to keep families updated on delays and repairs that should have been handled internally (FLAT 2 – Evidence of Concerns).

V. MILWAUKEE CANNOT ABSORB THIS BURDEN

Milwaukee’s public safety and inspection departments are already overstretched. If this project is approved:

- MPD will face **the same chronic service calls, armed threats, and loitering issues** seen at The Harmony (Police Report Summary)
- DNS will be forced to issue citation after citation, tracking down an **unresponsive ownership group** that does not comply until penalized
- The City Attorney’s Office will have to dedicate staff to enforcement, reinspection coordination, and — eventually — litigation

These burdens are not hypothetical. Madison’s city staff spent **years** attempting to get this property into compliance, culminating in:

“Legal action that would potentially take control of the property out of Royal Capital’s hands.”
— ACA Zilavy (FLAT 3 – Evidence of Concerns)

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

Royal Capital Group has failed to maintain safe, sanitary, and law-abiding housing at The Harmony. Their track record is marred by violence, decay, and legal noncompliance. They have ignored tenants, rebuffed city oversight, and delayed action until forced to move — if at all.

Milwaukee cannot afford to import a known liability.

We strongly urge the Zoning, Neighborhoods & Development Committee to **reject this proposal** and prevent Royal Capital from expanding its footprint in our city. The risk to residents, city staff, and public safety is simply too high — and the record is already written.