

Open Letter to the Public Officials of the City of Rockford

Re: Proposed Abortion Clinic at 4236 Maray Drive

We the undersigned business owners in the vicinity of 4236 Maray Drive demand the city council immediately vote to amend the C-2 Limited Commercial District zoning classification to explicitly exclude abortion clinics. 4236 Maray Drive is the proposed location of a clinic with the purpose of performing abortions.

4236 Maray Drive is currently zoned C-2 Limited Commercial District, which does not allow for “undue traffic congestion” or “detrimental impacts on neighboring properties.” This alone should have prevented the new clinic owners from attempting to establish an abortion clinic in our neighborhood. Since this has not happened, we demand that the city council amend the C-2 Limited Commercial District zone to explicitly exclude abortion clinics.

Our primary reasons for making this demand are as follows:

- 1) Abortion clinics come with protesters, which will have significant detrimental impacts on our businesses. There will be almost daily protests in front of the clinic – signs, bullhorns, graphic images, and crowds of people – that could scare away potential customers.
- 2) Dennis Christensen, the owner of the building, formerly operated the Northern Illinois Women Center in Rockford. This abortion clinic was shut down by the IL Department of Public Health over ten years ago for several health and sanitation violations, creating a vacant property for several years which the city later converted into a police district station. Buyers are reluctant to purchase property owned by a former abortion clinic site, creating more likelihood for the property lying vacant and uncared for after an abortion clinic closes.

At a recent meeting, the City Administrator, Todd Cagnoni, said that any alderman could make the proposal to amend the C-2 Limited Commercial District zone to explicitly exclude abortion clinics, and that the city council could then vote on the measure. We demand that one of the alderman make this proposal and the city council vote to make the zoning amendment.

In presenting this demand, we take no position regarding the morality of abortion. We simply want to protect our businesses.

Please make this zoning change immediately and help us continue to serve residents of the City of Rockford.

Thank you.

Signed: