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A Better Mt. Pleasant: Reneges on agreement to pay relocation benefits for Foxconn

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"Gives handicapped father of four 30 days to get out – now fears becoming homeless"

MT. PLEASANT, WI SEPTEMBER 27, 2018 – Village resident, Sean McFarlane was notified this week by the Village of Mt. Pleasant, that he and his four children have approximately thirty days to vacate a temporary residence which was provided to them when they were displaced by the Foxconn development. McFarlane was also told the village will not pay him $22,000 in relocation benefits they agreed to pay in June.

McFarlane's rented home was purchased for the Foxconn development in April. As a tenant of that residence, he and his children were eligible for a "displaced person" benefit under Wisconsin law – which the village initially attempted to deny.

In late June, McFarlane signed a relocation assistance package with the village which provided him with a relocation benefit of $22,080 to cover the cost of moving expenses and increased rent for four years.

Due to the village's delay in providing a relocation assistance package to McFarlane, they agreed to move him and his children to a temporary home and pay his moving fees. An amputee, McFarlane must use a wheelchair. The village promised to make the temporary house wheelchair accessible while his new residence was being prepared. McFarlane planned to use his relocation benefits to pay for significant repairs and accessibility improvements.

As requested, McFarlane notified the village he had entered into a lease for his new residence, making him eligible for the disbursement of relocation benefits. He left several messages, receiving a voicemail message on Wednesday saying that no benefits would be extended to him and he and his children had thirty days to vacate the temporary residence.

The Village of Mt. Pleasant never made McFarlane's temporary home wheelchair accessible as promised, and the home has no heat. Village officials promised him he and his children could stay until his new residence was ready – a promise made to other residents and then reneged.

With so little time left before eviction, and no funds to fix and prepare for his specific mobility needs, McFarlane fears he and his children will become homeless.

On the heels of a Village Board meeting just this week when a Mt. Pleasant village official was recorded describing concerned residents as "a bunch of assholes," the contempt and callous behavior of local leaders has become wholly unacceptable.

The primary responsibility of village officials is to the people they represent. All village residents deserve to be treated with compassion and respect. The village must honor its promises and use its authority to help our community prepare for the future – not punish the very people who are sacrificing their homes to make the Foxconn development a reality.