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Madison’s Plan Commission passes vote; ending Fast Forward Skate Center

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MADISON ROLLER RINKS

The city of Madison’s Plan Commission voted Monday night on a proposal to replace the Fast Forward Skate Center with a four-story, 70-unit housing project.

By Colton Molesky

Updated: 19 hours ago

MADISON, Wis. (WMTV) - The city of Madison’s Plan Commission voted Monday night on a proposal to replace the Fast Forward Skate Center with a four-story, 70-unit housing project, passing the plan on a unanimous vote. The prospect of losing Fast Forward is sad for a long-time employee, but he says he is working to ensure it is not the end of roller rinks in Madison.

“Losing this is going to hit a lot of people hard,” said the rink’s operations manager Justin Alling. “The closest skating rink the last 15 years has been Monroe and Watertown.”

Alling started working at the rink in 1998, just eight years after the center opened. Now, Lincoln Avenue Capital is proposing a plan to put in affordable housing into the location.

“It also has a small amount of office and classroom space,” said planner for the city of Madison Planning Division, Colin Punt. “It’ll be missed; there’s a hope that there will be a new community space that can grow as part of this proposal.”

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Following the passing vote from the Plan Commission, Punt says permits and paperwork to demolish the current building and begin the new one will need to be gathered and brought before city staff for approval. Alling says he is already working to open another roller rink, Mad Town Skate, as the city’s only roller rink faces demolition. The loyal employee says from fundraisers to roller derbies to roller hockey, the rink played a vital role in the community and hopes to preserve that legacy in a new location.

“It definitely hits hard; there was definitely a lot of potential that was missed here,” said Alling. “You know, we wanna keep the roller hockey going, we want to keep the roller skating going, we wanna do something that’s going to be open seven days a week, there’s no reason why we can’t have a roller skating rink in the area.”

Lincoln Avenue Capital announced during Monday night’s meeting it does not plan to begin construction until spring of 2023. The company added the rink will remain open until construction begins.

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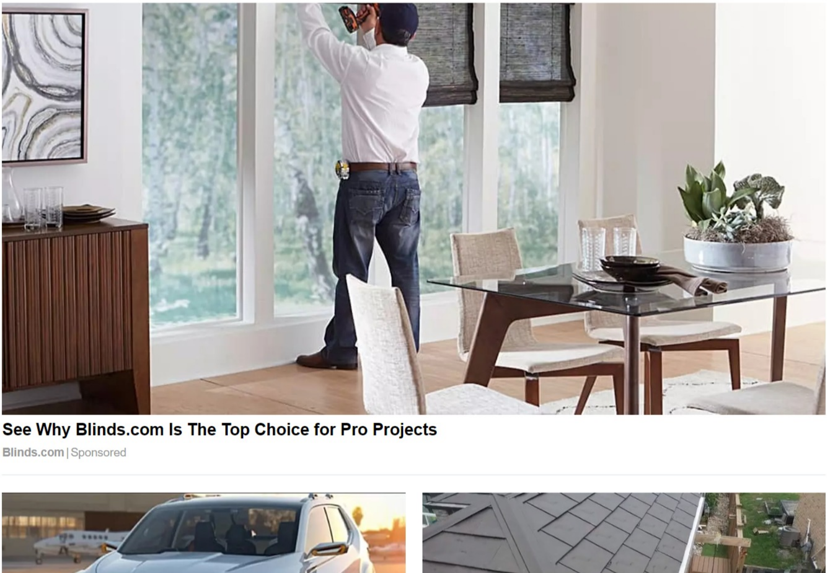

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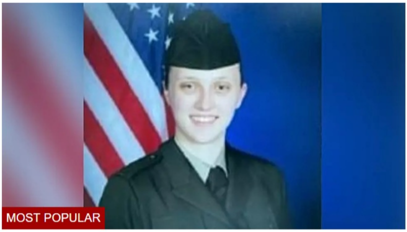
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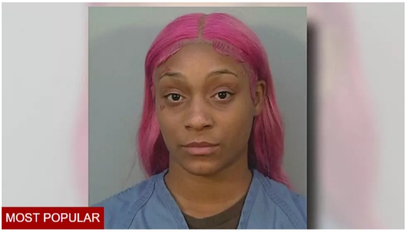
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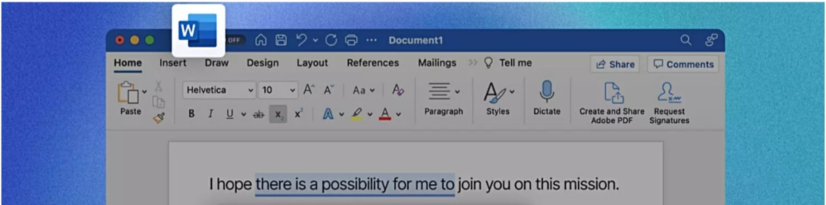
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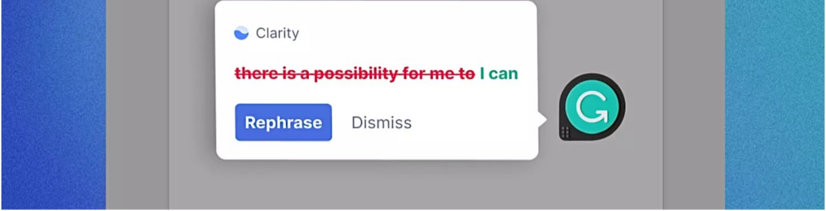

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