

Patch's bias is showing in article about transition housing for registrants.

written by Sandy | January 2, 2023



By Sandy . . . It has been a while since anything significant crossed my desk concerning the situation in Joliet where the mayor is doing his best – or worst – to close down an apartment building designed as reentry housing for men with sexual crime convictions. [After losing round one](#) by way of a federal ruling, Mayor Bob O'Dekirk launched round two: the city bought a lot with a vacant house a block away from the [NewDay Apartments](#), the home of the registrants, with the plan to demolish the home and build a park/playground there – projected to be functional in June, 2023 – which would place the residents of the apartment building [out of compliance with state law](#).

City council approved the plan with no grandfather clause included.

That was five months ago, and a flurry of new publicity has

now been released about the progress of the project.

According to the local **Patch**, the house at the newly purchased property has been demolished. It is now being referred to as a “fire-damaged” building, which I find curious. I read every word printed at the time the plan was being hatched, including all of the **Patch** articles, and I watched and listened to the city council meeting where the plan was officially presented and approved. I don’t recall the home on the property being



described as fire-damaged; it was only described as vacant. A photograph pulled from a real estate site some months ago shows the house fully from the front and one side, and no fire damage is discernable. I cannot find any reference to the house being “fire-damaged” except in this most recent **Patch** article. If it was “fire-damaged” when the city of Joliet bought it on August 12, 2021, for \$83,000.00, when did it become that way? And how?

Patch Publications can also take credit for using the name “Pedophile Palace” to identify the apartment building. Anyone who has read [my recent criticism](#) of Fox News and Tucker Carlson regarding the use of that word knows how I feel about it. Seldom fully understood, almost always misused, and often misspelled, pedophilia requires a qualified physician’s diagnosis before one can accurately be labeled a pedophile. And yet some editor in Illinois decided that **Patch** would get “cutesy” with headlines and use “Pedophile Palace.”

After a huge header starting with the words, **Patch** places the blame for the name on someone else with this sub-heading:

“Joliet’s so-called ‘Pedophile Palace’ faces being closed in 2023 once the city of Joliet builds a new children’s playground in the spring.” In fact, in a June 24 article, they credit Jim Latham, a politician and unsuccessful candidate for state representative in Illinois’ 86th district, with coining the phrase, probably borrowed from a similar phrase, “Pedophile Island,” in another case.

I cannot find the words being used in any publication other than *Patch*. I searched Joliet’s primary local newspaper, the *Herald-News*, and the words were not found. I searched the Joliet *Times Weekly*. Nothing. I even searched the *Chicago Tribune*. Nothing. Jim Latham may have used the words first, but it looks as though if anyone is “so-calling” the NewDay Apartments “Pedophile Palace” and keeping that phrase in the public eye, it is *Patch*.

The overall bias of the piece is clear. At every opportunity pejorative terms are used. On at least seven occasions the term “sexual predator” or “child sex offender” is used when “man,” “apartment resident,” or “registrant” would have served as well or better. Additionally, the piece totally fails to do what all decent news pieces do: address both sides of a controversial issue. There is not even a hint of the scientific evidence and studies supporting the efficacy and benefit to public safety of reentry support for those who have been incarcerated for a sexual crime conviction, and for an article appearing in the “Crime and Safety” section, that is inexcusable.

Patch Publications in Illinois are clearly in the camp of those who want the NewDay apartment residents gone, and that is their right. It is also their right to print editorials making that position clear, even though their stance is the opposite of what has been shown to best serve public safety. But when they print not editorials but purported news articles using inflammatory terminology as “click-bait,” when they

publicize the pictures and criminal records of men who are working to overcome the faults of their pasts, when they feature rhetoric and accusations for which there is not a shred of evidence – “They’re. . . making having new victims even easier” – and when they fail to include any of the plethora of evidence that does exist on the subject, then they have crossed lines that no reputable journalistic medium should cross.

A request to the Patch editor and author of the articles for a comment or response went unanswered.