

Sent: Friday, April 30, 2021 9:39 AM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Public Comment on Planning Commission Discuss of Freedom House

Hello,

I would like to submit my comment for the public record. My comment is that I hope the city of St. Paul and the Planning Commission continue to try to ameliorate the situation for the distressed business owners, but also continue to make the effort to house those experiencing homelessness. These are our neighbors, and many are experiencing life altering crises. Planning Commissioner Stephen Moore made a great comment in the public hearing regarding retaining empathy when we discuss the issues we're trying to address. Our neighbors experiencing homelessness need our help.

For the record, I live in Summit Hill at 958 Linwood Ave

Thank you,

Tommy Fitzgerald

From: Brent Frederick <brent@jesterconcepts.com>

Sent: Friday, April 30, 2021 10:00 AM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Fwd: City of Saint Paul Meeting & The Parlour Restaurant

Hi Mr. Dermody, thank you for the time today and allowing me to be apart of the conversation. Here is the detailed log from the general manager at our Parlour St Paul Location located across the street from the freedom house. We are at 267 7th St. W, St. Paul, MN.

I would like to add that the businesses are happy to help and support any way possible but there is zero accountability for the people at the freedom house. Listening to Commissioner Moore's comment I'm really struggling to find where there is empathy happening at the freedom house. There is a lack of oversight, no accommodations, no services or support that seem to be embraced. I'm saddened by his comments that we are looking at profits over people. It doesn't have to be one or the other. There can be a balance, and as a commissioner, I would urge all of you to look at all members of the community and not just those that are mentally ill. Unleashing them into a neighborhood without support is fairly reckless and irresponsible. What is the primary goal here? If it's to help people, I would put forth that is not currently being achieved given the complaints from the businesses and neighborhood. Isn't there a larger responsibility here? On top of that, you would think commissioners would want businesses to thrive and for neighborhoods to feel safe. Neither of those are happening currently. You are sacrificing the livelihood of businesses and their employees that rely on the business to do well for them to make a

living. You are also sacrificing the neighborhoods right to quiet enjoyment of life just to push forth an agenda. I think this is very short sighted and not only does it not help the mentally ill that we all wish to help, you stagnate the economic growth in that neighborhood which negatively affects the city in the long run. No one is saying that there is not a need. I just do not think this was thought through with everyone's opinions taken into consideration.

In the email below, you will see the general managers comments in what we have seen in the last 4 months and how our employees have been threatened and our businesses harmed.

Thanks,

Brent Frederick

Owner

Jester Concepts

m: 612.387.1613

a: 730 N. Washington Ave. Suite 231, Minneapolis, MN 55401

w: jesterconcepts.com **e:** brent@jesterconcepts.com



JESTER CONCEPTS RESTAURANT GROUP | 730 WASHINGTON AVENUE N #231 MINNEAPOLIS MN, 55401

Borough

Parlour

MONELLO

CONSTANTINE

P.S. STEAK

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Andrea Bollinger** <andrea@parlourbar.com>

Date: Wed, Apr 28, 2021 at 3:54 PM

Subject: Re: City of Saint Paul Meeting & The Parlour Restaurant

To: Brent Frederick <brent@jesterconcepts.com>

Cc: Mike DeCamp <mike@jesterconcepts.com>

Good Afternoon,

As requested, here is a log of issues we have encountered at Parlour St. Paul since the Freedom House has been open;

*I did a thorough search of the manager log and went through management group text conversations about incidents that have occurred to be sure no larger issues were missed.

01.22.2021

A man entered the restaurant and told the host he needed to use the restroom before he got a table. After over 20 minutes had passed, the host brought it to the attention of management as he seemed a bit "off" and had a large bag with him. When it was determined that he had been in the restroom the entire time, the manager on duty knocked on the restroom door to make sure there wasn't an issue. He became agitated and locked himself in the stall of the restroom. The manager on duty held the door open and informed him that he would have to leave. He came out of the stall, walked to the sink and began to continue washing himself in the sink. He was asked to vacate the premises and not to return. He became very agitated and confrontational with the manager and had to be escorted to the door while spewing profanities at the manager. Several weeks later, he returned and was asking guests on the sidewalk patio for money. He was asked to leave and was informed the STPD would be notified if he did not vacate immediately. The manager stood outside, apologized to guests and waited for him to walk away, once again, he was confrontational and used vulgar language in front of guests.

02.01.2021

Our Sous Chef was delivering ketchup to our food truck at Bad Weather. She was stopped at the intersection of West 7th, across the street from the Freedom House waiting for the light to turn green when someone busted out the back window of her SUV and ran in the direction of the Freedom House. She reported the incident to St. Paul Police with a description of the perpetrator. There was no further communication from the police department.

02.02.2021

The following incident occurred at the bridal shop next door to us and was brought to our attention by a guest at the restaurant the evening it was reported. It seemed as if the shop may have been broken into days before it was noticed, according to the owner;

The door of My Darling Bridal was pried open and the lock and door frame were broken. We notified the owner who had just returned to town after visiting relatives for the weekend. He arrived shortly after, called STPD and once it had been established that no one was inside he entered. The office had been vandalized, food they had on the premises was consumed and it looked as if people had been sleeping

there. While the owner was assessing the damages, a man entered with several bags and some groceries as if he was expecting to continue staying there.

02.15.2021

A man entered the vestibule of the restaurant with a couple of large bags. He proceeded to begin removing items from one of the bags he had with him. He sat on the floor in our entryway and covered himself with a blanket as if he was setting up to sleep there. The manager on duty asked him to leave and informed him he wasn't allowed to stay in the vestibule. It took him several minutes to gather his things but he finally left without issue.

03.16.2021

We had 2 women come into the restaurant and attempt to order multiple shots of vodka. As we do not serve guests in this manner, the server explained to them that we serve one shot at a time. They came in at 4:15 in the evening and sat at a table for over an hour. The server brought them their check and they seemed to wait until she was out of sight and walked out on their tab. The manager on duty caught sight of them going into the Freedom House where they met two men and proceeded to walk in the direction of Tom Reid's. The St. Paul Police were called, they dispatched 2 uniformed officers that issued a no trespass against the women.

04.05.2021

We had a guest come in and give false contact information at the host desk (we know this because we attempted to call the number he gave after he walked out on his tab). He said he was waiting for a couple of friends and was on his phone most of the time he was in. He proceeded to eat and have a couple of cocktails. He told the server he was going to go outside to flag down his friends and never returned. He did not pay his tab. St. Paul Police were notified and a no trespass was issued. He was seen later that week sitting at the picnic table outside the Freedom House by the server that waited on him.

04.10.2021

When taking out the garbage and recycling at the end of the night, our closing manager was approached by a man that seemed to be "off." He began yelling in her face about the Queen and Prince Phillip saying he knew we were hiding them in the laundry room and he just needed to come in and get them. She backed away and stepped into the gated area behind the restaurant closing the gate behind her. He continued to scream and began to shake the gate. When leaving at the end of the night he began to follow her to her vehicle through the alley between the restaurant and Irvine Park Towers. A co-worker who was on that evening had seen him enter the alley and drove through as she was walking to her car. The man ran off towards West 7th Street when the car approached.

These are just a few of the incidents that have been logged by management in the past few months. We have also incurred the following issues consistently;

- Bottles of urine have been found on several occasions in entry areas, on the sidewalk, in the alley, by the dumpster and recycling bins, and in our flower planters.
- Our sidewalk planters have been moved around and knocked over on several occasions, as well as items being removed from them and laid out in our entry ways along with rocks and wood chips being placed in window sills.
- Human defecation on the sidewalk, in the wood chips out front of the restaurant, and in the alley. Soiled undergarments and napkins covered in feces have been removed from the sidewalk and wood chips in front of the restaurant.
- Garbage, in a much greater amount than usual, being left on the sidewalk and in our semi-sheltered doorways, planters and alleyway.
- People sleeping in vestibules of the apartment building upstairs and outside the restaurant in outdoor entryways.

If there is anything else you need, please let me know. I spoke with someone from the neighborhood association that came in and dined with us last night. I gave her my business card and she said she would do her best to keep us updated with all of the meetings/issues in the neighborhood. She spoke to me about her visits with Tom Reid and apparently has a few petitions going. When I hear from her I will be sure to communicate with you.

Thank you,

Andrea Bollinger
General Manager
Parlour St. Paul
612.426.8871

Check out our exciting take away and holiday offerings for
Borough, Parlour, PS Steak and Monello
www.jesterconcepts.com/takeoutanddelivery

Andrea Bollinger
General Manager
Parlour St. Paul
612.426.8871

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Sent: Monday, May 10, 2021 2:05 PM
To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Freedom House on W7th

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

As a long time W7th resident, I do NOT support proposed changes to the city zoning code that would allow day facilities for the homeless within a half mile of existing overnight shelters.

Ever since Freedom House on W7th has opened, in addition to the piles of garbage everywhere, I have seen open drug use and open drug dealing on the premises and surrounding property; people sleeping, passed out, engaging in sexual activity on the premises and surrounding property; people pooping and peeing on the premises and surrounding property.

I no longer visit the businesses in the area, because of the constant harassment from the "guests" on the property and up and down the surrounding streets.

I know there is a homelessness problem - I see the encampments growing and panhandling is rampant. I don't know what the solution is, but I know that places like this aren't it. The negative effects on the residents and businesses in the area are far too great. Crime in the area has increased since the opening of Freedom House, and I am not alone in looking forward to this place closing.

Thank you for your time.

Lisel Olson

Smith Avenue & W. 7th Street

Sent: Tuesday, May 11, 2021 10:45 AM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Freedom House

Hi Bill,

I was directed to you to get feedback regarding making the freedom House a permanent shelter.

I live in Irvine Park. I've lived here for 20 years and mostly understand the homeless issues in our city.

While I support the temporary emergency measures to help the homeless in Saint Paul, the freedom house is in between the Salvation Army and Dorothy Day center, much larger facilities with more extensive processes, security, services. I would prefer the city of Saint Paul to invest it's permanent resources to help the homeless into those shelters and wet shelters.

Since the freedom house open, we've had a spike in crime, burglary. My house and garage were broken into.

I really think the city should invest to facilitate wet shelters.

I also believe it would be best if the shelters are located in the areas with minimal disturbance to residence and businesses. West seventh has too many shelters in two small of an area with a Freedom House.

Thanks,

Mike

Mike Salovich
50 Irvine park

Sent: Tuesday, May 11, 2021 12:29 PM
To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Cc: sara@listeninghouse.org; molly@listeninghouse.org; Noecker, Rebecca (CI-StPaul) <Rebecca.Noecker@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: The Listening and Freedom Houses 🏠🏠🏠

Mr. Dermody,

I live on Goodrich Ave. where it crosses W7th by the Day by Day Cafe, Claddagh, Bad Weather, St. Vinney's, etc. The Freedom House & Listening House are my kind of neighbors! While it is true these "houses" host and attract some troubled and sometimes troubling guests, it is my belief that kindness, welcome, generosity and gracious amenities can and should be extended to our homeless or simply lonely community members. Full and generous funding should be granted to be sure staff are available to clean up after those who cannot or, due to whatever limitations inhibit them, cannot, keep their surroundings and behavior in keeping with the rest of the community. Rather than a punitive, nose in the air or nose holding posture toward these guests I would like to see even the least among them treated with dignity, respect, an arm around a shoulder, a listening ear. When trouble occurs I would like to know that trained, compassionate and capable professionals are there to guide all parties to safety.

I like the flowers and picnic tables and would love to see patio tables (perhaps with umbrellas) like at the surrounding cafes. As at cafes and bars, staff would have to tend to these amenities to avoid vandalism or theft. Strict gun safety rules (such as banning guns on the premises) should be implemented just as they are at many establishments.

I wish I were in a position to donate tons of money to support these houses and their guests. I think a change in attitude is appropriate, that would elevate understanding that more than bare bones amenities and attention are needed to offer our guests the greatest possibility of health, well being and self sufficiency so they can contribute to others in need in the future. Thank you for your considered attention to these deserving community members.

Deborah Padgett
274 Goodrich Ave.
www.padgettstudios.com

Sent: Wednesday, May 5, 2021 1:50 PM
To: Noecker, Rebecca (CI-StPaul) <Rebecca.Noecker@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Prince, Jane (CI-StPaul) <Jane.Prince@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Brendmoen, Amy (CI-StPaul) <amy.brendmoen@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Homeless Services Zoning Study

Just read the zoning code amendments for homeless services and thought I'd point out one thing Section (b) "The service capacity of the facility shall be limited to the number of approved beds in emergency housing facilities and overnight shelters within one-half (½) mile" only limits how many people can be served by one facility it doesn't limit the number of that clients can be served in the area. The proposal as written would allow two facilities to be located next door to each other and both could serve the number of clients equal to the number of beds within a 1/2 mile. You could have a dozen facilities within the half mile of the overnight shelter and they could all serve up to the number of clients in the facility. There is no language that says how many total clients can be with the half mile.

I personally think that counseling service for the homeless should be treated no different than counseling wealthy people. We don't restrict those numbers at all. But, if what you think your doing is restricting the number of facilities downtown with this language, you aren't. You are just limiting how many people can be in one facility at any one moment in time.

Just wanted to share my thoughts...

Chuck Repke

26 W 10th Street #1704, St Paul, MN 55102

Sent: Wednesday, May 12, 2021 9:45 AM
To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Freedom House

Dear Planning Commission,

Just wanted to drop a note and register my support for Freedom House, in light of the upcoming discussions regarding it. I am the Director of Pastoral Care and Outreach at the Church of the Assumption at 51 7th St W, and I have a background working with the unsheltered in various different contexts. It goes without saying of course that we all have an obligation to care for those for whom our system is not working, especially those of us for whom it is working quite well. If we would be humane, we have to say with the philosopher Seneca, "anything that is common to humanity is common to me." So as long as there are dispossessed, we all have a duty to them, because we are all part of making the world in which people are forced to a place like Freedom House.

And if you are going to be forced somewhere, Freedom House is the best kind of place. Assumption has supported Listening House and now Freedom House with substantial donations for years, and I personally make visits there at least once a week. There are very few places in which folks can find such dignity, warmth, and understanding. Anyone can go to Freedom House, and simply be treated like a human being, and, while services are available, they are not pushed, but gently offered. The staff take people where they are, and most guests are on a first name basis with at least some staff members.

The staff are very conscious of the environment their work creates in and around the neighborhood, and do their very best to ameliorate the difficulties.

I fully support their work, and it would be a strike against all of us if it were hindered.

Warmly,

Colin Miller, Ph.D.

Director of Pastoral Care and Outreach

Church of the Assumption

From: Molly Jalma, Listening House

Sent: Wednesday, May 12, 2021 9:53 AM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Freedom House - zoning change

I want to extend a sincere thank you for allowing us a chance to be present for the meeting on the 28th. Our absence of representation at the previous meeting was simply a lack of knowledge about its occurrence and not a lack of interest, concern, or understanding of importance.

Listening House entered into a partnership with the City, County, and external providers in order to serve a population of St. Paul residents who have extremely limited options for having their basic human needs met due to generational deep poverty, trauma, disabilities, illness, etc. We greet people by name, look them in the eye, ask them questions, and build relationships. We are not naive to challenges that

this population presents. People in constant survival mode are going to respond when confronted with perceived threat. Listening House at both our locations have staff trained in de-escalation techniques and partner with a multitude of external providers with expertise in mental, chemical, physical, and spiritual health. I understand that some of our neighbors want to see tangible evidence that programs like Freedom House are effective. From our viewpoint, we believe people need to stay alive in order to move through change. We believe people need to have some essence of self-worth in order to self-advocate and not live in the shadows. We meet all people where they're at. We accept them for who they are without judgement. We focus on accountability and don't excuse consequences of actions.

We have been open and engaged with all stakeholders. We have and remain solution focused, sitting at every table with ears and eyes open. We have productive relationships with the SPPD, the Sheriff's office, DSI, Metro Transit, the City Council, the Mayor's office, neighbors, and a vast volunteer base. Disallowing our Freedom House location does not offer solutions. Freedom House alone isn't going to solve the housing crisis nor the rise in crime (occurring in all major cities) but we will hold people on their journey whether they're on the way up or down. Our hospitality is radical because it's simple. We say "yes, please come in, we're happy to see you here today." The answer isn't to limit or move programs like Freedom House, the answer is to increase them. The more options and choices people have, the more empowered they are to meet their needs independently. Major cities take the brunt. They're the entertainment, business, and social services hubs for the state. Imagine if people didn't move to St. Paul or Minneapolis just so there was somewhere to charge their phone and take a shower. The issue here isn't Freedom House, the issue is much more regional and much more complex.

Thank you for your time, energy and consideration.

Molly

--

Molly Jalma

she/her/hers

Interim Executive Director

Listening House of St. Paul, Inc.

464 Maria Ave

St. Paul, MN 55106

651-227-5911

www.listeninghouse.org

Sent: Wednesday, May 12, 2021 1:33 PM
To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Freedom House

Think Before You Click: This email originated **outside** our organization.

I work for the RADIUS Homeless Outreach team. I am in favor of Freedom House remaining in its current location. I work and meet my clients there. May I contact you in order to speak?

James Weaver
Case Manager
777 7th St E. St. Paul, MN 55106
D 651-888-9224 | M 651-783-5427 | F 651-756-7475

R A D I A S

H E A L T H

Welcome to a full circle of care.

Sent: Wednesday, May 12, 2021 1:28 PM
To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Freedom house

Greetings,

I just wanted to share my thoughts that the Freedom house has done an excellent job of providing the city's unhoused population with needed emergency shelter and their services are invaluable. It would truly be a loss if they were not able to continue this important work.

Thanks & Best,

Kelly Wolf

Kelly Wolf (She/Her/Hers)

Sr. Program Manager, Safe House Youth Shelter and Street Outreach

Lutheran Social Service of MN

Cell: 651-408-2667

Kelly.Wolf@lssmn.org

1696 Dayton Ave.

St. Paul, MN 55104

Sent: Thursday, May 13, 2021 11:36 AM

To: CouncilHearing (CI-StPaul) <CouncilHearing@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: I support Freedom House remaining a day shelter!!!

DATE

GREETING

My name is Sri and I work for Minnesota Community Care, the largest community health center in Saint Paul.

I support Freedom House remaining a day shelter. Space where people experiencing homelessness can spend their days has become almost non-existent since the pandemic. Freedom House is a safe, welcoming, supportive space for unsheltered adults to spend daytime hours and access services like mental health and medical support as well as rest, store their belongings, and get food and supplies.

Our Minnesota Community Care medical outreach provides care at Freedom House, where they connect with some of the most vulnerable people in our state. Removing Freedom House will not "solve" the problem of homelessness or criminal activity in the West 7th Community; it will simply make it harder for unsheltered, mentally ill, and substance using people to access services.

Freedom House is a hub for service providers to meet with individuals who have some of the greatest needs in the unsheltered population in Saint Paul. Please allow Freedom House to continue its vital work.

Respectfully,

Sripathy Umapathi



Sripathy Umapathi, DC, MHS

he/him/his

Chiropractor

651-602-7500 • sumapathi@mncare.org

Minnesota Community Care | East Side Family Clinic |
Healthcare For the Homeless

St. Paul, MN 55106

mncare.org

895 E 7th Street

Sent: Friday, May 14, 2021 4:22 PM

To: CouncilHearing (CI-StPaul) <CouncilHearing@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: I support Freedom House remaining a day shelter

My name is Joshua and I work for Minnesota Community Care, the largest community health center in Saint Paul.

I support Freedom House remaining a day shelter. Space where people experiencing homelessness can spend their days has become almost non-existent since the pandemic. Freedom House is a safe, welcoming, supportive space for unsheltered adults to spend daytime hours and access services like mental health and medical support as well as rest, store their belongings, and get food and supplies.

Our Minnesota Community Care medical outreach provides care at Freedom House, where they connect with some of the most vulnerable people in our state. Removing Freedom House will not

"solve" the problem of homelessness or criminal activity in the West 7th Community; it will simply make it harder for unsheltered, mentally ill, and substance using people to access services.

Freedom House is a hub for service providers to meet with individuals who have some of the greatest needs in the unsheltered population in Saint Paul. Please allow Freedom House to continue its vital work.

Respectfully,

Joshua



Joshua Grooters, RN

he/him/his

Clinic Manager

651-389-2568 • jgrooters@mncare.org

Minnesota Community Care: La Clinica

153 Cesar Chavez Street

St. Paul, MN 55107

mncare.org | mncare.org/give

Sent: Thursday, May 13, 2021 12:59 PM

To: *CI-StPaul_Contact-Council <Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Freedom House Letter of Support

May 13, 2021

To Members of the St Paul City Council,

My name is Helene Freint and I have served as the Director for Minnesota Community Care's Health Care for the Homeless program since 1997. Everyone is fatigued from COVID impacts and when the toll is more evident because those lives are not neatly tucked away in stable housing, the general population is quicker to protest.

I support Freedom House remaining a day shelter. Space where people experiencing homelessness can spend their days has become almost non-existent since the pandemic. Freedom House is a safe, welcoming, supportive space for unsheltered adults to spend daytime hours and access services like mental health and medical support as well as rest, store their belongings, and get food and supplies.

Our Minnesota Community Care medical outreach provides care at Freedom House, where they connect with some of the most vulnerable people in our state. They provide health care, working with folks to manage chronic disease, including mental health issues and substance use issues as well. All efforts are aimed at helping to stabilize and help people move toward housing. Removing Freedom House will not "solve" the problem of homelessness or criminal activity in the West 7th Community; it will simply make it harder for unsheltered, mentally ill, and substance using people to access services.

Freedom House is a hub for service providers to meet with individuals who have some of the greatest needs in the unsheltered population in Saint Paul. Please allow Freedom House to continue its vital work.

Respectfully,

Helene Freint, MPH

Director, Health and Housing

Minnesota Community Care



Helene Freint, MPH

she/her/hers

Director, Health and Housing

Cell: 952-451-8944 • freinth@mncare.org

Minnesota Community Care

Downtown Clinic

424 Dorothy Day Place

St. Paul, MN 55102

mncare.org | mncare.org/give

Sent: Thursday, May 13, 2021 11:20 AM

To: *CI-StPaul_Contact-Council <Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Letter of Support for the Freedom House

May 14th 2021

Greetings,

My name is Elizabeth Sersland, I am a social worker with Minnesota Community Care, the largest community health center in Minnesota.

I support Freedom House remaining a day shelter. Space where people experiencing homelessness can spend their days has become almost non-existent since the pandemic. Freedom House is a safe, welcoming, supportive space for unsheltered adults to spend daytime hours and access services like mental health and medical support as well as rest, store their belongings, and get food and supplies.

Our Minnesota Community Care medical outreach provides care at Freedom House, where they connect with some of the most vulnerable people in our state. Removing Freedom House will not "solve" the problem of homelessness or criminal activity in the West 7th Community; it will simply make it harder for unsheltered, mentally ill, and substance using people to access services.

Freedom House is a hub for service providers to meet with individuals who have some of the greatest needs in the unsheltered population in Saint Paul. Please allow Freedom House to continue its vital work.

With Gratitude,

Elizabeth Sersland

Elizabeth Sersland-Social Worker, LSW (she/her/hers)

Minnesota Community Care-Healthcare for the Homeless

Downtown and Union Gospel Mission clinics

424 Dorothy Day Place, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

Downtown clinic 651-793-2219

Direct 651 793-2207

Fax 651-389-2544

Sent: Thursday, May 13, 2021 10:21 AM

To: *CI-StPaul_Contact-Council <Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Freedom House

Good morning,

My name is Christie Jansen and I work for Minnesota Community Care, the largest community health center in Saint Paul.

I support Freedom House remaining a day shelter. Space where people experiencing homelessness can spend their days has become almost non-existent since the pandemic. Freedom House is a safe, welcoming, supportive space for unsheltered adults to spend daytime hours and access services like mental health and medical support as well as rest, store their belongings, and get food and supplies.

Our Minnesota Community Care medical outreach provides care at Freedom House, where they connect with some of the most vulnerable people in our state. Removing Freedom House will not "solve" the problem of homelessness or criminal activity in the West 7th Community; it will simply make it harder for unsheltered, mentally ill, and substance using people to access services.

Freedom House is a hub for service providers to meet with individuals who have some of the greatest needs in the unsheltered population in Saint Paul. Please allow Freedom House to continue its vital work.

Respectfully,

Christie Jansen



Christie Jansen

she/her/hers

Interim Vice President of Finance

612.296.0904 • cfo@mncare.org

Minnesota Community Care

380 E. Lafayette Frontage Road, Suite 200

St. Paul, MN 55107

mncare.org | mncare.org/give

Joseph Finley
1157 Summit Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55105

May 2, 2021

Re: Homeless Services Zoning Study

Members of the Planning Commission:

Please include this comment letter in the **hearing record** for the Homeless Services Zoning Study, which I understand is being held open for further public comment.

I write to oppose adoption of the addition of “Homeless Service Facility” as a *permitted* use in several city zoning districts. My opposition is based largely on anecdotal reports of increased crime and nuisance behavior from some business operators I know who have businesses between Dorothy Day and the Freedom House.

First, I think it is irresponsible for the City to allow such a novel use as “permitted” under the code (preposterously equating it to clubs and fraternal organizations) without more study and some case histories in hand. It would be much better public policy—taking into account the safety and welfare of all city residents and taxpayers—to start off with such a novel use as “conditional” rather than permitted. Each one of the homeless services facilities will pose specific issues and should be subject to specific conditions. If operating histories and case studies eventually showed that such facilities actually are relatively benign vis-a-vis surrounding neighborhoods, then the use later could be made permitted. But given the uncertainty surrounding such uses, it is truly a disservice to the vast majority of city residents to make this novel use “permitted” right off the bat, with no possible permit review process.

Second, as both a land use lawyer (retired) and city planner (MCP), I am shocked at how cavalierly the staff report concludes that the Freedom House (and other like facilities surely to come) will have no adverse affect on surrounding areas or neighborhoods. This conclusion is based on an examination of three-month data for the years 2016-18 relating to the Listening House, which presents a very different situation than the Freedom House. Why would the Commission not want to use actual, relevant data? The Freedom House report pre-supposes a “travel corridor” between Dorothy Day and the Freedom House. The Freedom House has been open since November, 2020. **Ask the Police for a study (like the one attached to the Memo you received) covering crimes reports in the “travel corridor” between Dorothy Day and Freedom House.** The corridor studied could be the area bounded by Smith on the north, Exchange on the south, Kellogg Blvd. on the east and Forbes/West Seventh (to intersection with Smith) on the west. The months contrasted would be December, January, February, March and April of 2020-21, against those same months for 2019-20 and 2018-19. The study should consider not only violent crimes, but crimes against property and nuisance crimes (such as vandalism and public defecation). If you used this data, which is timely, targeted, relevant and available, instead untimely data from a very different situation, you could more responsibly address the issue whether the Freedom House has resulted in no meaningful adverse effect upon the “travel corridor.” As a citizen/taxpayer, I respectfully ask you to base your decision on relevant available information. I don’t know how a Police study of the “travel corridor” would come out, and don’t pre-suppose a result one way or the other. I just know that a responsible public body, when addressing a zoning change that could affect so many, should strive to seek out timely and relevant data.

Thank You, Joseph M. Finley, 651.324.5601

5/6/21

ZONING COMMISSION,

AFTER READING AN ARTICLE IN THE
ST. PAUL PIONEER PRESS ON THURSDAY MAY 6, 2021
CONCERNING THE FREEDOM HOUSE AND THE DIFFICULTIES
IT IS CAUSING LOCAL BUSINESSES I WOULD LIKE TO
VOICE MY OPINION.

STEVEN MOORE SUGGESTS THE
BUSINESSES ARE "PUTTING PROFIT ABOVE PEOPLE." /
SAY THIS - AS A "PEOPLE" LET ME TALK.

I AM A 63 YEAR OLD HANDICAPPED WOMAN
WHO HAS LIVED IN THE SHERMAN FORBES APARTMENT
COMPLEX FOR 43 YEARS. WHILE NOT PERFECT IT HAS
ALWAYS BEEN A DECENT NEIGHBORHOOD, THEN FREEDOM
HOUSE OPENED.... WE HAVE MANY SMALL CHILDREN
THAT NOW CANNOT USE THE PLAYGROUND ON OUR PREMISES
BECAUSE IT IS NOT SAFE, THE MEN OCCUPY MY APARTMENT
HALLWAY MANY TIMES EACH WEEK. THEY ARE DRINKING,
SMOKING, USING DRUGS AND LOUDLY ARGUEING ON THE
OTHER SIDE OF MY DOOR. THEY LEAVE BEHIND FOOD, TRASH
& CLOTHING. THEY GATHER ON MY FRONT STEPS TO YELL
AND SWEAR AND FIGHT. THEY ARE DESTROYING PROPERTY
TO THE APARTMENTS. I AM UNABLE TO FREELY CHECK MY
MAIL OR OPEN MY FRONT DOOR. I AM VERY AFRAID OF
THEM BREAKING IN OR STARTING A FIRE.

I DO HAVE COMPASSION AND CONCERN
IT MUST BE A DEVASTATING WAY TO LIVE HOWEVER

HAVING THIS SERIOUS PROBLEM FORCED UPON ME IS NOT OKAY,

WHERE DO THEY GO? WHAT IS THE ANSWER? I DO NOT KNOW. I AM NOT ON ANY BOARD. I DO NOT HOLD COLLEGE DEGREES. BUT PERHAPS A LOCATION THAT ISN'T 30 FEET AWAY FROM HOMES? UNIVERSITY + VANDALIA AREA?

I ALREADY WROTE A SIMILAR LETTER TO THE MAYORS OFFICE, HAVING 3 HOMELESS GATHERING SPOTS IN AN 8 BLOCK RADIUS - DOROTHY DAY, SALVATION ARMY, AND FREEDOM HOUSE IS OVERKILL - AND YOUR BOARD IS CONSIDERING ADDING MORE - OR MAKING FREEDOM HOUSE PERMANENT !!! TALK ABOUT COMPASSION WHERE IS YOURS? AM I WRONG TO PREFER SAFETY OVER BECOMING A CRIME VICTIM OR CALM DAILY LIVING OVER INSANITY?

IMAGINE IF A HANDFUL OF THESE MEN WERE TO CAMP OUT DIRECTLY IN YOUR BACK YARD, SIT ON YOUR FRONT PORCH AND CAUSE COMPLETE HAVOC IN YOUR DAILY ROUTINE FOR A MONTH, I BELIEVE YOUR FEELINGS WOULD ABSOLUTELY CHANGE,

I DO NOT KNOW WHAT THE ANSWER IS BUT I DO KNOW THAT THE CURRENT SITUATION IS NOT THE SOLUTION.

DIANNE NILO
313 SHERMAN ST #2
ST. PAUL, MINN

55102