

August 6, 2021

TO: Comprehensive & Neighborhood Planning Committee

FROM: Bill Dermody, City Planner

SUBJECT: Homeless Services Zoning Study

Issues/Background

In November 2020, an emergency ordinance was approved by the Mayor and City Council to permit services to unsheltered homeless individuals in a former fire station at 296 7th Street West ("Freedom House") on a temporary basis, tied to the COVID-19 pandemic. An emergency ordinance was needed, in part, because the principal use of daytime services to people experiencing homelessness is not defined in the Zoning Code. Such uses exist in the city as accessory uses, both at Listening House in Dayton's Bluff (a special situation permitted through a City Council action and subsequent court ruling as an accessory use to a religious institution) and as an undefined accessory use on the campus of overnight shelters/emergency housing facilities such as the Dorothy Day Center in downtown. Listening House and Freedom House each typically serve over 100 guests per day. Elements of these uses also exist elsewhere in Saint Paul at a much smaller scale, often integrated into general population-oriented services that fall under different definitions, such as medical clinics or accessory uses to a library (see the City's [Consolidated Plan](#) pp98+, pp158+, and pp193+ for details.) Freedom House is part of an [ecosystem of supports](#) that is addressing homelessness needs and mitigating quality of life issues nearby. There may be a desire to permit the use of Freedom House for such daytime services as a principal use beyond the end of the emergency ordinance, which would require a Zoning Code amendment. There may also be a desire to permit the use in other areas of the city.

Analysis

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan, in Appendices A and B of the Housing Chapter, identifies a need to decrease homelessness, and to provide supportive services for those experiencing homelessness as an important City action to address the need.

The proposed Zoning Code amendments define "homeless services facility," add standards/conditions for the use, and establish which zoning districts will permit the use. The use is proposed to be classified as a "civic and institutional use" and is proposed to be permitted in the following zoning districts: in B3, B4, B5, IT, and I1 districts permitted by right; in T2, T3, T4, B2, F4, F5 and F6 districts, a facility of up to 5,000 square

feet permitted by right, and a facility greater than 5,000 square feet permitted with a conditional use permit. As with all uses, the use may not be appropriate in all settings. The use is unlikely to work well in residential zoning districts or in T1, B1, BC, and F1-F3 districts, which are often embedded among residences or smaller business or mixed-use clusters, unless accessory to a larger institutional campus (like a church) with adequate space and facilities to avoid spillover impacts on adjacent properties. The use is generally appropriate in the B3-B5 business districts and IT-I1 industrial districts, which already permit uses of similar impact such as bars. The use is not appropriate in the I2 general industrial district because of the importance of limiting I2 zoning to more intense industrial uses which have few other places to locate.

The proposed square footage for triggering a conditional use permit in certain districts is >5,000 square feet. Other uses also require a conditional use permit over a certain size:

| Use | Square footage requiring a CUP in certain zoning districts | Zoning districts where the size-based CUP applies |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Museum | >10,000 | T1 |
| General retail | >20,000 | T1-T4 |
| Service business with workshop | >15,000 | T2-T3 |
| Tobacco products shop | >2,500 | BC, T2 |
| Bar | >5,000 | T2-T4, B2, F4-F6 |
| Coffee shop, tea house | >800 | T1 |
| Restaurant | >15,000 | T2-T3 |
| Fast-food restaurant | >10,000 | T2-T4, B2-B3, F5-F6 |
| Theater, assembly hall | (>500 capacity) | T2-T4 |
| Craft brewery or distillery | >15,000 | T2-T4, B2 |
| Limited production and processing | >15,000 | T2-T3 |

The Freedom House site is zoned T2; thus, if these amendments are approved in current form, the Freedom House use would need to receive a conditional use permit or be relocated to a different site to continue past the pandemic emergency.

Additionally, the proposed amendments allow for a small number of beds for emergency use, whether overnight or during the day. This reflects the Freedom House situation (they have a few beds for occasional use, as needed) and provides a reasonable size limitation to differentiate from an “overnight shelter” or “emergency housing facility” principal use, which have their own zoning code definitions and standards including separation requirements.

Other standards and conditions have been recommended in response to public testimony, as discussed below.

The proposed amendments intentionally do not address whether a “homeless services facility” should be permitted as an accessory use to a religious institution. That possibility will be explored through the upcoming Religious Accessory Uses Zoning Study.

Public Hearing Testimony

Fifteen people spoke at the Planning Commission hearings and over 40 people provided written comments, including a neighboring apartment manager who aggregated several of their residents’ comments. One person shared a series of videos. Testimony included:

- The services provided at Freedom House are valuable to the community and should be supported.
- Unsheltered homeless people (living outdoors) need these services too – not just those who use overnight shelters or emergency housing.
- Delete the requirement that Homeless Services Facility be within ½ mile of an overnight shelter or emergency housing so that the use could exist in more locations.
- Homeless people are our neighbors, too.
- People believed to be Freedom House guests have caused repeated quality of life issues in the surrounding area, such as property damage, litter, illegal drug use, theft, fires, disturbances at businesses, loud shouting and cursing, physical fights, public urination/defecation, unauthorized sleeping on private property, and confrontational behavior.
- There are public urination and litter issues on West 7th Street that do not have to do with Freedom House.
- Many uses that have less impact are not permitted in some of these zoning districts.
- Compared to the current Freedom House situation, Homeless Services Facilities should be larger and provide more external security.
- The amendments would allow multiple Homeless Services Facilities in close proximity – perhaps not what is intended.
- This use should be treated like counseling services for anyone else (fewer restrictions).
- There is a housing crisis and increased violence in all cities – they are not problems created by Freedom House.
- This use should be a conditional use – not a permitted use.
- The City should help Freedom House find a new site.
- The use should be closer to the Dorothy Day campus.
- There should be additional standards, including separation requirements between Homeless Services Facilities, minimum lot size, limits on numbers of guests served, and maintenance of the surrounding area, in order to reduce negative impacts.
- The use should not be allowed in B2, B3, T2, T3, or F districts because they are often embedded in neighborhoods.
- The definition should fall under the Congregate Living category, not the Civic & Institutional Uses category.
- Homelessness issues will not disappear if the Freedom House facility ceases operation.
- The demographics of Freedom House guests are approximately 60% male, 50% Black, and a median age in the 40s.
- To address issues outside, Freedom House has cameras, their staff makes rounds, they have added garbage cans, and they’ve worked with Metro Transit to remove some benches. They try to redirect people causing issues and will call SPPD if they need help.
- The Freedom House site was chosen as a temporary, emergency location because it was:
 - o An underutilized City facility;
 - o Close to outdoor encampments;
 - o Near other service providers, such as Safe Space and Dorothy Day; and
 - o Close to the Green Line and other transit.

Saint Paul Police Department Data

Given issues raised through public testimony, staff sought data from the Saint Paul Police Department (SPPD) to inform decisions on the zoning study. The data shows a 36% increase in Part 1 (more serious) crimes near Freedom House in the first five months of 2021 compared to 2020, and a 78% increase in Quality of Life crimes over the same time period. Looking farther back, the data shows a 23% increase in Part 1 crimes in the first five months of 2021 compared to the average of 2016-2020, and a 99% increase in Quality of Life crimes. In terms of arrests, there were 50 in the first six months of 2021 as compared to an average of 37 over the first six months in 2016-2020 – an increase of 35%. Freedom House opened in January 2021, and despite being a very limited period of time, the uptick in crime nearby possibly suggests a correlation. Other factors could have an impact, as well. Notably, SPPD has intentionally increased patrols in this area in 2021. Also, this area has experienced an especially large reduction in foot traffic and safety-enhancing “eyes on the street” during the pandemic due to its businesses’ reliance on entertainment events at the Xcel Center.

The citywide crime increase (all categories) through May 2021 is 3.8% over the first five months of 2020.

Please see attachments for details.

Staff Analysis of Testimony

The Zoning Code’s purpose, set out in Section 60.103, includes:

- promotion and protection of public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community;
- implementing the policies of the comprehensive plan;
- encouraging a compatible mix of uses; and
- establishing reasonable standards for uses.

Public testimony makes clear that the homeless services facility use promotes public health and safety by supporting people experiencing homelessness in a manner not covered by other institutions in the city. To not allow the use would be detrimental to public health, safety, and general welfare of not only those who receive the services, but also to the larger community by making it harder for people to stabilize their lives and transition from homelessness. However, testimony also established that the use presents compatibility and public health/safety questions for surrounding residents and businesses – and SPPD data reinforces that testimony. The size and setting of the existing Freedom House use appear to contribute to those compatibility issues.

Public testimony also suggested locational factors most important to the use, which include not only proximity to overnight shelters/emergency housing, but also proximity to transit, proximity to outdoor encampments, and adequate space. As outdoor encampments are not a permitted use anywhere in the city but potentially exist in many places, it would be difficult to tie the homeless services facility use to outdoor encampments locations. For this reason plus ease of administration, the previously proposed distance maximum from overnight shelters/emergency housing has been removed from the proposed amendments.

Recommendation

The recommended code amendments have been revised in several ways to improve their alignment with the Zoning Code’s purpose, as informed by public testimony. Specifically, the amendments are revised to provide for the use in more districts, some by right and some requiring a Conditional Use Permit for larger facilities, in both cases with additional standards:

- Permit the use in B3, B4, B5, IT, and I1 zoning districts.

- Permit the use in additional districts when small in size (5,000 square feet or less): T2, T3, T4, B2, F4, F5, F6.
 - o Permit the use conditionally in the same districts when it is greater than 5,000 square feet to allow for context-dependent evaluation in districts that are often adjacent to residential neighborhoods.
- Add property maintenance standards regarding litter collection.
- Eliminate the capacity limit standard.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Comprehensive Planning Committee recommends approval of the attached draft Planning Commission resolution recommending the Homeless Services Zoning Study for City Council approval.

Attachments

1. Draft Planning Commission resolution (including recommended Homeless Services zoning code amendments)
2. Saint Paul Police Department data near Freedom House
3. Map of zoning districts proposed to permit homeless services facilities
4. Public testimony

city of saint paul
planning commission resolution
file number _____
date _____

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul Zoning Code, found in chapters 60 through 69 of the Saint Paul Legislative Code, is established to promote and to protect the public health, safety, morals, aesthetics, economic viability and general welfare of the community; and

WHEREAS, Section 61.801(a) of the Zoning Code calls for periodic review of said code to reflect current city policies, to address current technology and market conditions, and to bring the zoning code up-to-date; and

WHEREAS, the Zoning Code does not currently address facilities for services to people experiencing homelessness that are separate from overnight shelters; and

WHEREAS, on March 19, 2021, the Planning Commission passed Resolution 21-35 initiating a zoning study to establish a definition and zoning regulations for facilities providing services to people experiencing homelessness, and any other connected regulations contained in the Zoning Code; and

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing regarding potential zoning amendments regarding homeless services facilities; and

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee of the Saint Paul Planning Commission, having reviewed the public hearing testimony and a memorandum containing analysis provided by staff, provided a recommendation for consideration by the Saint Paul Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul Planning Commission, having reviewed the public hearing testimony and the Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee's recommendation, finds the proposed text amendments to be supported by the policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Saint Paul Planning Commission, under the authority of the City's Legislative Code, that the following proposed amendments to the Legislative Code are recommended for approval by the Mayor and Council of the City of Saint Paul:

moved by _____
seconded by _____
in favor _____
against _____

Homeless Services Facility Proposed Code Amendments

Chapter 65. Zoning Code—Land Use Definitions and Development Standards

ARTICLE III. 65.200. CIVIC AND INSTITUTIONAL USES

...

Secs. 65.222-~~65.229~~ ~~65.232~~. Reserved.

Sec. ~~65.230~~ ~~65.233~~. Golf course.

...

Secs. 65.231-65.239. Reserved.

Sec. 65.240. Homeless services facility.

A facility that provides services targeted to persons experiencing homelessness, such as meals, counseling, education and practical assistance.

Standards and conditions:

(a) The facility may provide up to ten (10) beds for use on an emergency basis.

(b) Except in B3-B5 business and IT and I1 industrial districts, a conditional use permit is required for a facility of more than five thousand (5,000) square feet.

(c) A litter collection plan shall be developed and submitted to the zoning administrator, which obligates the facility operator to keep the area surrounding said facility free of litter generated by the use for a reasonable specified distance.

Secs. 65.241-65.249. Reserved.

Sec. ~~65.250~~ ~~65.234~~. Museum.

...

Secs. 65.251-65.259. Reserved.

Sec. ~~65.260~~ ~~65.235~~. Recreation, noncommercial.

...

Secs. 65.261-65.269. Reserved.

Sec. ~~65.270~~ ~~65.236~~. Religious institution.

...

Chapter 66. Zoning Code—Zoning District Uses, Density and Dimensional Standards

ARTICLE III. 66.300. TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRICTS

Sec. 66.321. Principal uses.

Table 66.321, principal uses in traditional neighborhood districts, lists all permitted and conditional uses in the T1—T4 traditional neighborhood districts, and notes applicable development standards and conditions.

Table 66.321. Principal Uses in Traditional Neighborhood Districts

| Use | T1 | T2 | T3 | T4 | <i>Development Definition (d) Standards (s)</i> |
|--|-----|------------|------------|------------|---|
| Civic and Institutional Uses | | | | | |
| <i>Social, Cultural, and Recreational Facilities</i> | | | | | |
| Club, fraternal organization, lodge hall | | P | P | P | (d) |
| <u>Homeless services facility</u> | | <u>P/C</u> | <u>P/C</u> | <u>P/C</u> | <u>(d), (s)</u> |
| Museum | P/C | P | P | P | (s) |

P - Permitted use C - Conditional use requiring a conditional use permit

Notes to table 66.321, principal uses in traditional neighborhood districts:

(d) Definition for the use in Chapter 65, Land Use Definitions and Development Standards.

(s) Standards and conditions for the use in Chapter 65, Land Use Definitions and Development Standards.

ARTICLE IV. 66.400. BUSINESS DISTRICTS

Sec. 66.421. Principal uses.

Table 66.421, principal uses in business districts, lists all permitted and conditional uses in the OS—B5 business districts, and notes applicable development standards and conditions.

Table 66.421. Principal Uses in Business Districts

| Use | OS | B1 | BC | B2 | B3 | B4 | B5 | <i>Definition (d) Standards (s)</i> |
|--|----|----|----|------------|----------|----------|----------|---|
| Civic and Institutional Uses | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Social, Cultural, and Recreational Facilities</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Club, fraternal organization, lodge hall | | | | P | P | P | P | (d) |
| <u>Homeless services facility</u> | | | | <u>P/C</u> | <u>P</u> | <u>P</u> | <u>P</u> | <u>(d), (s)</u> |
| Museum | | | | | | P | P | |

P - Permitted use C - Conditional use requiring a conditional use permit

Notes to table 66.421, principal uses in business districts:

(d) Definition for the use in Chapter 65, Land Use Definitions and Development Standards.

(s) Standards and conditions for the use in Chapter 65, Land Use Definitions and Development Standards.

ARTICLE V. 66.500. INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS

Sec. 66.521. Principal uses.

Table 66.521, principal uses in industrial districts, lists all permitted and conditional uses in the IT—I3 industrial districts, and notes applicable development standards and conditions.

Table 66.521. Principal Uses in Industrial Districts

| Use | IT | I1 | I2 | I3 | Definition (d) Standards (s) |
|--|----------|----------|----|----|---------------------------------|
| Civic and Institutional Uses | | | | | |
| <i>Social, Cultural, and Recreational Facilities</i> | | | | | |
| Club, fraternal organization, lodge hall | P | P | C | | (d) |
| <u>Homeless services facility</u> | <u>P</u> | <u>P</u> | | | <u>(d), (s)</u> |
| Museum | P | P | C | | |

P - Permitted use C - Conditional use requiring a conditional use permit

Notes to table 66.521, principal uses in industrial districts:

- (d) Definition for the use in Chapter 65, Land Use Definitions and Development Standards.
- (s) Standards and conditions for the use in Chapter 65, Land Use Definitions and Development Standards.

ARTICLE IX. 66.900. FORD DISTRICTS

Sec. 66.921. Ford district use table.

Table 66.921, Ford district uses, lists all permitted and conditional uses in the F1-F6 Ford districts, and notes applicable development standards and conditions.

Table 66.921. Ford District Uses

| Use | F1 | F2 | F3 | F4 | F5 | F6 | Definition (d) Standards (s) |
|--|----|----|----|------------|------------|------------|---------------------------------|
| Civic and Institutional Uses | | | | | | | |
| Club, fraternal organization, lodge hall | | P | P | P | P | | (d) |
| College, university, specialty school | | P | P | P | P | P | (d), (s) |
| Day care, primary and secondary school | | P | P | P | P | P | (d), (s) |
| <u>Homeless services facility</u> | | | | <u>P/C</u> | <u>P/C</u> | <u>P/C</u> | <u>(d), (s)</u> |
| Public library, museum | P | P | P | P | P | P | |

P—Permitted use C—Conditional use requiring a conditional use permit

Notes to table 66.921, Ford district uses:

- (d) Definition for the use in Chapter 65, Land Use Definitions and Development Standards.
- (s) Standards and conditions for the use in Chapter 65, Land Use Definitions and Development Standards.

Grids 151 and 230



Crime Analysis Unit
Data Retrieved June 7th, 2021



DISCLAIMERS

- All duplicate results have been removed.
- Results reflect a count of CNs associated to Grids 151 and 230 in the city of St Paul.
- Part 1 CNs reflect disposition of Records Received.
- Quality of Life CNs reflect ALL disposition types.
- Analysis covers CNs from January 1st – May 31st of the years 2016-2021.



PART 1 CRIMES (Grid 151)

| Crime | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | Total |
|-----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| THEFT | 11 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 3 | 11 | 47 |
| BURGLARY | 1 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 14 |
| AUTO THEFT | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 11 |
| AGG ASSAULT | 2 | 1 | 1 | | | 4 | 8 |
| ROBBERY | | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| AGG ASLT DMSTIC | 1 | 1 | | | | | 2 |
| FORCIBLE RAPE | 1 | | | | 1 | | 2 |
| Grand Total | 17 | 15 | 11 | 13 | 9 | 22 | 87 |



PART 1 CRIMES (Grid 230)

| Crime | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | Total |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| THEFT | 21 | 28 | 12 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 106 |
| AUTO THEFT | 2 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 22 |
| BURGLARY | | 3 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 17 |
| FORCIBLE RAPE | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 13 |
| AGG ASSAULT | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 10 |
| AGG ASLT DMSTIC | 3 | 3 | | | | 2 | 8 |
| ROBBERY | | 1 | 1 | | | 2 | 4 |
| ARSON | | | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Grand Total | 29 | 47 | 23 | 21 | 30 | 31 | 181 |



PART 1 CRIMES (Grids 151 and 230)

| Crime | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | Total |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| THEFT | 32 | 34 | 19 | 23 | 18 | 27 | 153 |
| AUTO THEFT | 3 | 10 | 3 | 4 | 9 | 4 | 33 |
| BURGLARY | 1 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 31 |
| AGG ASSAULT | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 18 |
| FORCIBLE RAPE | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 15 |
| AGG ASLT DMSTIC | 4 | 4 | | | | 2 | 10 |
| ROBBERY | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 4 | 7 |
| ARSON | | | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Grand Total | 46 | 62 | 34 | 34 | 39 | 53 | 268 |



QUALITY OF LIFE CRIMES (Grid 151)

| Crime | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | Total |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| DOBS | 28 | 37 | 40 | 31 | 36 | 132 | 304 |
| DISTURB CALLS | 4 | 22 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 11 | 52 |
| DRUNK | 10 | 10 | 8 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 42 |
| FIGHTS | 5 | 14 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 40 |
| CRIMINAL DAMAGE | 5 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 15 | 35 |
| OTHER ASSAULT | 5 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 9 | 26 |
| NARCOTIC DRUGS | 2 | 1 | | | | 4 | 7 |
| WEAPONS | | | 1 | | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| DOC | | | | | | 4 | 4 |
| OTHER VIOLATION | | | | | | 3 | 3 |
| NARCOTICS DRUGS | | 1 | | | | 1 | 2 |
| VAGRANCY | 1 | | | | | | 1 |
| OTHER SEX OFFSE | | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| GRAFFITI-NON GANG | | | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Grand Total | 60 | 94 | 65 | 51 | 60 | 192 | 522 |



QUALITY OF LIFE CRIMES (Grid 230)

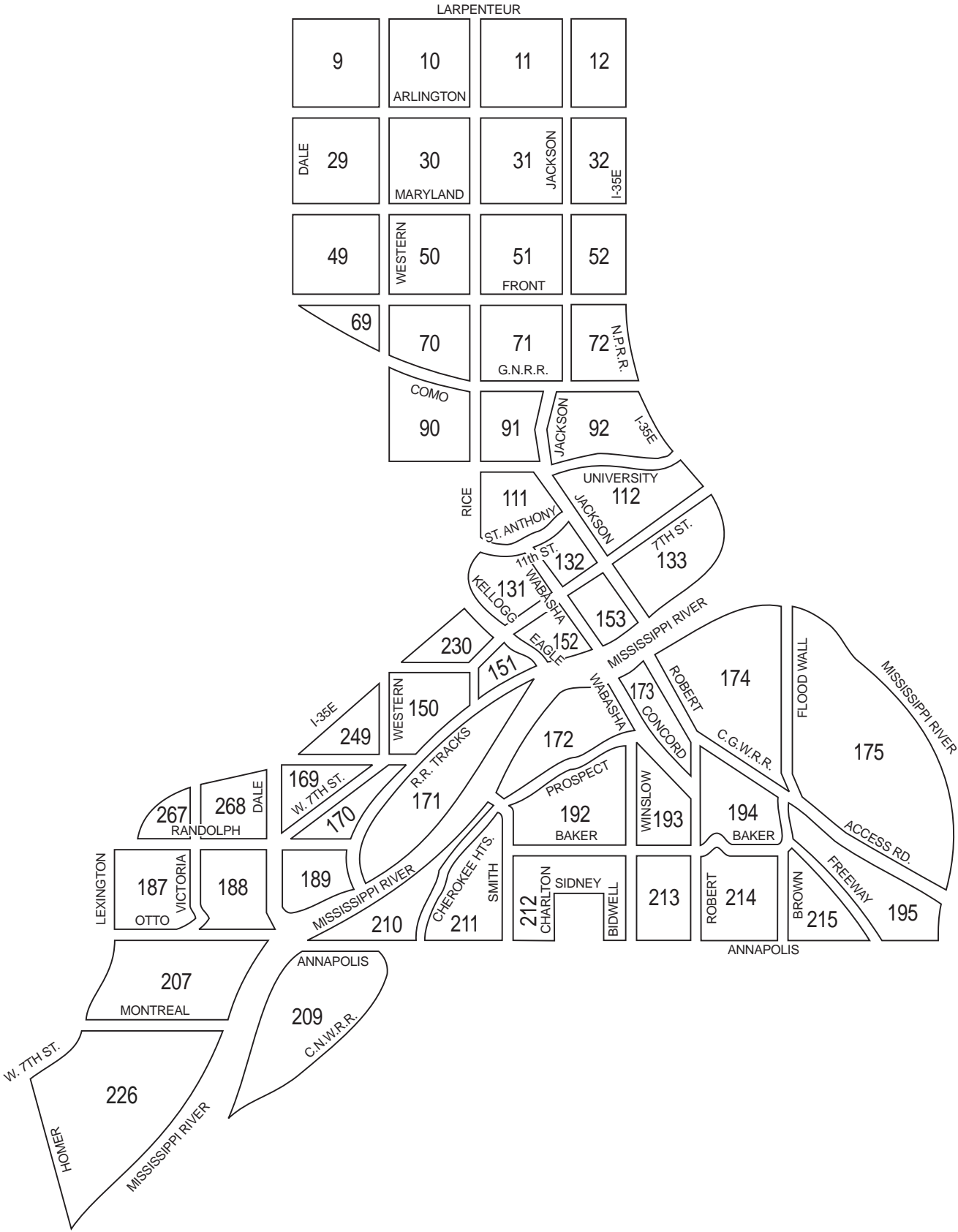
| Crime | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | Total |
|--------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| DOBS | 45 | 64 | 67 | 60 | 89 | 125 | 450 |
| OTHER ASSAULT | 17 | 15 | 10 | 16 | 7 | 14 | 79 |
| DRUNK | 16 | 14 | 9 | 9 | 11 | 2 | 61 |
| FIGHTS | 15 | 3 | 9 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 45 |
| CRIMINAL DAMAGE | 4 | 3 | 10 | 5 | 9 | 9 | 40 |
| DISTURB CALLS | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 13 | 7 | 32 |
| NARCOTIC DRUGS | 3 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 19 |
| NARCOTICS DRUGS | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 18 |
| DOC | 2 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 15 |
| WEAPONS | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | | 9 |
| GRAFFITI-NON GANG | 2 | | | | | | 2 |
| GRAFFITI | | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| OTHER VIOLATION | | | 1 | | | | 1 |
| LIQUOR LAW | 1 | | | | | | 1 |
| LOITERING | | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| Grand Total | 114 | 110 | 117 | 109 | 147 | 177 | 774 |



QUALITY OF LIFE CRIMES (Grids 151 and 230)

| Crime | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | Total |
|--------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| DOBS | 73 | 101 | 107 | 91 | 125 | 257 | 754 |
| OTHER ASSAULT | 22 | 19 | 12 | 21 | 8 | 23 | 105 |
| DRUNK | 26 | 24 | 17 | 13 | 17 | 6 | 103 |
| FIGHTS | 20 | 17 | 17 | 10 | 12 | 9 | 85 |
| DISTURB CALLS | 6 | 25 | 7 | 9 | 19 | 18 | 84 |
| CRIMINAL DAMAGE | 9 | 8 | 12 | 6 | 16 | 24 | 75 |
| NARCOTIC DRUGS | 5 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 10 | 26 |
| NARCOTICS DRUGS | 3 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 8 | 20 |
| DOC | 2 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 19 |
| WEAPONS | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 13 |
| OTHER VIOLATION | | | 1 | | | 3 | 4 |
| GRAFFITI-NON GANG | 2 | | | 1 | | | 3 |
| VAGRANCY | 1 | | | | | | 1 |
| LOITERING | | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| GRAFFITI | | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| OTHER SEX OFFSE | | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| LIQUOR LAW | 1 | | | | | | 1 |
| Grand Total | 174 | 204 | 182 | 160 | 207 | 369 | 1296 |

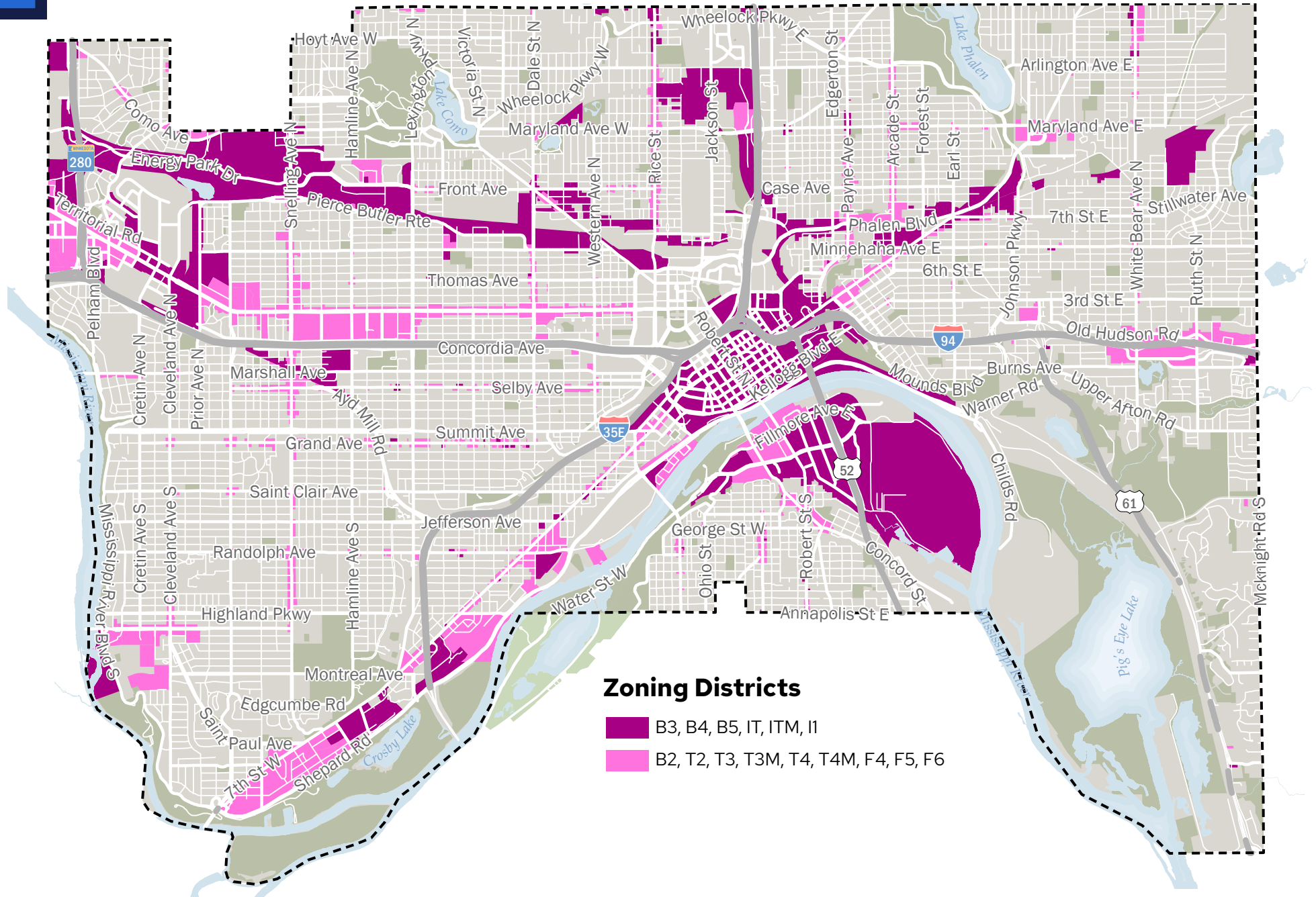
Central District





Homeless Services Zoning Study

August 3rd, 2021



Zoning Districts

- B3, B4, B5, IT, ITM, I1
- B2, T2, T3, T3M, T4, T4M, F4, F5, F6

This document was prepared by the Saint Paul Planning and Economic Development Department and is intended to be used for reference and illustrative purposes only. This drawing is not a legally recorded plan, survey, official tax map or engineering schematic and is not intended to be used as such. Data source: St. Paul Enterprise GIS, 2021. Distances shown are approximate, and would be refined given detail in an actual zoning application.





CATHOLIC CHARITIES
of St. Paul and Minneapolis

1200 Second Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55403
612-204-8500
cctwincities.org

April 23, 2021

Luis Rangel Morales, Chair
Saint Paul Planning Commission
25 West Fourth Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Via Electronic Delivery

Re: Homeless Services Zoning Study

Chair Morales and Members of the Saint Paul Planning Commission:

On behalf of Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis, I write to thank you for your leadership on the Homeless Services Zoning Study and to express our support for the proposed Zoning Code amendments which establish “homeless services facility” as a permitted use.

As a housing, emergency shelter and direct services provider, Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis serves more than 23,000 men, women, children and families annually. Many of these individuals seek emergency shelter, housing and supportive services at our Dorothy Day Place campus, which opened in Saint Paul’s Ward 2 in the fall of 2019, just a few months before COVID-19.

Local government and community partnerships have been critical to our ability to continue safely serving those in need during the pandemic, and they will remain critical long after COVID-19 has passed. We welcome additional partners in this work, so that we may collectively strengthen service delivery for the thousands of individuals working toward housing stability in our community.

The proposed Zoning Code amendments will help address the current demand for daytime services by allowing services providers like Freedom House to operate post-COVID-19, creating more opportunities for people experiencing homelessness to access them. Recognizing the extent of the housing and homelessness crisis and that not all individuals who experience homelessness utilize emergency shelter, we encourage you to also consider permitting service facilities beyond the half-mile radius of an overnight shelter to further reduce barriers to service across Saint Paul.

Adopting the amendments prompted by the Homeless Services Zoning Study is one small action the Commission can take today to ensure adequate supports are in place for those who find themselves in crisis. And by intervening with critical support services early, we can improve the public health, safety and general welfare of the broader community, too.

Catholic Charities serves those most in need. We are a leader at solving poverty, creating opportunity, and advocating for justice in the community.

We thank you, again, for your leadership on the Homeless Services Zoning Study and look forward to continuing to work with you and our city partners to better support our unhoused and housing-insecure community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Lorna Schmidt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lorna" and last name "Schmidt" clearly legible.

Lorna Schmidt
Public Policy Manager, Social Justice Advocacy & Engagement
Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis
lorna.schmidt@cctwincities.org
(651) 647-2582

May 25, 2021

Bill Dermody, bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Dear Mr. Dermody:

I am writing in opposition to the proposed zoning change to allow the Freedom House to become a permanent facility for the following reasons. First, the condition that these facilities be less than a half mile from an overnight shelter makes no sense especially in the case of the Freedom House. It is well known that the Dorothy Day Center does not admit persons under the influence of drugs or alcohol. From my personal experience many of the people coming into Irvine Park from the Freedom House would not be allowed on the Dorothy Day campus. If the Dorothy Day Center will not accept many of the people using the Freedom House, why the half mile distance requirement? The guests of the Freedom House are not there because the Dorothy Day is close by. Second why are you trying to congregate shelters in one area of the city? Even the statement by the Freedom House disagrees with that strategy. I quote, "Entertainment, business and social services all on the same streets creates density that can be a lot to bear. If there were more Freedom Houses regionally located, there would be less density in city centers – a good goal for Minnesota to work towards." Concentrating the number of homeless people in one area, makes the entire neighborhood fearful. Not a good way to promote a welcoming environment. I have attached a simple Google search of the "shelters" near Irvine Park. As you can see the concentration is very lopsided. Finally, irrespective of the SPPD data attached to Homeless Services Zoning Study, the number of 911 calls, police patrols, and crime has increased dramatically in the Irvine Park neighborhood since the Freedom House has opened.

Sincerely,

Dirk Dantuma

59 Irvine Park

St. Paul MN 55102

Google

overnight shelters

Rating ▾Hours ▾Your past visits ▾

Sort by **Best match** ▾

Simpson Housing Services

4.1 (95) · Homeless s...

8.6 mi · Minneapolis, MN

Closed · Opens 5PM · (612) 874-...

As far as shelters go not bad."

WEBSITE

DIRECTIONS

Union Gospel Mission

Twin Cities

4.1 (16) · Homeless s...

0.7 mi · 77 9th St E

Open 24 hours · (651) 228-1800

WEBSITE

DIRECTIONS

Naomi's Family Center

3.6 (27) · Homeless s...

0.7 mi · 77 9th St E

Open now · (651) 222-7962

It is a great shelter to come to if you need help."

WEBSITE

DIRECTIONS

Project Home Day Center

No reviews · Homeless shelter

1.0 mi · 244 10th St E

Their website mentions overnight shelter

WEBSITE

DIRECTIONS

Catholic Charities

Higher Ground Saint Paul

3.4 (129) · Social ser...

0.4 mi · 435 Dorothy Day Pl

Open now · (651) 647-2350

Their website mentions overnight shelter

WEBSITE

DIRECTIONS

Catholic Charities

4.1 (15) · Social servi...

0.5 mi · 438 Dorothy Day Pl Ofc · ...

Open 24 hours · (651) 227-2637

WEBSITE

DIRECTIONS

Kingdom Pathways

2.1 (11) · Homeless s...

2.4 mi · 1088 University Ave W

(651) 387-8393

WEBSITE

DIRECTIONS

Hope Street Shelter

3.8 (37) · Social servi...

7.8 mi · Minneapolis, MN

Open 24 hours · (612) 204-8211

Their website mentions shelter overnight

WEBSITE

DIRECTIONS

Bethel Hotel-Working Men's Htl

4.2 (9) · Non-profit organization

1.5 mi · 435 University Ave E

Open now · (651) 292-1721

DIRECTIONS

Union Gospel Mission

https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C1CHBF_enUS852US852&tbs=lf:1,lf_ui:2&tbm=lcl&sxsrf=ALeKk01j7ClaBxrvxQckN7V2W7-nD0y1kw:16218844... 1/1

West 7th Street Neighborhood & Re-zoning

The residents and businesses in the West 7th Street Neighborhood understand there is a great need for homeless facilities. However, since the Listening/Freedom House opened in late January 2021, there have been daily incidents ranging from trash spread over multiple city blocks, parking lots, and residential homes (including human feces, crack pipes, syringes and condoms), fights, thefts, and break-ins at commercial and residential buildings along West 7th. Some incidents are violent in nature. The crime/vandalism has become especially unwelcome from Kellogg to St. Clair Avenue and in Irvine Park. The West 7th Neighborhood wants to be a partner in finding a better solution for the Listening/Freedom House.

The West 7th Neighborhood members feel there has to be a larger facility for the Listening/Freedom House to prevail. The former fire station at 296 West 7th does not have enough amenities, such as showers, beds, and bathrooms to accommodate the number of individuals using this Listening/Freedom House location. The current location makes it difficult for individuals using the Listening/Freedom House to have easy access to medical or mental health treatment.

The West 7th area is a thriving entertainment/retail/residential area. Many of the individuals who use Listening/Freedom House have mental health issues and several have become very aggressive towards restaurant customers, area employees, and residents. While the Saint Paul Police have increased their presence in the area, they can't be all places at all times. The incidents are becoming more frequent and more aggressive.

The commercial and residential neighbors that work and live in this area are not trained or equipped to deal with this new crime/vandalism. As a result, the restaurants and businesses are losing customers and we're all afraid of what will happen next and no one feels safe.



Since the Listening House opened in late January, West 7th residential and commercial neighbors are now experiencing a 3-fold jump in new crimes and vandalism. There have been several violent crimes involving weapons as well as many thefts/break-ins and vandalism.

Re-zoning the West 7th area for homeless shelters IS NOT the solution for the challenges of the homeless.

The Listening/Freedom House needs to be relocated to a larger building that has an appropriate number of bathrooms, showers, beds, and space, with convenient access to 24 hour full-service facilities such as Catholic Charities. At the current location, when the Listening/Freedom House closes at 8pm, there is nowhere for the Listening/Freedom House individuals to easily find shelter. As a result, the homeless are camping in commercial parking lots, breaking into apartment building foyers, and sleeping on the lawns, decks and porches of the homes in and around Irvine Park.

The West 7th Neighborhood wants to help the City of Saint Paul relocate the Listening/Freedom House so they can be more successful in their mission of providing for the homeless. We want to help improve the quality of life for these homeless individuals. A larger building with more basic amenities could provide a wider range of opportunities including increasing services, such as more complete meals. Several of the West 7th Businesses are willing to donate meals, food and financial support to that effort. Plus, the extra space of a larger building would furnish better protection against the weather.

Included in this document you will find photos illustrating a small sampling of the incidents occurring daily. We sincerely hope that the Planning Commissioners understand that West 7th, as the gateway to Saint Paul, cannot withstand these daily incidents and threats. Re-zoning 296 West 7th to a homeless structure is a mistake.

We ask that the proposed zoning change NOT be approved and a more suitable location be found for the Listening/Freedom House.

Thank you for your full consideration.

Tom Reid's Hockey City Pub
The Art Farm Advertising
Parlour Bar
Cossetta Alimentari

Dan Parker, WWII Company
Eagle Street Grill
Mike Black Law Office
Westlake Orthotics and Prosthetics

Dr. Robert Keifer
Dan Conoryea
Susan Adair, Irvine Park Resident
Ginny Zeyer, Irvine Park Resident

Cathy Czah, Irvine Park Resident
307 Walnut Street Owners/Residents

Photos of West 7th Incidents Since February 2021

Photos included represent a small sampling of the events occurring daily in the West 7th Neighborhood

PLEASE NOTE -- some of the photos are very graphic and maybe disturbing to some readers



Garbage after a few days at the Listening/Freedom House, 296 West 7th Street



Listening/Freedom House individuals preventing entry to West 7th Parking Lot (former Dairy Queen)



Probable crack pipe found near Tom Reid's Hockey City Pub on 3/23/21

Syringe, one of 11 found on 5/9/21 in the parking lot at 310 Sherman Street and in the Alexander Ramsey House parking lot



Weapon of cut-off rake handle with rocks tied into T-shirt fabric. Found in parking lot at 310 Sherman Street



Two separate fires, 4/26/21 and 5/13/21 were set near the dry cleaners building at 286 West 7th by Listening/Freedom House individuals. The fires were caught early and extinguished 4/26 by Police and 5/13 by a Ramsey County Sheriff who saw flames as he was driving by



Saint Paul Police investigate shooting at Listening/Freedom House on 3/11/21 (above and right photos)

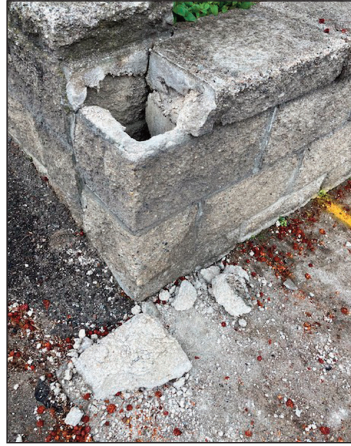


Photos of West 7th Incidents Since February 2021 CONTINUED

Photos included represent a small sampling of the events occurring daily in the West 7th Neighborhood

PLEASE NOTE -- some of the photos are very graphic and maybe disturbing to some readers

Property damage to retaining wall at 310 Sherman Street done by Listening/ Freedom House individuals on 4/22/21



Property damage to window at 286 West 7th Street done by Listening/Freedom House individuals on 4/6/21

Individual from Listening/Freedom House removing trash from Ramsey House dumpsters on 5/8/21



Food, containers, trash next to Ramsey House wall on Walnut Street side



Trash along West 7th Street, May 2021



Rabbit with skull crushed and mutilated found at rear door to 310 Sherman Street on 4/22/21 (gray box is to cover very graphic mutilation). Saint Paul Police felt the rabbit was likely tortured and killed by a human and not a dog, cat or coyote



Human feces found on edge of 310 Sherman Street parking lot. Found almost daily in Ramsey House parking lot, former DQ parking lot, along Walnut Street, and many other areas in the West 7th Neighborhood

Individual from Listening/ Freedom House in former DQ parking lot, May 2021



Confrontation between Listening/Freedom House individual and employee at Tom Reid's Hockey City Pub on 4/16/21

Letter from a West 7th Resident

The email below was written by one of the tenants at the Louis Rochat building, located at 267 1/2 – 275 West 7th Street. The email was sent to the property manager at Kingwood Management company.

Regarding the new neighbors – although I have to admit things are not as bad as they were even a couple weeks ago, I still feel like this is not a good location for the Day Shelter.

As a resident living across the street and who has to walk to my car (on street parking only, with metered parking only ending at Grand & W 7th) I now avoid that side of the street until I am beyond it.

On the weekends I leave quite early and the folks who are waiting until it opens at 8am often are literally camped out along the side of the building with pallets and tarp for walls or in the bus shelter, which is right in front of the building. Thankfully the security for my building has been beefed up in response to those waiting for 8 sleeping (as well as urinating, defecating, leaving used condoms, cigarette butts ((on carpeting!)) clothing and trash in our doorway).

When I come home in the afternoon they are, understandably, congregating out in front, in large numbers, making it intimidating to walk through, and if I did need to catch a bus going towards Downtown I would never wait for it there. As a matter of fact at first glance you might think there are a dozen or so men waiting for the bus because they are right where the bus stops. It's also not unusual for there to be an argument ensuing as well.

There is often a police presence, which although reassuring really is not a great optic for the neighborhood. This area has made a reputation for being a restaurant destination especially for those attending events at the Xcel. This had finally made its way west of Walnut with Parlour opening and with that kind of expansion comes the effort to be visually welcoming. And then boom- it is NOT visually welcoming; I feel bad for Parlour and the positive investment they have made to this block. I really feel sorry the bridal gown shop welcoming their "by appointment only" brides, bridesmaids and mother's of the bride...

So, beyond the intimidation factor leading to walking a different route, the economic and aesthetic trials being taken on by neighborhood business who we are all looking to re-establish a post pandemic normalcy – I am last but not least, particularly concerned about and question the wisdom of locating this Day Shelter right across the street from a large, very family-oriented apartment complex. There are tons of children, there's playground equipment in the courtyard - which is not fenced in. It's well kept and seems to be a very safe community- You would think this may have occurred to someone, I'm surprised it's not a zoning issue. I was walking to my car one day, I had changed my usual route and when I came back around the guy I was avoiding came out of the alley and casually walked up to a nice SUV parked outside the Apt complex, gave the door a pull, it was locked and he went on his way... middle of the day.

None of it seems very neighborly.

Thanks for your consideration,
Susan, a West 7th St concerned resident

"I now avoid that side of the street until I am beyond it.

On the weekends I leave quite early and the folks who are waiting until it opens at 8am often are literally camped out along the side of the building with pallets and tarp for walls or in the bus shelter, which is right in front of the building. Thankfully the security for my building has been beefed up in response to those waiting for 8 sleeping (as well as urinating, defecating, leaving used condoms, cigarette butts ((on carpeting!)) clothing and trash in our doorway)."

Sent: Thursday, May 13, 2021 11:14 AM

To: *CI-StPaul_Contact-Council <Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us<<mailto:Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us>>>; CouncilHearing (CI-StPaul) <CouncilHearing@ci.stpaul.mn.us<<mailto:CouncilHearing@ci.stpaul.mn.us>>>

Subject: Urgent Support for Freedom House

My name is Kyle Lipinski and I work for Minnesota Community Care, the largest community health center in Saint Paul. I am dual licensed counselor who works with unsheltered individuals experiencing significant mental health concerns.

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 and are becoming less and less available due to a lack of free public space where individuals can truly be themselves. 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,

Kyle Lipinski
424 Dorothy Day Place

Sent: Saturday, May 22, 2021 3:45 PM

To: Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul) <Luis.Pereira@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Cc: Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul) <sonja.butler@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Rezoning and West 7th Homeless Shelter

Mr. Pereira;

Could you please make sure my email is distributed to the planning commissioners and put into the record as part of the discussing on rezoning for homeless shelters?

To the Planning Commissioners of St. Paul;

I work in a clinic in the Richie Medical building. I've worked in that same clinic for 17 years. I usually park either in the contract lot or on Sherman.

A homeless shelter opened in the old fire station building earlier this year. Since then, it's become very unnerving to walk by the area near the fire station because of the homeless. Many of them appear to have mental health problems and are very confrontational.

Last Friday, when I was walking to my car around 4:45pm, one of the homeless men from in front of the fire station walked over to me very quickly and grabbed the strap on my purse. He tried to yank it off my shoulder. I started screaming and kicked him very hard on his shins. He left go and I ran to my car. Nothing like this has ever happened to me before. I've been using the same route to my job for 17 years and I've never been this scared to go back to work on Monday. I don't know what to do.

For the safety of the residents and employees and the homeless in that area, please do not make that fire station a permanent homeless rescue by rezoning.

It's clear that building is not big enough as so many are laying on the sidewalk in front, in the bus shelter, on the grass along side the fire station, and down by the old Dairy Queen. Regions Hospital has on site mental health care and they're good at what they do. Isn't there a larger building near Regions that would be better because of access to Regions?

I know homelessness is a complicated topic. Shoving them into a building without medical help puts everyone at risk.

Don't rezone the fire station area.

Karen Lewis

1709 Sunbird Dr., Faribault, MN 55021

Sent: Thursday, May 13, 2021 10:45 AM

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

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

Subject: In support of Freedom House

5/13/2021

My name is Kat Donnelly 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, shower, store their belongings, and get food and supplies.

I provide care at Freedom House via our medical outreach to our unsheltered patients, where I 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 care and 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,

Kat Donnelly

Kat Donnelly, FNP

Health Care for the Homeless

MN Community Care

kdonnelly@mncare.org

424 Dorothy Day Place

Sent: Monday, May 24, 2021 8:36 PM

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

Cc: Noecker, Rebecca (CI-StPaul) <Rebecca.Noecker@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Listening House zoning issue 296 West 7th St.

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

Hello Mr. Dermody -

Would you please forward this note to appropriate Planning Commission Members regarding the rezoning discussion for 296 West 7th St., St. Paul, the Listening House.

Thank you for your concern about homeless and mentally ill members of our community. Rezoning 296 West 7th St. is not the best solution for helping these individuals or for the safety of the families living within feet of this former fire station. Unfortunately, the homeless individuals are not receiving the mental and physical care they need at the Listening House and are roaming the neighborhood trespassing, causing damage to personal property, and engaging in other unlawful activities. The broken and boarded up windows at the firestation and in the community (Forepaugh's) do not project a safe, thriving neighborhood, either. One of my neighbors shared that she's had to call the police more times this year, than in the past thirty years. Just this weekend a violent, mentally ill person had an outburst at a building site in the neighborhood and burned a piece of property of the builder.

Please consider moving the Listening House out of a high density residential neighborhood (Irvine Park Towers is across the street, as well as other apartment buildings, too). Restaurants are struggling to recover after the pandemic shutdowns, as well, and criminal activity deters patrons. Perhaps consider partnering with Dorothy Day and Catholic Charities or choose a site near their campus where there are 24-hour medical and mental health facilities designed and equipped to help those in need.

Thank you for your consideration

Robin Gehl
38 Irvine Park
St. Paul, MN 55102

Sent: Friday, May 14, 2021 7:49 AM
To: *CI-StPaul_Contact-Council <Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; CouncilHearing (CI-StPaul) <CouncilHearing@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Freedom house

May 14,2021

My name is Maria Teresa Olivari, MD and I volunteer as a cardiologist for Minnesota Community Care, the largest community health center in Saint Paul.

I support Freedom House remaining a day shelter. Spaces where people experiencing homelessness can spend their days have 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 care as well as rest, store their belongings, 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 but it will make it harder for unsheltered, mentally ill, and substance using people to access much needed 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,

Maria Teresa Olivari, MD

Voice Mail transcriptions via City Council offices:

Hello my name is Gerardo Segovia. First name is spelled Gerardo last name, SEGOVIA. My address is 1667 Englewood Ave, Saint Paul 5512. This is in regards of Freedom House issue that is going on. I work for a Minnesota Community care in Saint Paul, specifically health care for the homeless. I am in support of Freedom House remaining a day shelter. This is a space where people experiencing homeless can spend their days. Because I mean they are almost non-existent because of the pandemic. Really Freedom House is safe is its supportive for the adult on shelter folks. They do provide access to mental health, medical help support for any other social services they provide. Supplies, get food, all that stuff. And as I said in are Minnesota Community Care medical outreach providers that work at the Freedom House. Come, I have truly shown us how vulnerable this population is in our state in removing Freedom House will not solve the problem of homelessness or criminal activity in the W 7th neighborhood. It would actually make it harder for every single on shelter material, substance. Use person have a harder time accessing services. I like I said, please consider my repetition. Our petition to have Freedom House remain open. It's very important for our own shelter folks and for this population to remain getting services that are there that much, much needed. Again, my name is Gerardo Segovia, phone number 651-470-3086.

Hi, my name is Elizabeth Fursland. That's E L I Z A B E T H last name is sersland S E R S L A N D my address is. My work address is four two four Dorothy Day. Place Saint Paul, Minnesota five five one zero two. My home address is ninety three seven Second Avenue South Bloomington, Minnesota. Five five four two zero. I am calling about the Freedom House and my support for the Freedom House to remain at the shelter. I currently work for Minnesota Community Care, the largest community Health Center in Minnesota. Freedom House is a space where people experiencing homelessness can spend their days has become in. These spaces have become nonexistent, more non-existent since the pandemic. Freedom House is a safe, welcoming support of space for unsheltered adults to spend their daytime hours and access services like mental health and medical support, as well as rest store store their belongings and to get food and supplies. Our clinic provides outreach, support, care at Freedom House are providers come and give medical care to the people who come to the drop in center. Some of the most vulnerable people in our state. Removing the Freedom House will not solve any problems for homelessness that criminal activity or other issues in the W 7th community, it will simply make it harder for unsheltered mentally ill and substance using

people to access services. Freedom House is a hub Where is 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. Please keep it going. It is one of the best resources for the homeless community that is in this city. Again, my name is Elizabeth Thursday and I'm a social worker with the Minnesota Community Care Health care for the homeless. Thank you.

Hello, good afternoon. My name is Ruby Martinez. My name is spelled Ruby for Ruby at Martinez Martinez today is May 13th, Thursday, May 13th around 1:24. I worked for Minnesota Community Care, the largest community Health Center in Saint Paul. My address is 424 Dorothy Day place. I support Freedom House remaining a day shelter. I'm leaving this message to advocate that Freedom House should stay open. The space where people experiencing homelessness can spend their days has become almost non existence 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 the rest as well as rest store their belongings and get food and supplies are Minnesota Community Care medical outreach providers 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 on the West Seven 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 and seeing Paul please allow Freedom House to continue its vital work. Respectfully, Ruby Martinez, clinic coordinator at health care for the homeless. Four two four thirty Day place phone number. Here is six five one seven nine three two two one nine. Thank you and I hope Freedom House continues to operate as an emergency zoning for the pandemic an for a Center for unsheltered folks to go Thank you so much. Bye bye.

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

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

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 Radas 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

* *Real Estate*

* *Hospitality*

900 American Blvd. East, Suite 300, Bloomington, MN 55420-1392
PH: 952.853.1400 FAX: 952.853.1410 www.nathcompanies.com



June 1, 2021

Bill Dermody
City Planner
Planning & Economic Development
25 W. 4th Street, 14th Floor
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Bill,

As you know I represent Irvine Park Towers which is right across the street of the Freedom House and is a high-density, multi-family residential building that has over 120 families. We have been here for over 30 years and never seen the amount of crime harassment and problems in the area. Although we recognize the need to serve the community; we doubt if the Freedom House is the in the best interest of the neighborhood and its current residents.

Since the temporary zoning changes allowed Freedom House to operate in this location, we have experienced a large increase in crime, attempted break-ins and nuisance complaints from our residents and owners. This has had a negative impact on the neighborhood, the building and our community. The safety and security of our residents and owners is our primary concern and should be shared by our public officials.

Attached are the examples I provided previously as well as few more that have been sent to our management office. Please note that we strongly object to changing the zoning to allow Freedom House to remain permanent.

Thank you,


Shalini Nath-Walia

Shelter

Warren, Pamela <Pamela.Warren@district196.org>

Fri 5/21/2021 4:32 PM

To: Irvine Park Towers <ipt@nathcompanies.com>

To Whom It May Concern:

In regards to the shelter across the street from our apartment building, I have been concerned about my safety, as well as the safety of others. I have seen people urinate outside our entrance, approach me asking to come in the building for water and a bathroom, sleeping in the hospital parking ramp stair wells, and defecating in the grass across from Cafe Astoria and Hope. I no longer walk around the neighborhood after dinner due to being harassed and in general, frightened for my safety. Many tenants in our building are women who live alone and no longer feel comfortable being outside. When I go outside, I don't stray far from the door. I also no longer visit the restaurants surrounding us as often. This will affect the businesses on W 7th that are just opening up following Covid closures. People attending concerts, games, and restaurants will stop coming, which will affect business revenues. This neighborhood has been growing and flourishing, and the shelter is a hinderance to that growth.

The homeless people in the area in the past have never been a problem. Many were recognizable, and I never felt unsafe. I no longer feel that way and will probably choose to move because of the change. Often, I come home after dark from either work or visiting family, and that is a problem now. I am on constant alert.

I also believe that I have seen several drug deals happening in the parking lot next to the shelter - at all times of day.

This location is not the best for the shelter. Everyone is literally hanging around outside and on the street corner (by the bus stop, which is a bad situation for those of us taking the bus).

Thank you.

Pam Warren

Highland Elementary School

14001 Pilot Knob Rd.

Apple Valley, MN 55124

(952) 423-7595

Pam.warren11@gmail.com (personal email)

Seventh St shelter

Mary Ann Meyer <psychologistmeyer@gmail.com>

Sun 5/23/2021 4:40 PM

To: Irvine Park Towers <ipt@nathcompanies.com>

Dear Dan,

I have lived in this building since 1994. The homeless population have always been a part of the street life between The Salvation Army and Dorothy Day, and an accepted part of the community. Things changed when the shelter opened across the street from my home of 27 years.

As I am writing this letter, obscenities, yelling and an another aggressive fight is exploding below my windows for the second time today. Last week I had to close my window in order to work doing Telemedicine from my home. Too many nights to count I hear the psychotic rantings of the drug addicted and/or mentally ill, and it is both horrifying and maddening that more is not being done. One night I found a schizophrenic man building a fire in the rain gutter across the alley as part of his psychotic delusion. I have been aggressively charged at and threatened in the lobby of the apartment complex, in the parking ramp, and in my car at a stop light. On a walk on Smith St, I encountered a psychotic man with his pants down around his ankles talking to himself. Another man was sleeping and eating from the dumpster behind the building. Drug deals are routinely done near the entrance to the Fort Road Medical Building in the light of day. There is human feces on the sidewalk. It doesn't feel safe to walk in front of the building or wait for the bus.

My car has been vandalized twice since February costing 7,400.00 to repair.

I am a psychologist and I have compassion for the overwhelming problems these people face; things like housing, Social Services, medical/dental, mental health attention. I am willing to pay taxes toward those ends. I am not willing to forfeit feeling safe in my own home. I ask you would you?

Respectfully,

Mary Ann Meyer

Master's Level MN Licensed Psychologist

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

(No subject)

MELISSA FELDNER <feldnermel@comcast.net>

Sun 5/23/2021 6:59 AM

To: Irvine Park Towers <ipt@nathcompanies.com>

morning dan. yes the shelter causes some concerns for sure. not only for my own safety but the whole neighborhood. i shouldnt have to step over homeless people on my way to work laying in the hallways let alone my own floor halls. im sure the homeless people carry some kind of protection for their own safety and some of them mentally ill or on drugs , so i bought mace just in case of any confrontation. i pay good rent to feel safe and never thought i would be considering moving when my lease is up in sept, let alone how the cost of having security in the lobby will affect my monthly rent, i cant understand why nath doesnt fix the main problem which is the entry way!! for the cost of security they could just change the freaking entry way!! have a great day!! mel

(No subject)

MELISSA FELDNER <feldnermel@comcast.net>

Sun 5/23/2021 8:17 AM

To: Irvine Park Towers <ipt@nathcompanies.com>

ps.... i have bought extra security protection for my apt door, and when i take the garbage to the garbage shoot i really prefer not walking in there only to find a person using it as a restroom.and finally... i think i told you, since im a very early riser and face 7th st, i constantly see individuals yelling swearing screaming at the top of their lungs at absolutly nothing only to walk up to our entry way, so as far as the hrs of the security guard i would feel safer if the hrs for.that guard was more like 11pm to 4 or 5 am

Hello

LilMama Beenthroughitall <murryl82@gmail.com>

Fri 5/21/2021 3:02 PM

To: Irvine Park Towers <ipt@nathcompanies.com>

📎 6 attachments (25 MB)

20210520_133336.jpg; 20210520_133452.jpg; 20210521_145646.png; 20210521_145515.png; 20210521_145447.png; image0.png;

I'm very concerned for my kids and my safety since the shelter came across the street. My kids are so scared to get on the school bus in morning or get off the bus. My kids have seen so much since the shelter have come from men and women cussing loud, arguing, making the properties and businesses around here so nasty and filthy. My son suffers from high anxiety and adhd and some days he cries because he don't want to get on bus because he so scared he say of those people. They pees outside make piles of rocks and dirt all around here. The city bus stop be so dirty and they smoke drugs right there to the point were me and my kids have to walk two blocks to the other city bus stop because the one we use to go to across the street they doing all these things over there. Then for the lady running the place I forget her name she act like she don't even care about us people and most of all my kids safety. They walking around with no mask on coughing not covering they mouth. The guys just whistle at me say sexual things to me when I'm at the school bus stop waiting on my kids or while I'm putting my kids on bus in morning. I have saw them sleeping in front of our building having cart full of trash dirt etc just sitting all around here. Walgreens windows have piles of dirt food and trash all around they building. It has to be at some point you guys have to care about our safety we are scared my kids are scared they always say when I'm picking them up from school bus stop or taking them in morning mom you see that man yelling cussing or you see him peeing. My kids are scared out of this world. My daughter 15 and she have them guys over there few times I was running late from appts so they had to get off bus without me and she said the guys would whistle at her say hey baby my daughter was crying she just a damn child. To be honest I wanted to go over there and rage but I knew I would be the one in jail not the damn predators that did this to my baby! I'm tired and drained please im begging at this point DO SOMETHING AND QUICK!!!!

Planning Commission Meeting 5/28

Jerry Madsen <jerrymadsen@gmail.com>

Fri 5/21/2021 9:58 AM

To: Irvine Park Towers <ipt@nathcompanies.com>

Hi Dan, below is the letter to send to the planning commission.

To whom it may concern;

I understand during the next planning committee meeting, the subject of Freedom House changing their hours to 24 hours. I currently reside at 291 7th Street West (Irvine Park Towers) directly across the street from Freedom House. Since Freedom House has been open, our neighborhood has seen a substantial increase in illegal activity including, gun shots, drug deals, people being robbed.

Our building has also seen an increase in nefarious activity including loitering, people being passed out in our lobby & breezeway as well as sleeping in our stairwell & on random floors. We have also found human feces & urine in our building. We had no issues before your facility moved into our neighborhood.

Having your facility open 24 hours a day 7 days a week will not solve any problems with homelessness but it will steadily decrease the property values of homes in our neighborhood, deter people from coming to the West 7th neighborhood to spend money at local businesses, thus affecting businesses and their revenue stream & eventually businesses will leave and our neighborhood will become a wasteland. I urge you to reconsider having your facility open 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

Jerry Madsen

Irvine Park Towers

291 7th Street West #1407

St. Paul, MN 55102

Planning Commission Meeting May 28th

echri21724@aol.com <echri21724@aol.com>

Wed 5/19/2021 11:49 AM

To: NmHood@gmail.com <NmHood@gmail.com>

Cc: Irvine Park Towers <ipt@nathcompanies.com>

Dear Mr. Hood

It has recently been brought to my attention that one of the subjects to be discussed at the next meeting of the Planning Commission on May 28th is the matter of the 24 hour opening of the Freedom House on May 28th. I currently live at 291 West Seventh Street and am acutely aware of the activity at the Freedom House. Since it opened we have experienced nothing but problems at my residence. From guns fired, defecation in the alleyway, sleeping into our building at night, trash on streets and sidewalks, police calls to the Freedom House almost daily, loud arguments among their residents nightly, needles found in the lot next to the House.....these are regular occurrences. Please check the police calls to the House and the number of police necessary to handle these daily problems in the short months this facility has been open. I ask you whether the opening of this facility for 24 hours a day seven days a week will improve life for all the residents of Seventh Street. The answer is a resounding no. It will get worse. I ask you to delay any action on expanding the hours of this facility for a year, listen to the concerns of long time residents of the area, then decide if this is the action that should be undertaken to improve the lives of all residents of this area. This will give all stakeholders a chance to express their views on this complex issue. Thanks you

Edward Christie
291 West Seventh Street #1701
St Paul, Minnesota 55102

Shelter concerns

Riley S <rileyschouveller10@gmail.com>

Thu 5/20/2021 1:27 PM

To: Irvine Park Towers <ipt@nathcompanies.com>

Hi Dan,

I live in the irvine park towers building and wanted to express some concerns I have regarding the shelter across the street. I understand these people need a place to go and everything but I don't believe that it should be located right in one of the busiest places in the area. I have to occasionally park in the neighborhoods behind the shelter and I have been approached by people asking for money or something every time and this has made it so people do not feel comfortable coming to visit me. I get it that this is not a huge problem, but it makes me nervous and scared to go out at night. I have ignored them, they yell at me. I have said I have no money, they say they will wait. I know people who don't even live here who don't feel comfortable coming to West 7th to drink and eat at night because of this presence, which I know is not 100% avoidable.

My biggest concern arises from something that occurred recently, last Thursday May 13th. I work in the early morning hours, which means I have to leave my apartment at 4am, which does make me nervous as it is dark out so I usually take the exit through Fort Road Medical center (i believe it is). I entered the stairwell and there was a homeless person sleeping, blocking my way out. Being a woman in her young twenties, I did not feel comfortable even risking waking them so I backed away and went to the main entrance. This is when I found another homeless person sleeping in the doorways and I again was scared. My safest exit was to take the stairs down and exit through the alleyway, which often has homeless people at the dumpster or sleeping on the ground. This is just one example of the unsettling experiences I have had.

I do love this area and this building, however I do not feel safe leaving my apartment at times. I understand that they are considering extending their hours but even at 8pm, when they close now, there are so many homeless people roaming around after and the fact that this happens when it is somewhat light outside is the only somewhat comforting thing about this set up. I do understand that this is a hard decision for them to make, and why should they make these changes because of one 20 some year old girl when these people already have lost so much. I just want to be able to leave for work and feel safe or not panic coming back from a run because these people will not leave me alone. Ideally, I would love it if they would reconsider the location as a whole, but again probably not a realistic request. I understand the privilege I have of not being in their position, but I also understand that I would be in serious danger if an interaction took a turn.

Thank you for providing your tenants with this information and outlet to share our concerns,

Riley S.

May 20, 2021

To The Planning Commision

I am writing this letter with great concerns of the shelter at the fire station on West 7th Street. This shelter is directly across the street from a condo we own and rent out. Currently our renter has expressed concern for her safety since the shelter has been open. Since this is out of my control I don't know how to assure her safety. This could greatly affect if we are able to rent this property in the future and then would be a financial burden to us.

I have been notified that you are discussing extending the hours of the shelter which we feel would be a danger to the area. The police calls to this shelter are frequent. The trash being left around the area and the loitering is also a big problem. The hours for the shelter should not be extended. The shelter should be closed. This area already has many shelters and now the Bethesda hospital is becoming a shelter. Please reconsider this shelter for the safety of the tenants and the businesses in this area.

Sincerely,

Dale and Eileen Schouvelier

Owner of condo at

291 West 7th Street, #1405

St, Paul, MN 55102

elleen9698@gmail.com

651-335-6086

Freedom House

Paul Kurtz <kurtzpaul@msn.com>

Thu 5/20/2021 4:58 PM

To: Cedrick.baker@gmail.com <Cedrick.baker@gmail.com>; adejoy@esndc.org <adejoy@esndc.org>; kristinemariongrill@gmail.com <kristinemariongrill@gmail.com>; nmhood@gmail.com <nmhood@gmail.com>; Jake.reilly76@gmail.com <Jake.reilly76@gmail.com>; usstmcc@gmail.com <usstmcc@gmail.com>; simon.taghioff@gmail.com <simon.taghioff@gmail.com>

Cc: Irvine Park Towers <ipt@nathcompanies.com>

Dear Planning Commissioners:

I am a condo resident at the Irvine Park Towers, which, as I'm sure you're well aware of, is across the street from Freedom House. Since I'm told there is a vote next week to make Freedom House not only permanent, but also a 24-hour shelter, I wanted to let you know my reasons why I think that's a bad and very dangerous idea. I have been a resident of St. Paul for almost four years and my family for ten years or more. I chose this location because it was a safe neighborhood that was centrally located within walking distance to some of the best of what Saint Paul has to offer. But since Freedom House opened its doors as a shelter, it has been anything but normal or safe in this neighborhood.

I'd like you put yourselves in our shoes and imagine what it would be like if, almost seemingly overnight, these issues below started to plague the neighborhood you live in because the city, even against a major outcry from tax paying local businesses and residents ahead of time, invited a large faction of people, most of whom have drug addictions, mental illness or both, to start coming to your neighborhood, daily and en masse, and cause all these issues and crimes.

Here's some examples, and these are just things I've witnessed personally since Freedom house opened:

- A shooting in broad daylight
- Physical fights between the Freedom House residents
- A bar patron punched in the face and knocked out on W 7th by a Freedom House resident, cracking his head open and then robbed....victim was taken away by ambulance
- A homeless man threatening me when I wouldn't let him follow me into my building
- Homeless people getting into our building, sleeping in the hallways and stairwells, and using them as a toilet
- A few weeks ago at around 9 am, a homeless man, high on drugs and knocking on various doors over on Ryan Street asking residents if he could use their shower because he was "high on drugs and Freedom House wouldn't let (him) in"I have Ring video of that from my friend over there if you'd like to see it
- A daily cacophony of loud augments and yelling, including well after Freedom House closes for the night, or even opens each day for that matter
- People from the shelter standing in the middle of the road, blocking traffic and intimidating drivers, which then causes loud horn honking, more screaming
- People with extreme mental illness walking back and forth screaming obscenities at people who aren't even there, sometimes for hours on end, and starting as early as 5am
- Littering
- Homeless people sleeping in the doorway or lobby of my building and surrounding buildings (several times)
- Constant panhandling
- Cat calling my girlfriend when she parks and walks across the street, so she now feels unsafe coming over
- Police and ambulance calls on a regular basis

- The fire alarm in my building was pulled last month by one of the Freedom House residents, angry he was kicked out of our building (apparently he felt entitled to sleep in our entryway), so the fire department had to show up
- Vandalism to cars in the adjacent parking lot
- Urinating/defecating/vomiting on the sidewalks and on people's front entrances
- Used needles on sidewalk and street
- Used condoms in parking lots and behind buildings

Seriously, why do we suddenly need to put up with all of this? There's elderly people and kids living here. And again, this is just what I've witnessed personally, and I'm not even embellishing.

Just on this side of Xcel within three blocks, there's Irvine Park Towers, Sherman Forbes apartments, Oxbo, Irvine Park Exchange, not to mention an apartment building going up across the street from Xcel and another across the street from Bad Weather. That's probably thousands of people just in those buildings alone, not to mention all the houses and other apartment buildings around this area. And there's already homeless shelters in the two 6-story buildings on the other side of Xcel Energy Center at the Catholic Charities....why does there need to be even more shelters all in this one concentrated area?! It can't just be because of being on the bus line, which one response read in an email I got back from the city council.

One of the recent news articles said that Freedom House services about 100-200 people a day, and most likely a lot the same people for the most part. Is that worth putting the other thousands of residents around Freedom House through all of this, putting their safety at risk or getting their properties vandalized or defecated on? I ask again, would you want these issues happening in your neighborhood, in front of your home or in front of your kids?

The City of St. Paul is 56 square miles and I find it impossible to believe there's not another vacant building, on the bus line, and in an area not nearly as densely populated as this area or in the heart of the Xcel entertainment district, where a shelter couldn't be opened and have the same amenities as the Freedom House location. And if that said building was lacking things like showers and bathrooms, couldn't some of the hundreds of thousands of dollars being poured into Freedom House go to putting in those amenities by updating another building's plumbing infrastructure?

I implore you to look at other areas or ways on this quest to help with the homelessness issue. While I'm sympathetic to those trying to find their way out of homelessness and get on the right track, I'm also a realist and know that a large percentage are addicts who never intend to or will, which is why they're homeless in the first place, and all Freedom House does is enable them. I know this from experience.

I'm also sympathetic to keeping my neighborhood, my neighbors and the surrounding businesses safe. And I don't want a building across the street where people sit outside loitering all day, screaming profanities, getting in loud arguments or fights, and completely disrespecting the neighborhood and the people that actually pay to reside here. This neighborhood has had enough.

Regards,
Paul Kurtz



From: [teri <teri@teribleiter@yahoo.com>](mailto:teri@teribleiter@yahoo.com)
Sent: Thursday, May 27, 2021 12:14 AM
To: Irvine Park Towers <ipt@nathcompanies.com>
Subject: Re: Freedom House

To the St. Paul Planning Commission -

My name is Teresa Ableiter and I live in Irvine Park Towers at 291 7th street west. I moved into the building in June of 2020 and have lived in the west 7th neighborhood for the past 12 years. When I moved in, the building across the street was occupied by the St. Paul Fire Department. In December, Freedom House moved in.

It has come to my attention that the planning commission intends to make Freedom House a permanent fixture in my neighborhood. I have concerns about that as the guests of Freedom House have, so far, proven not to be good neighbors.

Since they moved in, there has been a noticeable difference in the neighborhood. I cannot wait for the bus on the corner without being asked for money or cigarettes. I have seen people smoking crack in the bus shelter (I reported that to Metro Transit), people 'signing' at the intersection, fights between guests on the sidewalk, and a big increase in the amount of litter in the neighborhood around the building. I have had people try to follow me or my guests into the building when the door opens, I've seen people who got in hiding out in the basement and the stairwell, camping outside in the doorway of the medical building, and sleeping in the courtyard, as well as outside the shelter itself in the parking lot. Our security building has had to hire a security guard to patrol the halls and there's been an increased police presence across the street in response. The police presence hasn't really helped. I've heard a lot of yelling at all hours from the guests across the street.

There's a gentleman who likes to collect rocks from the landscaping and arrange them into piles, there's another guest who stands outside screaming profanities at no one in particular. I can hear him clearly, in my apartment, with the windows closed. Today, I stopped in to inquire about him. I asked if he has tourette syndrome - because I wanted to understand why this guest is outside screaming profanities every day and it's going unchecked. Clearly he needs some sort of help, whether it's a medical condition or a psychiatric one - and he's obviously not getting it at this facility. I did not appreciate the loaded question the lady behind the counter gave me - "Where should he go?" My answer to her (and the commission) is I don't know. But maybe a shelter in a residential neighborhood full of kids isn't the best option. I have been listening to this man screaming profanities for the past 6 months and no one goes out to calm him down or address his issues. It's upsetting. While I was there, another guest angrily stormed out shouting profanities at one of the ladies who work there.

I am not a social worker, nor do I know the qualifications of the people who are staffing Freedom House, but I resent the mindset that because I have complaints about the behavior of their guests that I am anti-homeless. In my youth I visited Listening House myself, at the time they were located in a storefront downtown. I've eaten more than one meal at Dorothy Day in the past. I didn't initially have a problem with Freedom House being across the street from me because I was under the impression that it was a temporary solution. Winter in Minnesota is cold and the pandemic was causing a shortage of shelter spaces due to the need for social distancing. However, the past several months have shown that they are not good neighbors. I would not want them to be a permanent fixture and I respectfully ask that you reconsider allowing them to stay permanently at this location.

- Teresa Ableiter

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

From: Bonita Schoep <bonitaschoep@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 27, 2021 9:12 AM
To: Irvine Park Towers <ipt@nathcompanies.com>
Subject: Homeless shelter

Greetings

I would like to thank the st. Paul city council for allowing me an opportunity to voice my concerns regarding the homeless shelter the freedom house.

I have lived at Irvine Park towers for the past 27 years. Over the years I have seen many changes for the neighborhood that make me want to live here.

Recently this has changed since the opening of the shelter. I no longer feel that sense of safety i once had. I work at united and I am able to go through the tunnel to work. I work from 3pm until 1130pm . Even going through the tunnel I have encountered a homeless person or two who have some how gotten into the building. A little nerve wrecking to have to encounting a person who is high on drugs. My fellow coworkers have commented to me that on a occasion or to that they have similar encounters in doctors professional building and the parking ramps. The homeless that we have encountered are individuals who do not ask for money but get aggressive when they are turned. Down Let me ask all of you on the city council how you would feel if your wife , daughter would have deal with this on a daily basis. Also I have noticed the graffiti on the sidewalks in the area along with the increase in drug dealing. Iam tired of seeing garbage being thrown in front of our building and down the sidewalk. I have never considered carrying a weapon but under the circumstances I have given it some serious thought. I feel angry that the people that are soppose to be my voice in making my surroundings safe are imposing their agenda on all of us that have to live here. In closing let me ask all of you if you would like crack pipes, needles or human waste on your door steps. Please do the job you were Voted in to do. Represent our voice.

Bonita Schoep

Shalini Nath Walia

From: Robin Espinoza
Sent: Thursday, May 27, 2021 12:05 PM
To: Shalini Nath Walia
Subject: Fwd: Shelter concerns

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone
Get [Outlook for Android](#)

From: Irvine Park Towers <ipt@nathcompanies.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 27, 2021 12:04:40 PM
To: Robin Espinoza <respinoza@nathcompanies.com>
Subject: Fw: Shelter concerns

Another letter.

Thanks

Dan Conoryea
Property Manager
Irvine Park Towers Apartments
291 W 7th Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102
P: (651) 291-1880
F: (651) 291-1883
ipt@nathcompanies.com



From: Laura Sillars <laurasillars07@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 27, 2021 11:52 AM
To: Irvine Park Towers <ipt@nathcompanies.com>
Subject: Shelter concerns

Hello,
I have lived on west 7th for almost 8 years. I love how easy and accessible everything is in St. Paul and how friendly St. Paul is as a community.

I believe that we have a lot of current programs such as the new development on the catholic charities homeless shelter next to the Xcel, Goodwill and the salvation army building just to name a few. I like these programs because they have rules and additional outreach programs that help people with issues, allow them to work through issues, and provide skills to help the community and the homeless community.

Currently, the situation at the St. Paul firehouse has caused a lot of issues for local residents including myself. They have no additional help or our reach programs. Basically, it just dumps people with varying degrees of issues and letting them be the public's problem. They have no rules and people come and go as they please. It is affecting local business and people will eventually not want to come to downtown St. Paul because they don't feel safe.

I personally do not feel safe on my own street. I do not go for walks, or go to the local restaurants or explore my favorite places. I have witness/experienced the following things:

- I have been followed
- I have been threatened with physical harm
- I have been hassled
- I have had gross/lude things said to me
- I have witnessed people shooting up drugs
- I have witnessed people using drugs
- I have heard gunshots
- Every night there are fights and screaming at all hours
- I see people daily go through our garbage at Irvine park towers
- I have seen people going to the bathroom in public and the hospital parking ramp is full of the smell of urinal
- I have seen people trying to seek shelter in the stairwell of the hospital parking lots, using drugs in the stairwell, and fighting. Making it unsafe to use the elevator or stairs.
- I see them hassled people at the bus stop or while walking

I do not believe the program at the St. Paul fire station is set up properly, or in a beneficial manner for the neighborhood, businesses, or to help the current residence.

Thank you,

Laura Sillars

To Whom it may concern:

The shelter located in the old fire department on west 7th street is disastrous to the local community.

Maslow lists Safety as the fundamental to society. The #1 concern when owning property whether that be a business or home is safety. The safety of the seventh street neighborhood has decreased immensely since the development of the shelter.

Arguments leading to fights occur almost daily. Harassment of not only the people staying there but also anyone within an ear shot of the location has increased. You can watch the foot traffic alter as tax paying citizens scurry away to avoid the onslaught of verbal assault.

It is a daily occurrence to see multiple police vehicles assessing yet another of the hundreds if not thousands of situations occurring. A cities level of danger can be assessed by presence of police. The higher the police presence the more dangerous the area. Our brave St. Paul police department must now walk the streets to deescalate the tumultuous situation.

These safety concerns have occurred in the last 60 days

- 1) A shooting has occurred in front of the building
- 2) The homeless have even been found sleeping outside of apartment doors essentially trapping us in our apartments.
- 3) Citizens are being approached and demanded to give money
- 4) A local tax paying citizen was threatened with assault

I fear for my safety every time I leave my apartment even for the 150 steps it takes to get to my vehicle let alone walk down the streets. The homeless shelter has caused myself and countless more to begin the process of moving and permanently vacating the neighborhood, never to return.

The safety of many outweighs the daytime solace of a few. There is no nobility in providing "help" for a few when you are risking thousands.

Jason Steeber

Log for Irvine Park Towers

| Date | Issues |
|-----------|--|
| 5/21/21 | 8am-our maintenance walk property and found graffiti in the stairwell. |
| | 10:00 am – no issues |
| | 12:00pm someone from the shelter across the street was screaming. |
| | 2:00pm police were at Freedom House. |
| | 4:00pm no issues |
| 5/24/2021 | 8:00am a bicycle hanging from the flag pole across the street. |
| | 10:00am Maintenance found trash by the fire door by the dumpster. |
| | 12:00pm Homeless person sitting on our table in front of our building. |
| | 2:00pm no issues |
| | 4:00pm group of homeless people hanging out in front of the shelter. |
| 5/25/21 | 8:00am walked property and no issues found |
| 5/25/21 | 10:00am Homeless person sitting at our table in front of our building. |
| | 12:00pm Group across the |

Log for Irvine Park Towers

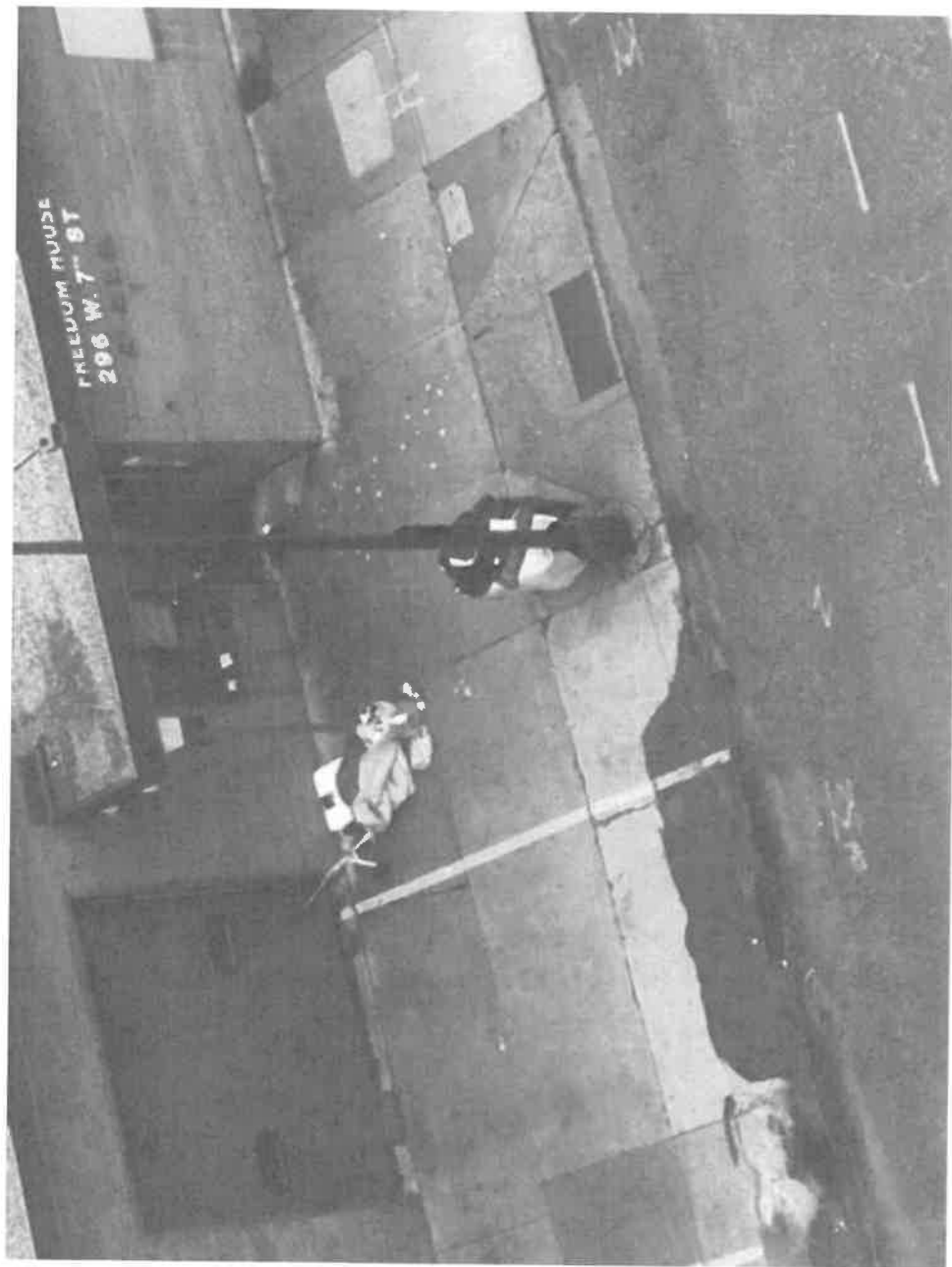
| | |
|--|---|
| | Street yelling 2:00pm no action 4:00pm Saw a drug deal go down |
|--|---|











ACCESS TO:
ELEVATOR EQUIPMENT ROOM

2/18/09

WHP

2/18/09



Sent: Thursday, May 27, 2021 8:58 AM
To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Support for Listening/Freedom House
Importance: High

Hi Bill,

I just wanted to add my encouragement to the St. Paul Planning Commission to keep Freedom House open. I was born in St. Paul, went to college at Hamline and have grown Direct Benefits, Inc from just me to 47 employees all in St. Paul. I love this city just as much as you or anyone does.

I've also been a board member for Listening House for the last 2 years. Speaking from the inside of the organization, I truly believe that Listening House/Freedom House are making a huge difference in our community. We absolutely need a low barrier day shelter to help folks get the support they need to make positive change in their lives. Freedom House does help folks get back on their feet and back into stable lives and housing.

I also know Molly and her staff have been making progress to addressing the concerns of nearby homeowners and business owners. We talk about it at every board meeting and I know she's discussing it with her staff every day. We are better neighbors and will get even better if you give us more time.

Please vote to keep Freedom House open. Thank you so much for listening.
Take care,

Tom Mayer
55 E. 5th Street Suite 500 St. Paul MN 55101

Sent: Thursday, May 27, 2021 1:28 PM
To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: In support of Freedom House

Dear Mr. Dermody,

I am writing regarding the zoning issues surrounding Freedom House. I am a Saint Paul resident and have been for the last 40 years. The city's growing homeless population and the lack of affordable housing are serious concerns for me and I believe we need to put significant resources toward addressing these issues. While Freedom House is not the long term answer, it is certainly an essential stop-gap measure that must be preserved and supported. As I have always been blessed to have a place to call home, I find it hard to imagine the challenge of living without access to basic needs such as water, a bathroom, electricity, a place to just "be". Freedom House serves these basic human needs.

I do recognize and appreciate the concerns expressed by local business owners. The last year has been a struggle for them. It has also been a struggle for marginalized communities. The cities homeless population has grown. Trying to hide our homeless

population will not make them disappear. As a city, as a community, we need to find ways to address this issue and the underlying conditions that contribute to it. Only by ensuring that Freedom House and other services like it are supported can we hope to gain some traction.

Thank you for the work that you do on behalf of our whole community.

Sincerely,

Diane Krueger

1497 Midway Parkway

Saint Paul, MN

MCCLAY • ALTON, P.L.L.P.
ATTORNEYS

Robert M. McClay
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951 Grand Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55105
Fax: 651/290-2502
651/290-0301

*Also Licensed in Wisconsin

June 1, 2021

VIA EMAIL

Luis Rangel Morales, Chair
City of St. Paul
Planning Commission
25 West Fourth Street, 14th Floor
St. Paul, MN 55102

Re: Homeless Services Zoning Study

Dear Mr. Rangel Morales:

At the Planning Commission Public Hearing on May 28, 2021 I spoke on behalf of WWII Realty LLC, the owner of 286 W 7th St., St. Paul. This is to supplement the comments made at that time for the consideration of the Comprehensive Planning Committee in deliberating the changes to the Zoning Code as a result of the Homeless Services Zoning Study.

At the outset, I want to affirm support for the goals to decrease homelessness and provide supporting services for those experiencing homelessness, and for the mission of Listening House.

Any zoning changes should be carefully and appropriately enacted to accomplish the goals, protect the public health, safety and general welfare and to minimize the unintended consequences.

The following comments and suggestions are made for consideration by the Planning Commission in deciding upon the proper revisions to the proposed ordinance changes to recommend to the City Council.

CONDITIONS. Like many land uses defined in the zoning code and allowed in the City, conditions should be attached to approval of a Homeless Services Facility. Conditions are appropriate given the documented issues at Freedom House. Among the reasonable conditions that are presently allowed in the zoning code are:

- Separation requirement. Alternative Financial Institutions must be separated by 2,640 feet (65.501). Supportive Housing Facilities have a 1,320 feet separation requirement (65.162). Overnight Shelters must be at least 600 feet from any of the other specified congregate living facilities with more than 6 residents (65.157).

- Minimum lot area. Such a minimum ensures that the guests are properly accommodated in a facility large enough for the people using it. Such minimums are commonly required in the zoning code.
- Limit the number of guests served. Include different limits depending on the zoning district. In less densely zoned districts make the limit on the number of guests lesser. See for example the limits on Supportive Housing Facility (65.162).
- Maintenance of the surrounding area should be a condition. Recognizing the impact a use can have on a neighbor, such a condition is reasonable. The zoning code requires that a fast food restaurant have a “litter collection plan” requiring the restaurant to keep the surrounding area clean for a reasonable distance.

WHERE ALLOWED. Revise the list of zoning districts where the use is allowed. T (2&3), B (2&3), and F districts are often embedded within or are directly adjacent to residential areas which the staff report offers the conclusion may not be appropriate for a homeless services facility.

DEFINITION. The definition of a Homeless Services Facility should be in Chapter 165, Division 3, Congregate Living. The use is similar to many of the defined uses in that portion of the zoning code.

CONDITIONAL USE, NOT PERMITTED USE. The use should be made a conditional use, rather than one permitted as of right. This would be more consistent with the uses allowed by the zoning code.

The Courts in Minnesota have stated that a conditional use is a use specifically authorized by the zoning ordinance that is generally compatible with the basic use classification of a particular zone, but should not be permitted to be located as a matter of right in every area included within the zone because of hazards inherent in the use itself or special problems which its proposed location may present.

Conditional use permits are “flexibility devices,” created to allow certain uses within a zone, subject to restrictions. They are designed to meet the problem which arises where certain uses, although generally compatible with the basic use classification of a particular zone, should not be permitted to be located as a matter of right in every area included within the zone because of hazards inherent in the use itself or special problems which its proposed location may present. By this device, **certain uses** (e.g., gasoline service stations, electric substations, hospitals, schools, churches, country clubs, and the like) **which may be considered essentially desirable** to the community, **but which should not be authorized generally** in a particular zone **because of considerations such as** current and anticipated traffic congestion, population density, **noise, effect on adjoining land values, or other considerations involving public health, safety, or general welfare,**

may be permitted upon a proposed site **depending upon the facts and circumstances** of the particular case. Zylka v. City of Crystal, 283 Minn. 192, 195, 167 N.W.2d 45 (1969). See: *Minnesota Land Use Law*, 2d Ed., © 2018, by Karen E. Marty.

The issues with the existing Freedom House are well documented. The effect on adjoining property and area residents, and the impact on the public health, safety, or general welfare should be taken into consideration.

In conclusion, the proposed zoning amendments should be revised in a way that work to achieve the goals but minimize the unintended consequences.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Alton", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Brian D. Alton
brian@mcclay-alton.com

BDA: gp

cc: Bill Dermody by email

Sent: Thursday, May 27, 2021 7:03 PM
To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Rezoning homeless shelters

Dear Mr. Dermody;

Could you please make sure my email is entered into the discussion on homeless shelters being rezoned.

I work in a clinic in the Richie Medical building. I've worked in that same location for 17 years. I usually park either in the contract lot or on Sherman.

A homeless shelter opened in the old fire station building earlier this year. Since then, it's become very unnerving to walk by the area near the fire station because of the homeless. Many of them appear to have mental health problems and are very confrontational.

Last Friday, when I was walking to my car around 4:45pm, one of the homeless men from in front of the fire station walked over to me very quickly and grabbed the strap on my purse. He tried to yank it off my shoulder. I started screaming and kicked him very hard on his shins. He left go and I ran to my car. Nothing like this has ever happened to me before. I've been using the same route to my job for 17 years and I've never been this scared to go back to work. I ended up staying home from work on Monday. I was too afraid to go in.

For the safety of the residents and employees and the homeless in that area, please do not make that fire station a permanent homeless rescue by rezoning.

It's clear that building is not big enough as so many are laying on the sidewalk in front, in the bus shelter, on the grass along side the fire station, and down by the old Dairy Queen. Regions Hospital has on site mental health care and they're good at what they do. Isn't there a larger building near Regions that would be better because of access to Regions?

I know homelessness is a complicated topic. Shoving them into a small building without medical help puts everyone at risk.

Don't rezone the fire station area.

Karen Lewis

1709 Sunbird Dr., Faribault, MN 55021

Sent: Thursday, May 13, 2021 11:51 AM

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

Subject: Freedom House

Hello,

My name is Pa Nhia Lee 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. We also provides vaccines for individuals there because many has no transportation. 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,

Pa Nhia Lee

Pa Nhia Lee

Clinic Coordinator

mncare.org



424 Dorothy Day Place

Sent: Friday, May 28, 2021 7:17 PM

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

Subject: Rezoning for homeless

Hello --

I listened to the discussion on Friday's meeting and, while I understand helping homeless, the rescue needs to be in a much larger building. That fire station is too small for the 100 people they claim they get each day. A bigger space would give the organization many more service options.

I also feel strongly that Stephan Moore needs to recuse himself from voting on the homeless rezoning.

He started crying almost every time he spoke about the homeless. He was way too emotional and lacks impartiality on the subject. He clearly has a bias and can't perform his duties objectively.

Bob Mackay

622 Lincoln

Saint Paul

Sent: Sunday, May 30, 2021 7:51 PM

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

Subject: Rezoning homeless shelters

I read the newspaper article on the rezoning of homeless shelters like Freedom House on West 7th Street and wanted to give my thoughts on the rezoning issue. Last week I took my wife and 2 sons, ages 5 and 7, to dinner at Cossetta's. We drove down West 7th around 5:30pm. When we drove past the homeless shelter called Freedom House, there were a couple people sharing something in a pipe in front on the picnic table. There was also a man standing on the sidewalk in front of Freedom House throwing rocks at the passing cars on 7th and he hit ours leaving a small dent. At the old DQ building a man sat masturbating right out in plain sight.

There has to be a better location with access to mental health and drug counseling help that would be better suited for this shelter. That shelter should not be in a neighborhood with stores, businesses and residential. It's hard enough to protect children without having horrible behavior flaunted right on the sidewalk.

I know there is a real need for shelters to help the homeless. Having one right on 7th Street is not helping anyone. The neighborhood kids at the apartments on Grand were watching the drug users and that isn't good. Drugs are a big enough problem for kids without encouraging them to watch using adults. Rocks thrown at cars is really dangerous and some guy masturbating in public is not something anyone should be exposed to.

Don't rezone that neighborhood area for homeless shelters.

John Dietrich

849 Osceola Avenue

Sent: Monday, May 31, 2021 4:33 PM

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

Subject: Public Comment re: Homeless Services Zoning Study

Dear Mr. Dermody and members of the Planning Commission,

I'm writing solely in my capacity as a resident of Saint Paul, and I would like to express my support for the proposed changes to the Zoning Code that would permit a homeless services facility to be located within one-half mile of an emergency housing facility or overnight shelter.

I currently live in Irvine Park Tower, located directly across the street from Freedom House Shelter. Since Freedom House opened several months ago, there has been an increased number of individuals experiencing homelessness as well as a larger police presence in the neighborhood. I also recognize that there has been an increased amount of litter in the surrounding area, and I have heard from my neighbors about increasing concerns about safety.

However, I am an avid walker in the immediate neighborhood near my building, and I have not had any concerns for my safety. My experiences interacting with clients of the shelter have been reasonable and non-confrontational. In fact, I have just started another year-long lease in the building with full awareness that Freedom House would continue to operate in the neighborhood for quite some time. I have attended multiple meetings designed for community input as well as meetings including city staff, and my understanding is that the staff of Freedom House is truly committed to ensuring that it is a good neighbor and takes all concerns seriously.

I think homelessness is one of the most distressing challenges facing Saint Paul, and I believe changes to the Zoning Code will help ensure that we can support our neighbors experiencing homelessness, which is only one of the many difficulties that they are likely facing. Granted, the current situation surrounding Freedom House is difficult, but I don't believe the problems can be solved by saying, "Can't this facility just go somewhere else?" The proposed changes can help ensure that facilities are available to help those in our community who need help the most.

Thank you,

Casey Carmody

291 7th St W, Apt. 1012

Sent: Tuesday, June 1, 2021 7:47 AM

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

Subject: Freedom House

Hi Bill -

I am writing to you to express my support for the Freedom House. I live at 47 Irvine Park and have been a resident of this area for almost 10 years.

The recent complaints about the Freedom House are extremely troubling to me. What I have witnessed when attending neighborhood calls, meetings, and watching the news I am seeing that the Freedom House is being categorized in a way that is not (in my opinion) accurate. Individuals like Tom Reid and other white, privileged individuals are weaving a narrative that Freedom House is creating chaos in our community when in my experience it is quite the opposite.

I believe Freedom House is doing exactly what it's intended to do. It's providing a safe space for individuals to go during the day time and get basic needs met. These individuals are Saint Paul residents. Although they may not have traditional homes like my family, they are our neighbors.

I walk my neighborhood daily with my 2 small children (3.5 and 1.5) and I do not feel unsafe. When I walk by the Freedom House I see nothing that would even alert me that it is a shelter. Our children accompany us when we drop off donated items with zero concern. My parents (who live on Pleasant Ave and walk by regularly) were not even aware that it was a shelter. What I HAVE seen since Freedom

House has opened is; no one sleeping in the gazebo over night in Irvine Park, people not looking for a place to use the restroom, people not asking for water or attempting to take water from neighbors hoses or drinking from kiddie pools, no one bathing in the fountain, and I have yet to see someone digging in the park garbage cans for food since Freedom House opened.

Just the other day I was in the park with my children and started chatting with 2 men about how lovely the fountain was and they were asking about the history of it. We visited for quite some time before they reconnected with some friends and I overheard them saying that they were heading to Freedom House. I had no idea that these men were homeless and that's the point. Freedom House helped remove the implicit bias we all have when we see someone who is unkept. They are helping to break down those barriers so we can see these individuals for who they are: human beings - our neighbors.

I am hoping you all will vote to allow Freedom House to continue their work. I know there are going to be bumps along the way, and that they are pivoting as needed to address and remedy concerns. St. Paul has an obligation to serve all members of our community, not just those with the biggest platform.

I strongly encourage you to visit the Freedom House, talk with the individuals who go there and solicit feedback from them as well before you make your final decisions.

Those who rely on Freedom House to have their basic needs met cannot learn to not experience hunger, they cannot learn how to feel rested, and they cannot learn how to feel clean. The comments submitted by those in the community expressing discomfort by being exposed to individuals in a different socioeconomic class than their own are valid but we can learn to overcome discomfort.

Sincerely,

Megan Kluthe

Sent: Tuesday, June 1, 2021 3:55 PM

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

Subject: Homeless Issues

Bill,

Below are my concerns and experiences I have encountered since the Freedom House was put into place this January 2021. I am empathetic to their needs, although I feel strongly that this location with

only 8 beds, 2 bathrooms (4 stalls) and 1 shower with hours of 8am to 8pm is not helping these less fortunate. This shelter was placed on a high volume entertainment district which attracts people from all over the state and country.

February

- Man with knife entered the pub, threatening our staff and guests, waving his knife inside and out
- Over \$5000 in damage to cars parked at our DQ lot. Random violence from a man twice tearing off rear view mirrors, windshield wipers and door handles

March

- Man arrested outside Tom Reid's for carrying a knife outside the pub
- Shooting outside Freedom House
- Casings from another shooting prior found in Dry Cleaning lot
- 2 physical fights outside the Freedom House with loud yelling and screaming
- Woman threatening to throw a brick at staff and at the building, the brick was recovered
- Man assaulted guest outside the front entry, hitting, knocking him down, splitting his head open, slapping him and then robbing him. This happened during business hours
- Drug deal inside pub and meth pipe found in bathroom
- Man entered foyer with 2 young moms with kids and pulled his pants down trying to urinate
- Woman and man found behind dumpster having sex
-

April

- Man with skateboard and backpack asked to leave the pub, left yelling and cursing. Went outside and threw his cigarette and skateboard at the building in front of staff and guests
- Man found passed out by back door of pub, had to call police to escort him away
- Woman caught urinating by back door of pub

May

- Man at DQ lot yelling and screaming, disrupting parking patrons. Police, sheriff and Freedom House workers spent over ½ hour trying to get him help
- Man found naked behind trash dumpster, changing his clothes
- Drug deal in DQ lot with graffiti
- 2 men smoking meth and 1 shooting up behind recycle dumpster, caught by police. One of the men entered Tom Reid's shortly after and was escorted out by police, who informed me he was dangerous
- Group of 4 caught by sheriff smoking meth at DQ lot
- Damage to our oil dispenser box on building
- Damage to fence at DQ lot
- Torn off electrical box on light pole
- Multiple graffiti both at Tom Reid's and DQ building and dumpsters
- Man defecating in DQ lot
- Multiple feces found behind dumpsters

Daily I clean our parking lot. Daily my staff takes trash out to this lot. Every day I worry what I or my staff might come across not knowing the mental or chemical issues these individuals are suffering from. Daily acts of violence to a neighborhood that was once safe to walk in day or night. We find individuals having sex, sleeping behind and in our dumpsters and drug use weekly at our DQ lot. Our neighbors in Irvine Park and Irvine Towers have informed us they no longer feel safe walking in this neighborhood anymore. This applies especially to our young families with children and our seniors.

These individuals arrive around 5am every morning and stay on our streets past the 8am to 8pm hours of the Freedom House, roaming the streets day and night.

These folks need help, this is not the location! Move this location to a place where they can receive 24/7 care with more beds, bathrooms, showers and counseling to help those in need. Move this shelter from the main entertainment district of St. Paul. Freedom House as it exists now is not helping the homeless, it is not helping the city and is not helping the businesses along 7th that have already suffered from COVID 19.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to share my thoughts and concerns.

Kathy

Kathy Gosiger | General Manager

Tom Reid's Hockey City Pub

258 7th St W, St. Paul, MN 55102

tomreids.com

Sent: Tuesday, June 1, 2021 2:03 PM

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

Subject: Rezoning for homeless shelters

I attended the virtual Planning Commissioners 5/28/21 meeting and I am against the rezoning of homeless shelters, especially concerning the building at 296 West 7th Street. That structure is not large enough for its current use as a day shelter. There are not enough showers, beds, or bathrooms for the 100 + people Freedom House says that they're servicing.

Since Freedom House opened in late February, the residents and businesses have been deluged with all varieties of crime, including: drug use, vandalism, robbery, assaults, arson, trespassing and prostitution.

Every day there are multiple problems caused by the Freedom House homeless. Walking or driving in that neighborhood now is unnerving at best and dangerous at worst.

One of the most disturbing daily scenes is seeing the fear and anxiety in the faces of the neighborhood children waiting for their school buses. While they wait, they are subjected to watching drug use on the picnic table in the front of the building, or men urinating and defecating against the building or on the sidewalks, plus yelling, fighting, and destruction of property. These are elementary school kids and they shouldn't be exposed to these types of behaviors, let alone every single school day.

Everyone agrees that we as responsible citizens need to help the homeless, but there must be better, bigger locations that have more bathroom facilities and also provide access to health services. The current use of the 296 building in this residential-business area of West 7th Street is just wrong. The homeless are already dealing with many problems, expecting them to use an overcrowded building with insufficient resources is a disaster waiting to happen.

Vote no on rezoning 296 West 7th Street and other residential areas for homeless shelters.

Sincerely
Charles C. Kosse
near Duluth Street/Margaret Street

Sent: Tuesday, June 1, 2021 1:08 PM
To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Homeless Rezoning Considerations

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

The situation regarding rezoning homeless shelter locations needs to have additional study because the current model of the Listening House/Freedom House on West 7th Street IS NOT WORKING. Rezoning the building at 296 West 7th for homeless use would be a mistake. In the May 28th virtual public discussion, Molly Jalma, Executive Director of Listening House/Freedom House, talked about the building and 296 West 7th and admitted, "much more space" would be better.

The residents and business in the West 7th neighborhood have struggled with the daily challenges since the Listening House/Freedom House opened in February. There are incidents every single day, ranging from trash spread throughout the area (including syringes, drug pipes, pills and condoms). Human feces and urine left all over including sidewalks and yards. Fights, thefts, weapons, break-ins at commercial and residential buildings, trespassing and individuals lying on the sidewalks and buildings all up and down West 7th.

The children in this neighborhood should not be subjected to this sort of bad behavior and drug use, especially when they're waiting for the bus and can't leave the area.

I have owned the historic building at 310 Sherman since 1992. In all those years, we've NEVER experienced the type of behavior that has occurred since Listening House/Freedom House opened next door. The individuals from Listening House/Freedom House continue to trespass on our property, including our parking lot. There have been several confrontations and my employees are now afraid to go to their cars. The employees of Listening House/Freedom House have been unsuccessful in controlling or preventing this bad and inappropriate behavior of the individuals using their facilities.

Having a location that homeless individuals in need can go is very important. However, the 296 West 7th Street building is not big enough to accommodate all the individuals using the space. There are not enough bathrooms, showers, beds, counseling or common areas to help improve the quality of life for the homeless individuals who want to use the space.

Do not rezone the building at 296 West 7th for homeless use. This is a complicated situation and any decision to change the City's Comprehensive Plan needs to be well thought out and discussed completely.

Pat Salkowicz
310 Sherman Street
Saint Paul 55102