

Hello,

I am writing to you about the listening house and the amount of people the city wants to limit on how many can enter. I do not think this is a good idea. 20 people is not nearly enough. I work with people in Ramsey County with a mental illness and who are homeless and this would greatly impact the community.

Alyson Calo

Dear City Council Members,

I live on North Street in Dayton's Bluff and Listening House is visible from my front yard. I walk by the entrance multiple times a day on my way to work.

Like many of my neighbors, I have also encountered homeless people in the neighborhood since Listening House's arrival, and I would like to share one of those stories with you.

My teenage nephew Misikir spent the summer with us. One afternoon as we were walking along North Street we met a young man named Max. Both he and Misikir liked to play basketball, so they went to the East Side YMCA together and got to know each other. We learned that Max had just moved here from Mississippi and was staying with his father at Dellwood Gardens. His father was not supposed to have guests and Max was told repeatedly to leave, but he did not yet have a job or transportation of his own.

We "hired" Misikir and Max to help out at Indigenous Roots Cultural Arts Center as they renovated their new space. The Center's proprietors introduced the newcomers to a warm and welcoming community. Max also joined us at a neighborhood pizza event hosted by Fire on the Bluff where he made more connections. We showed Max how to use the bus to get around and helped him find a job at a local theater.

This may sound like we did a lot, but we just included Max in things we were doing with Misikir already, so it was not a big deal. Max had dropped out of high school, which he regretted. He and Misikir encouraged one another to finish school and stay focused on making the most of their future.

Our relationship with Max would not have happened if he was not in a residential context. At a chaotic and vulnerable time in his life, this community offered him numerous windows into stable and supportive homes and opened doors for employment opportunities. The connection was also valuable for my nephew, who gained a greater appreciation for the caring family he had waiting for him when he returned home at the end of the summer.

Like many of my neighbors, I also have examples of negative encounters with people along North Street. But that was true before Listening House moved in, and because of the current crisis in homelessness, it will still be true if Listening House is forced to leave due to zoning changes or restrictions. Relocating services like Listening House to commercial or industrial zones may make some nearby residents more safe and comfortable, but it exacerbates the challenges of people (especially the growing number of homeless elders) who already face many disadvantages including social isolation and lack of transportation.

The city's response so far (under pressure from some neighbors) has been to address this controversy through law enforcement and zoning restrictions. This combination, if writ large, leads down the tragic road of criminalizing poverty, mental illness, and addiction. My hope is that the city will choose a more humane path that does not involve restricting and/or relocating services offered for vulnerable people in their own communities.

Since Listening House opened, it feels like LH and First Lutheran Church are being blamed for all disruptive and criminal activity in the neighborhood, even though serious crimes were happening here before LH opened (such as several home invasions and thefts this spring). LH had a good relationship with the police at their previous location, and I am satisfied that they are cooperating and coordinating with the police here. They have installed security cameras and review the tape every day. Cheryl, Julie, and Ed have all been accessible and approachable to me when I have questions and concerns. I regularly see Julie making rounds through the neighborhood with clean-up crews. I consider Listening House to be a neighborhood ally, not a threat.

The presence of the Listening House has quality of life implications for people like me who own houses on North and Bates Streets. But please remember that the import service Listening House offers in this community also has life-changing implications for people like Max, who also live in Dayton's Bluff.

Thanks for Listening,

Chelsea DeArmond

667 North Street

Dear Members of the St. Paul City Council:

I am writing to express my support for the services of one of our very important community partners, Listening House. I understand that the scope of Listening House's services has been limited by the City's Zoning Committee and Planning Commission through the restriction of the number of guests they can serve in any one day to 20 individuals. This is quite arbitrary and nonsensical!

Listening House provides services that are critical to meeting the needs of those who experience homelessness, poverty, and lack of access to basic needs. The organization's new host in First Lutheran Church on the East side aligns well with Listening House's goals and activities. To cap their level of interaction at 20 individuals per day is incongruous with the goals and capacity of the organization and quite frankly, is a disservice to the citizens of St. Paul. With this arbitrary cap, Listening House is forced to deny assistance to numerous people, leaving them on the streets of the neighborhood, something that is objectionable to the residents of the neighborhood.

From my involvement with Listening House over the years, I know they are committed to being a good neighbor to residents in the area and to the City of St. Paul at large. They are a necessary provider of services to those individuals on the margin of society, helping get them back on their feet and stabilized in society.

I would strongly urge you to consider allowing Listening House to operate without a restrictive cap on the number of guests they serve on a daily basis.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

MARK W. LUCKE

RADIUS

HEALTH

Welcome to a full circle of care.

September 5, 2017

To Whom it May Concern,

We are writing this letter in support of the Listening House remaining a part of our Dayton's Bluff Community. We feel strongly that the Listening House will continue to fill a gap that has existed in this community for quite some time. We believe that Listening House will continue to be responsive neighbors who will address any concerns regarding their guests, and will continue to provide a safe place for community members to direct people who may be in need.

The RADIUS Health ACCESS team, funded with federal grant dollars, provides outreach and case management to homeless individuals who struggle with mental health and chemical dependency issues in Ramsey County. The team has been operational since 1986. It is our mission to engage and build relationships with people experiencing homelessness, and connect these people to things like housing, treatment, and mental health services. The team formerly used office space within the Dorothy Day building, but relocated to the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood three years ago. The move allowed team members to be more active in engaging in community outreach activities. The team does not use this space to meet with persons served; instead the space is used as a 'base' for conducting outreach activities.

Due to outreach activities that are part of the ACCESS Team's mission, team members have been aware of homelessness in the Dayton's Bluff area for quite some time. In addition to camps in Mounds Park, team members are aware of people experiencing homelessness behind the Union Gospel Mission, in Swede Hollow, in the nearby nature sanctuary, and people living in cars within the Dayton's Bluff community. There are also a great number of people "doubled up" or "couch hopping" in this area. Some individuals receive shelter in nearby locations that require them to leave during daytime hours.

There are many people experiencing homelessness in this area who do not travel to adjacent neighborhoods to receive services such as food and healthcare. In 2015, a group of homeless services providers engaged in a targeted outreach effort in the Dayton's Bluff/Metro State Library. During this effort, providers encountered countless people who were homeless and not connected to resources.

The Listening House has been an excellent collaborative partner to homeless services advocates for many years. Outreach staff have been able to engage with many persons experiencing homelessness at the Listening House over the years - persons who have not been able to engage with service providers in any other locations. Engagement with both persons served and with staff at the Listening House has led to trusting relationships between people experiencing homelessness and service providers. This has led to permanent housing for formerly homeless individuals - and a reduction of use in other services that are costly to taxpayers.

Since the move into the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood, members of the ACCESS team have continued to work closely with Listening House staff persons and with the individuals they serve. Service providers have regularly scheduled outreach services at the Listening House. In turn, Listening House staff contact team members when there is concern or a need for additional engagement and support to persons served.

We are very hopeful that Listening House will continue to provide a needed service for persons experiencing homelessness in this community.

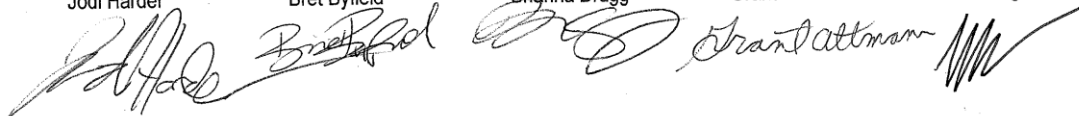
Sincerely,

RADIUS Health ACCESS Outreach Team
Jodi Harder Bret Byfield

Brianna Drugg

Grant Altmann

Zach Wolfram



*Mary and Larry Haeg
427 Portland
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102*

November 20, 2017

Ms. Jane L. Prince
Saint Paul City Council
Ward #7
320-C City Hall
15 Kellogg Boulevard West
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

Dear Ms. Prince:

As longtime financial supporters of Listening House we urge you to allow this outstanding social service provider to serve considerably more than twenty people a day, the arbitrary and unfair level currently under consideration by the City Council.

Listening House's new quarters in the basement of First Lutheran Church are a vast improvement over its former location. The Listening House staff is one of the finest of any social service ministry we've encountered. They run a safe, clean, friendly, good neighborly operation, of which all of Saint Paul can be proud. We do not live in Ward 7 but we can tell you if Listening House had similar quarters in our neighborhood we would welcome it with open arms and great pride.

Cheryl Peterson and her team are people of integrity and caring. We're sure they would never do anything to jeopardize the safety and security of the neighborhood. Whenever we visit Listening House we always feel comfortable with their clients and we sense that they, too, want to be good neighbors to everyone in First Lutheran's vicinity.

Please go to bat for Listening House. When you do, you not only will be going to bat for every other faith-based, non-profit in the city but for all of us who so proudly call St. Paul our home.

Sincerely,



Cc: Cheryl Peterson, Listening House

From: Anne Maley [<mailto:abmaley@me.com>]

Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2017 8:25 AM

To: #CI-StPaul_Ward3

Subject: Please vote in favor of Listening House

Dear Council Member Tolbert, My name is Anne Maley. I'm a Highland Park resident, business owner, Council Chair at Lumen Christi and Highland Business Association Board Member.

Last night, I was moved deeply by the stories I heard about the Listening House and their ministry to the homeless. With homelessness up 20%, their services are more critical than ever in meeting the needs of the poor and homeless.

In understand there have been changes to their zoning that would cap their service to 20 people daily. I urge you to vote in favor of their appeal to expand this number. Listening House guests count on the "Welcome!" they get at the door. To cap it means, more lines, more numbers, more turning away. And having more homeless people wandering the neighborhood would be in direct contrast to the desires of the neighbors.

I was impressed to hear all they are doing to be a good neighbor—installing monitoring cameras, moving the main entrance, staying open over lunch, cleaning up the grounds every day and the surrounding neighborhood routinely. Clearly they are committed to making this work for all.

It's been affirmed that their location in First Lutheran Church is consistent with the mission of every house of faith—to welcome the stranger. Please don't allow city government to interfere in that ministry.

I know someday as the Ford Site is developed you and I may have our values tested further, and I may be asking you to support affordable housing and help for the homeless in my own church or at least closer to home. I hope we both do the right thing then as well.

In the meantime, as this comes before you, please vote in favor of the Listening House continuing its crucial role in our city in the same way it is today. Thank you for your work for Highland Park. Blessings on your holidays. Anne Maley

From: Manuel Lopez [mailto:mmlopez@comcast.net]

Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2017 10:36 PM

To: #CI-StPaul_Ward3

Cc: McMahon, Melanie (CI-StPaul)

Subject: Listening House decision

Dear Council Member Tolbert, My name is Manuel López and I'm a Highland Park resident.

As a member of Lumen Christi Catholic Community, I was privileged to attend a gathering for Listening House last evening. I understand there have been changes to the zoning of their new location on Maria Avenue that would cap their service to 20 people daily. Given their history, proven record and

the desperate need for the services they provide I urge you to vote in favor of their appeal to expand this number. With homeless on the rise, limiting service to 20 guests when there is capacity to serve many more defies logic: having more homeless people wandering the neighborhood would be in direct contrast to the desires of the neighbors who seem opposed to the facility. I was impressed to hear all they are doing to address the concerns of their neighbors, clearly they have made a commitment to being good neighbors.

While I appreciate and thank you for your service to our Highland Park community, we are also part of the larger community of Saint Paul. As this comes before you, I urge you to vote in favor of maintaining Listening House's crucial role by supporting their appeal of the Planning Commission's decision. Simply put, there is an absence of sufficient services to assist individuals and families in search of a safe place to stay during daylight hours. Capping service to 20 daily guests does not address the needs of Saint Paul.

Respectfully, Manuel López 844 Kenneth Street

From: Laurel Lapore [mailto:laurielapore@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, November 17, 2017 12:18 PM
To: #CI-StPaul_Council
Cc: cheryl@listeninghouse.org; Dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us
Subject: Listening House

City Council Members, I'm very concerned about what's happening to the mission of Listening House....with regard to First Lutheran Church and the complaints of neighbors. This is a vital service that's being provided to St. Paul's homeless and I'm asking compassion, understanding and a willingness to overcome some real bias on the part of All involved. I live in downtown and see the effects of homelessness on a continual basis. I'm urging the City Council to vote in favor Listening House to carry out this mission that provides some basic necessities to the "least of our brethren"....in First Lutheran Church, especially since \$250,000 was spent renovating the basement of the church. Thank you, Laurie Lapore

Council Members,

I am asking the St. Paul City Council to allow Listening House to continue its fine work with the poor, homeless and lonely of St. Paul. Common sense dictates that serving this population is consistent with the mission of a church. The move to limit Listening House to 20 visitors per day, on the other hand, violates common sense.

I am a retired psychologist and a volunteer at Listening House. I grew up on the East Side. In fact, I was born in St. John's Hospital when it was a block from First Lutheran Church. I want to address a common misconception that impacts some people's perception of Listening House. Some fear that individuals with mental illness are likely to be violent. Although some guests at Listening House do struggle with

mental illness, the fact is that people with mental illness are far more likely to be victims of violence than perpetrators.

The research is summarized on <Mental [Health.gov](https://www.health.gov)> under Myths and Facts:

Fact: The vast majority of people with mental health problems are no more likely to be violent than anyone else. Most people with mental illness are not violent and only 3%-5% of violent acts can be attributed to individuals living with a serious mental illness. In fact, people with severe mental illnesses are over 10 times more likely to be victims of violent crime than the general population.

This finding matches my experience with the guests of Listening House. As I have gotten to know them as individuals, a number of guests have told me about assaults they have suffered and the fear they live under. For these individuals, Listening House is a haven of safety, compassion and support. Please allow Listening House to continue to be there for them.

John Buck, Ph.D.

To All Members of the St. Paul City Council:

Services provided by Listening House are critical to meeting the needs of people who experience poverty, homelessness, and lack access to basic needs.

The Listening House's location in First Lutheran Church is consistent with the mission of places of worship of every faith. The City cannot limit First Lutheran Church and Listening House, or other faith-based institutions that respond to the needs of people on the margins.

If Listening House is capped at serving 20 people daily, it is forced to deny numerous people assistance, leaving them on the streets within the area, which is objectionable to neighbors.

Listening House is committed to being a good neighbor. Please work with them to assure that people who experience poverty and homelessness, and who lack access to basic needs are not denied the services provided by Listening House and left out on the streets.

Thank you for considering my feedback.

Pat Tommet
1717 Wellesley Avenue
St. Paul, MN. 55105

To whom it may concern

Please allow the members of Listening House to help people who are without a permanent housing, regardless of the number of people who are served. Religious institutions are protected through an executive order signed by President Trump not to be trampled on or opposed. Members of faith-based institutions have the right to help all people of God, regardless.

Thank you,
Sheri Blesener

Please reconsider the 20 person limit on those served daily at Listening House. This is a critical service and in cooperation with First Lutheran Church has served effectively some of the city's neediest and most vulnerable. The staff is prepared; the setting is remodeled and many more than 20 folks are at their door. Please let them in.

Sincerely, Rita Quigley

