

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

Sincerely
Rita Spinal, volunteer at Listening House

I am writing to express the need to protect Listening House as a vital part of the St. Paul community. Chief of Metro Transit, John Harrington has stated that homelessness is up 20% in St. Paul. There are 200 homeless people riding public transit all night because they feel it is safer than shelters. When the Metro Transit police clear off the trains every morning they send people straight to Listening House.

The services provided by Listening House are critical to meeting the needs of people who experience poverty, homelessness, and lack of 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. To cap the number of people that can be served to 20 people daily, is to deny numerous people assistance, leaving them on the streets within the area, which is objectionable to neighbors. Listening House has been and is committed to being a good neighbor.

Please consider these points when making any decisions regarding the future of Listening House.

Thank you,

Judy Reger

Last night former St. Paul police chief John Harrington said there were on average 200 homeless people a day in St. Paul. If Listening house is limited to serving 20, where can the other 180 go for safety and uplift? This restriction sets a dangerous precedent for Other faith based places currently serving the Twin Cities.

Visitors staying overnight in St. Paul for the Super Bowl may choose to eat and entertain themselves in Minneapolis if they encounter the discontented poor wondering our streets.

I understand the fear of residents in the neighborhood because they don't know what to expect.

Please explore ways that could relieve their fear without denying

The poor the dignity they deserve. Marilyn Woolley

From: bobdianne2@comcast.net [<mailto:bobdianne2@comcast.net>]

Sent: Monday, November 20, 2017 10:54 AM

To: #CI-StPaul_Ward7 <Ward7@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward6 <Ward6@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Cc: Anderson, Dianne <bobdianne2@comcast.net>

Subject: Appeal of Planning Commission re: PED Zoning File 17-060-690

Dear City Council members Jane Prince and Dan Bostrom,

We are writing this letter in support of the Listening House and its appeal to the Planning Commission.

We are members of First Lutheran Church - Dianne 70+ years and Bob 40+ years. It is our understanding that this will be on the agenda at a council meeting on December 6th at 5:30 p.m.

First Lutheran's first pastor in 1854 proclaimed that this church would be a "friend of the homeless."

In the early 1960's the then pastor requested the church move east (near the present 3M campus)

to the suburbs. The church declined stating that it belonged right where it was serving its members and

those in need on Dayton's Bluff and the greater east side of St. Paul.

This church has always been a welcoming place to those in need. We provided a home for some of the

first Vietnamese refugees arriving in St. Paul, housing for a group home for adolescent and young adults with hearing

and emotional difficulties, sponsored a Hmong Elder Program in cooperation with Southeast Asian Ministries,

ran a weekly food shelf for our neighbors for over 40 years, presently host a weekly Wellness Center in

conjunction with Metropolitan State University, and hosted many National Night Out evenings. In other words,

hosting the Listening House is not a totally different kind of venture for the church. Many of those who attend

Listening House ARE our neighbors. They may live across E. 7th street but we don't believe that means they are not neighbors of First Church. People have been coming and going to First Church and its programs for years.

We believe that the aims and goals of Listening House make it a good fit for First Church.

We believe that the new demands/restrictions that have been placed on Listening are unrealistic - the sole purpose

being to shut down the program. We appreciate the Zoning Commission's decision not to do any re-zoning. This could

have had a negative effect on all houses of worship in St. Paul. We urge you to defeat the following restrictions:

Maximum of 20 people at any one time. (we think the city code maximum is approximately 90)

Most, if not all of the overnight shelters require guests to leave the premises for the day. The Listening House provides a warm, home-like atmosphere for its guests. It provides so many additional services which

we are certain you are already aware of. Why would you limit the number of people who could take advantage

of these services? Similar questions will be: Who decides who those 20 people will be? What will those coming and

not getting in do: form a line around the church waiting for someone to leave, Walk the skyway system downtown, Step into businesses/stores, Sit in the lobbies of the nearby hospitals, etc. This restriction does not make any sense to us.

Listening House is ready and capable of providing much needed services and would be prohibited from offering them.

Who or what other program is in operation to pick up those persons presently coming to the Listening House. The city?

Restrict the courtyard space between the church and its education building. (sorry we don't know the legal wording)

We believe the neighbors have asked that there be little or no "loitering" or sitting outside during Listening House

hours. This space is a natural walk way for church members and visitors who park in the north parking lot. Many

Metro State U. students park their cars on the street adjacent to the church (north side) and walk across the courtyard

to get to their classes - day and evening. It would also prevent the neighbors from walking their pets around the

church, and those who feel a need to take pictures of the Listening House guests, and most recently a person, or

persons flying a drone above the church. Would the Listening House become a lock-in facility?

We know that there are other restrictions that we are not aware of and hopefully there will be some give and take and

compromises made. From the very first meeting with the neighbors Listening House has been willing to work with them

in order to become good neighbors.

Thank you for reading this letter!

Sincerely,

Bob and Dianne Anderson

211 Kenwood Drive W.

Maplewood, MN 55117

November 14, 2017

Jane Prince
Saint Paul City Councilmember, Ward 7
320C City Hall
15 Kellogg Blvd. West
St. Paul, MN 55102

RECEIVED

NOV 20 2017
CITY COUNCIL
WARD 7

Dear Ms. Prince,

My name is Lynda Thompson; I am a member of First Lutheran Church. I have followed the proceedings regarding the movement of Listening House to First Lutheran with interest and great joy that this organization has found a new home. I am writing to you to appeal to your non-partisan nature and your dignity as a human being to vote in favor of Listening House continuing to provide services at First Lutheran Church on the December 6th.

As you know, the "meanness" factor in our country and in our city has increased exponentially in the past few years. Our natural tendency to look out for our own interests over those who are our neighbors seems to grow with each passing month. I respect the separation between church and state; however, there is just so much the government can do to help the least of those among us. Listening House is taking on some of that burden by providing a place where folks who are experiencing the most disastrous effects of poverty are treated with compassion and dignity—just the way, I'm sure, those who are speaking out against the presence of Listening House in the neighborhood would wish to be treated.

The conditions that the City Council has placed on Listening House and First Lutheran are unreasonable and infringe on the rights of the church to fulfill God's mission of treating those who many consider to be of little value to society as beloved and useful children of God and as valuable members of our community. All of the major world religions have compassion as a major component of their doctrine. No matter what your religious beliefs, I am appealing to you as a compassionate human being to rise above partisanship and to consider something bigger and longer lasting than the number of votes you might receive by supporting the neighbors who are speaking against the presence of Listening House. I'm asking you to look at the arguments presented and think about what you would want for yourself if were in the place of those who are in need of the services that Listening House provides, remembering that it is only by an accident of birth that you or I are not guests of Listening House.

Although I was born and raised in St. I now live in Vadnais Heights and I follow St. Paul issues. I consider myself a proud daughter of St. Paul. That is why I attend worship in the city. Thank you for taking time to read this letter and for your service on the City Council.

Peace,



Rev. Lynda Thompson