



March 25, 2015

Stephen Ubl,
City of St. Paul Building Official
Department of Safety and Inspections
375 Jackson Street, Suite 220
Saint Paul, MN 55101-1806

Copy: Gregory Fenton,
Principal
BWBR
380 St. Peter Street, Suite 600
Saint Paul, MN 55102

RE: Zoning and Building Use of Property Located at 778 University Avenue West

Dear Mr. Ubl:

It was a pleasure meeting you this morning. Per our conversation, I would like to provide you with information regarding the use of our building located at 778 University Avenue West in St. Paul and some of our facility goals during the next six months.

Breaking Free has been providing services to women and girls who have been victims of sexual exploitation/sex trafficking and need assistance escaping the violence in their lives since 1996 in St. Paul. Over the past 10 years, we have served over 5,000 clients, with the majority seeking services at our facility located at 770 University Avenue West. We do have a satellite office at 1900 Chicago Avenue South in Minneapolis at the RESOURCE building.

Between 2009 -2015, Breaking Free went from having four full time employees to having thirty-five. In 2013, we purchased the facility at 778 University Avenue to accommodate 11 staff members who had administrative duties only. We do not serve women and girls at the facility located at 778 University Avenue. Our Women's Staff resides at 770 University Avenue where we hold support groups, provide food and clothing goods, advocacy, intakes and education groups and feed our clients before every meeting as many of them are homeless and hungry.

Those of us that work at 778 University are providing the following services: IT, Grant Writing and Processing, Human Resources, Communications, Office Management, Volunteer

Management as well as Outreach and Training Strategies. Much of what the Administrative Staff does happens outside the walls of our facility. We do many trainings off site and are limited to what we can do at 778 University Avenue West based on its size. There is very little traffic, other than the mail carriers and delivery drivers.

Our hours of operation at the facility located at 778 University is between the hours of 9:00am - 5:00pm, Monday through Friday. We may have an occasional Board Meeting on a Saturday from 11:00am – 1:00pm. For all intents and purposes, we are operational only during week days.

As you witnessed during the tour of our facility this morning, we have reached capacity at this location. We are looking at a property located at 579 Selby Avenue just east of Dale and Selby. We have presented two LOI's and are performing due diligence to purchase the building. Since we are a 501C3 organization, we are operating on a "shoe string" budget. To obtain the building at 579 Selby, we are planning on launching a Capital Campaign. We are tentatively due to launch the campaign in June, 2015. In the meantime, we will work with the owner of the property and our realtor to secure our intentions.

Please know that Breaking Free respects your position and understands that you have a job to do. I have a step-father that has MS and is in a wheelchair. I firsthand understand how important it is to have handicapped accessible facilities. With that being said, we haven't had a lot of people come through our facility even at 770 University Avenue with handicaps that include the use of a wheelchair. But, the law is the law. We respect that.

Thank you for working with us on this matter and we will continue to provide services to the disenfranchised and exploited women/girls of St. Paul and will push forward on acquiring a different facility that will meet our growing needs.

Sincerely,

Terry Forliti
TForliti@breakingfree.net
612-203-7119