

Kyle Holland

From: DAVID POOR <dmpoor@msn.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 28, 2023 6:31 PM
To: Kyle Holland
Subject: Homeless Conditional Use Permit

You don't often get email from dmpoor@msn.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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November 28, 2023

To whom it may concern: Kyle Holland Community Development Department.

As a longtime Helena resident and a multiple homeowner on North Jackson Street, I and other tax paying neighbors are against the Emergency Shelter Proposal in our zoning district. This isn't the place or a good location for a temporary or a permanent shelter to house individual's male or female. We have had many problems with the current homeless situation in our area, these include numerous break-ins, thefts, vandalism, people going through our dumpsters for discarded mail, random camping out wherever they please, using anywhere to go to the bathroom day or night, discarded trash & shopping carts, junk vehicles parked for long period of times, discarded drug paraphernalia, liquor bottles & cans, and cigarettes & other smoking paraphernalia. There also have been numerous calls to local Law Enforcement.

Watching the local news lately it seems like this proposal is already a done deal. I hope this isn't the case. Downtown Helena has a major problem daily with people sleeping and congregating in our parks and setting up camp wherever they please and starting fires and doing whatever they please. We really do not need this in our neighborhoods. Many of the people have been kicked out of God's Love for Drug and Alcohol abuse and fighting and criminal records. They are not allowed to stay there. Using the old Saint John's Hospital seemed like the best idea overall with strict supervision. Putting this proposed location in the back attached section of a current business (Simple Cremations Funeral Home) is not the place to house people. Thank You for your time and listening.

Sincerely,
David M. Poor

Kyle Holland

From: Paul Williams <lugnutpaul@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 22, 2023 9:50 AM
To: Kyle Holland
Cc: Suzy; Paul Williams
Subject: Hi, this email concerns the proposed conditional use permit for 648 Jackson street.

[You don't often get email from lugnutpaul@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

My name is Paul Williams. I have owned the building at 612-614 North Last Chance Gulch since 1984. I and my tenants have had many, many problems with transients in the past. In the barbershop, I have had to replace the picture window and the window in the entry door, which were broken due to vandalism. My tenant, the barber, has had many problems with transients using the doorway to his business as a shelter, so customers couldn't access his business, In the alley behind where my business was accessed on the lower level of my building, I witnessed fights, drunkenness, urination, litter and fires. Sometimes I had to call the Police to deal with it.

It is TIME for the city of Helena to acknowledge and invest in the businesses and property owners who are the lifeblood of our city, and stop these "feel good" projects which are at the expense of business owners. The reason for zoning is to alleviate problems which this conditional use permit will inevitably cause.

I am very strongly opposed to this conditional use permit. DO NOT ALLOW IT



400 S. Oakes Street
Helena, MT 59601
(406) 442-9883
pccofficemgr@gmail.com

November 27, 2023

To: City of Helena
Dear: Mayor Collins and City Commissioners

For more than 10 years various community organizations have considered effective ways to address the needs of our unsheltered neighbors during Helena's bitter cold winters. We recognize and thank the Helena City Commission for the essential funds to help address emergency shelter for our most vulnerable neighbors. Representing the Outreach and Social Justice Committee at Plymouth Church we endorse Good Samaritan Ministries' proposal to shelter women in the downtown area, adjacent to their highly impactful day center, "Our Place."

Plymouth Church is one of many local non-profits and social service agencies to recognize the housing crisis and to offer assistance as best we can. Our congregation provides meals and food to God's Love; instigated the book read and fall 2023 discussion surrounding "Rough Sleepers", a Boston journalist's experiences with the unhoused; received significant funding for and design of a traveling photo exhibit titled "Faces of Our Unsheltered Neighbors" which features 10 of our Helena-area unhoused men, women and families and is currently booked through May of 2024; instigated a drive to purchase 50 sleeping bags for those living on the streets (which surprisingly raised enough to purchase another 50); organized a consortia of Clergy Advocates representing a variety of faith communities that are committed to addressing the housing crisis in Helena.

We attended most of the "Move the Dial" meetings orchestrated by United Way, attended the Emergency Housing Task Force and City Commission meetings when possible so that we might be better informed and responsive to specific needs. In all our work we are most grateful for the tutelage of Dr. Jeff Buscher of United Way and Theresa Ortega of Good Samaritan Ministries who have made us aware of acute needs and reasonable solutions to the housing crisis.

*Plymouth's mission is to nurture our congregation and the wider community
with acts of love and a vision of God's image in all things.*



Plymouth Congregational Church fully supports the Good Samaritan Ministries' candidacy to utilize the funds earmarked to address homelessness in Helena this winter. Unsheltered women, who often struggle in a traditional mixed-gender shelter setting, can begin a path to recovery, realignment, and restoration. There is no organization more prepared nor positioned to take on this project, and we trust in Good Samaritan Ministries' ability to foster a safe and caring environment for those women in need. Plymouth Church asks you to extend financial support to this effort which distinctly speaks to Helena's compassionate and innovative spirit.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Jeffries Thompson
Chair, Outreach and Social Justice Committee, for
Plymouth Congregational Church - UCC

Kyle Holland

From: Rex Seeley <rexseeley@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2023 9:42 PM
To: Kyle Holland
Subject: 316 N Park CUP

Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Completed

You don't often get email from rexseeley@hotmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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I am extremely opposed to this change. It should stay as it was intended. We are already cleaning up feces, garbage, and discarded possessions of transients in the area. They trespass on posted property, dump trash, steal, and vandalize. They have made fires in my front lawn as they prepared their drugs as well as fires behind the building next door, and our back yard which is very disconcerting since we have a wood building. They are often aggressive, accost our customers and intimidate our employees and the cleaning people at the Seeley building. I do not want to have to deal with more issues with them. Putting any additional money into that building would be a poor investment.

Rex Seeley
618,630,708 N Last Chance Gulch
Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows



November 21, 2023

Theresa Ortega, Executive Director, and Brad Cook, GSM Board Chair
Good Samaritan Ministries
PO Box 5177
Helena, MT 59604

Dear Theresa and Brad,

Greetings to you! Thank you for your November 14 letter regarding opening a women's shelter and emergency shelter. I am hopeful for the good work you do for those most vulnerable among us, especially the homeless. I thank you and give you my support in these important ministries.

You have my conditional approval for the two phases as described in your letter upon the insurance coverage being procured and a plan to hire qualified staff. Please continue to work with Jim Carney as you determine insurance costs with Catholic Mutual. Please keep me informed so that I can give final approval before November 30.

Thank you for your attention to the needs of all God's children. Know of my prayers for you and this project. Please pray for me!

In Christ, I am

Most Reverend Austin A. Vetter
Bishop of Helena

O F F I C E O F T H E B I S H O P

Diocese Of Helena • P.O. Box 1729 • Helena, MT 59624

Phone: 406.442.5820 • Fax: 406.442.5191

Kyle Holland

From: April Sparks
Sent: Wednesday, November 29, 2023 2:35 PM
To: Kyle Holland
Subject: FW: Support for Emergency Shelter in downtown Helena

FYI add to the support comments



April Sparks

Administrative Assistant III, Community Development Department
(406) 447-8490 | apsparks@helenamt.gov | helenamt.gov
316 N. Park Avenue, Room 445, Helena, MT 59623



From: chuckbutlr@aol.com <chuckbutlr@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 29, 2023 2:34 PM
To: Wilmot Collins <wilmotcollins@yahoo.com>
Cc: April Sparks <APSPARKS@helenamt.gov>; Anne Pichette <APICHETTE@helenamt.gov>
Subject: Support for Emergency Shelter in downtown Helena

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Mayor Collins & Members
of the Helena City Commission

This letter (transmitted by email on 11/29/23) is to enthusiastically support the proposal by Good Samaritan Ministries for a Conditional Use Permit to open an Emergency Shelter in downtown Helena for homeless women.

For many years we have driven by Our Place on Last Chance Gulch, but only after attending a conversation there this fall on Helena's Homeless did we realize the extent of the services offered by the Our Place/Good Samaritan Ministries staff.

In the past few months i have stopped there with pizzas and lately, as it has gotten a bit colder, hot coffee. (It is a very special feeling to get a bear hug from my homeless friends)

Susan led our church Women's Fellowship fundraiser that resulted in the purchase of 100 Kelty sleeping bags for Helena's Homeless. We delivered the bags to Our Place where Street Outreach Coordinator Mark Nay, a very caring person, has been distributing them.

The staff at Good Samaritan Ministries (Our Place) Mark, Theresa, Kaitlin and Justine are very special individuals. They care for the folks who Drop-in, show them respect and treat them with compassion. Bless them.

So, observing Our Place staff for several months interact with many homeless women and men, I know that Good Samaritan Ministries will do likewise with women who use the proposed Emergency Shelter.

Your approval of the application by Good Samaritan Ministries for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the Emergency Shelter will
be a significant move towards helping our Homeless neighbors.

Respectfully,
Susan & Chuck Butler
Longtime Members
Plymouth Congregational Church
Helena, Montana

April, please add this letter to the file of the Good Samaritan Ministries CUP application being prepared for Mayor Collins and the City Commissioners. Thank you, Chuck

CC: Theresa Ortega
Mark Nay
Pastor Charles Wei

Mayor Collins and City Commissioners
City of Helena
City County Building
316 N Park Ave
Helena, MT 59601

November 25, 2023

Dear Mayor Collins and City Commissioners,

For more than 10 years various community organizations have considered more effective ways to address the needs of our unsheltered neighbors during our bitter cold winters. In recognition of the growing magnitude of this crisis, Helena's City Commission earmarked essential funds to shelter our most vulnerable neighbors this winter. I am writing you on behalf of ExplorationWorks to show our endorsement of Good Samaritan Ministries' proposal to shelter women in the downtown area, adjacent to their highly impactful day center, "Our Place."

While the persistent need is compelling, Good Samaritan Ministries' passionate and professional programs and team make them the ideal candidate to fill the existing gap in emergency shelter services. With a longstanding relationship with God's Love, whose services have carried our community for many winters, I am confident that these agencies will work together effectively to keep our most vulnerable neighbors lodged through the colder months.

With a goal of opening in January of 2024, this pilot program will complement the services provided at "Our Place." Good Samaritan Ministries is well-prepared to meet the needs of unhoused women in a shelter capacity as they have fostered trust and relationships by providing meaningful, relevant, and trauma-informed services to this population at "Our Place." Regularly, they better the lives of our most marginalized community members through connection to addiction and mental health services as well as providing housing navigation and assistance regaining identification and Social Security enrollment. The existing collaborations that have made "Our Place" a respected and trustworthy program in our community will continue during Good Samaritan Ministries' emergency women's shelter program, demonstrating the strength of their proposal.

ExplorationWorks fully supports the Good Samaritan Ministries' candidacy to utilize the funds earmarked to address homelessness in Helena this winter. Thoughtfully meeting the needs of unsheltered women, who often struggle in a traditional mixed-gender shelter setting, can begin a path to recovery, realignment, and restoration. There is no organization more prepared nor positioned to take on this need, and we trust in Good Samaritan Ministries' ability to foster a safe and caring environment for those women in need. We/I (Agency) humbly ask you to extend financial support to this project that so distinctly speaks to Helena's compassionate and innovative spirit.

Sincerely,



Heather O'Neill
Executive Director
heathero@explorationworks.org



995 Carousel Way, Helena, MT 59601
(406) 457.1800

www.explorationworks.org



November 20, 2023

To Whom it May Concern,

This letter is to offer complete and full support for Good Samaritan Ministries' project to open a homeless shelter for women. This shelter will meet an important need for many women and their families in our community who currently have no stable or safe place to sleep at night, especially in the winter.

The mission of The Friendship Center (TFC) is to be a safe haven for those affected by domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking (DVSA) and to empower our community to flourish in relationships free from violence. Trauma and violence often intersect with homelessness; homelessness can be a direct result of the trauma and violence someone has experienced, and being homeless dramatically increases the risk of experiencing trauma and violence. The two issues are so intertwined that it can be hard to distinguish and separate. Projects that will assist with the sheltering and housing crisis more broadly will by default benefit our clients (and community) because of the clear intersection of the issues.

The lack of available, affordable, and sustainable housing is a critical issue. The current sheltering agencies in our community are nearly always at capacity and/or have a waitlist. Additionally, only two agencies provide emergency shelter, which are not able to meet the needs of the community or, depending on the circumstances, safely meet the needs of women and their families. Currently, there is no shelter specifically for homeless women and their families in the tri-county area. Good Samaritan Ministries' shelter will offer our clients, as well as many others, a safe place to sleep while they figure out next steps – helping to meet the pervasive crisis we are all facing.

People should not have to win the timing lottery or sacrifice safety to have a safe place to sleep at night. It is necessary to have another shelter option in our community.

Good Samaritan Ministries' project to open a homeless shelter for women will fill a dangerous and large gap that has existed in our community for too many years. TFC offers unequivocal support for the project. We are committed to partnering with Good Samaritan Ministries to provide support to all DVSA victims that are sheltered through this project. We implore you to add your support for this project as well.

Sincerely,

Gina Boesdorfer
Executive Director



We build
strength, stability,
self-reliance,
and shelter.

11/21/2023

Helena Area Habitat for Humanity
PO Box 459
Helena, MT 59624
406-204-7315

To: City of Helena
Dear: Mayor Collins and City Commissioners

Helena Area Habitat for Humanity strongly supports Good Samaritan Ministries' proposal to shelter women in the downtown area, adjacent to their highly impactful day center, "Our Place."

With a goal of opening in January of 2024, this pilot program will complement the services provided at "Our Place." Good Samaritan Ministries is well-prepared to meet the needs of unhoused women in a shelter capacity. The existing collaborations that have made "Our Place" a respected and trustworthy program in our community will continue during Good Samaritan Ministries' emergency women's shelter program, demonstrating the strength of their proposal.

Helena Area Habitat for Humanity is very familiar with the serious challenges faced by the most vulnerable in our community. With no dedicated women's shelter in the city, a basic and fundamental need in our community has gone unmet. The challenges of the unhoused will continue to compound through this rapidly accelerating housing crisis as the most vulnerable are pushed out of their fragile housing. The time is now to address these serious challenges.

Our organization fully supports the Good Samaritan Ministries' candidacy to utilize the funds earmarked to address homelessness in Helena this winter. The city should double or triple these funds as it finds itself able.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jacob Kuntz", is written over a large, faint circular watermark or stamp.

Jacob Kuntz, Executive Director

**Helena Area Habitat
for Humanity ReStore**
1320 Market Avenue
Helena, MT 59602
(406) 457-0444

**Helena Area
Habitat for Humanity**
PO Box 459
Helena, MT 59624
(406) 449-4663
HelenaHabitat.org





Helena Area
Habitat
for Humanity®

We build
strength, stability,
self-reliance,
and shelter.

11/21/2023

Helena Area Habitat for Humanity
PO Box 459
Helena, MT 59624
406-204-7315

Re: Montana Department of Commerce, EMERGENCY SHELTER FACILITY GRANT (ESFG)
PROGRAM

Dear Theresa:

I write this letter in support of Good Samaritan Ministries application to the Department of Commerce, Emergency Shelter Funding Grant. (ESFG). This grant will fund Good Samaritan's Emergency Warming Shelter with trauma-informed care for the whole person. Good Samaritan Ministries operates "Our Place Day Center" where they provide addiction services, mental health support, housing navigation, assistance gaining identification, and more. These services, provided in part through meaningful community partnerships, will be an integral part of the programming offered to residents of this emergency shelter. I am confident in Good Samaritan Ministries' ability to expand upon their portfolio of meaningful assistance to our unsheltered neighbors. This investment in our community will be a catalyst for stability, health, and housing permanency in the Helena Area — to the benefit of all.

Our organization is very familiar with the challenges faced by the most vulnerable in our community. With no dedicated women's shelter in the city, a basic and fundamental need has gone unmet. The challenges of the unhoused will continue to compound through this rapidly accelerating housing crisis. As the most vulnerable are pushed out of fragile housing conditions.

Helena Area Habitat for Humanity fully supports Good Samaritan Ministries' candidacy for an ESFG grant. The enduring passion and professionalism that define both the work and team at Good Samaritan Ministries has led to an outpouring of community support. We are confident they will be successful in serving our community's most vulnerable citizens.

Sincerely,

Jacob Kuntz, Executive Director

**Helena Area Habitat
for Humanity ReStore**
1320 Market Avenue
Helena, MT 59602
(406) 457-0444

**Helena Area
Habitat for Humanity**
PO Box 459
Helena, MT 59624
(406) 449-4663

HelenaHabitat.org



EQUAL HOUSING
OPPORTUNITY



November 28, 2023

Helena City Commission
City of Helena
316 N. Park Ave.
Helena, MT 59601

Dear Mayor Collins and City Commissioners

For more than 10 years, various community organizations have studied more effective ways to address the needs of our unsheltered neighbors during our bitter cold winters. In recognition of the growing magnitude of this crisis, Helena's City Commission earmarked essential funds to shelter our most vulnerable neighbors this winter.

At Helena Food Share, we have witnessed an increase in the number of our customers who are unhoused, both temporarily and chronically. The need for new food assistance options for those without a home or kitchen, and the increased need for weekend food support for kids in our schools that are homeless steadily rises. Because of this, we are well aware of the growing need to assist those facing homelessness in our community. We eagerly write to you to forward our endorsement of Good Samaritan Ministries' proposal to shelter women in the downtown area, adjacent to their highly impactful day center, "Our Place."

While the persistent need is compelling, Good Samaritan Ministries' passionate and professional programs and team make them the ideal candidate to fill the existing gap in emergency shelter services. With a longstanding relationship with God's Love, whose services have carried our community for many winters, I am confident that together, these agencies will work together effectively to keep our most vulnerable neighbors lodged through the colder months.

From our perspective as a partner to Good Samaritan Ministries, we believe this pilot program will complement the services provided at "Our Place," and that Good Samaritan Ministries is well-prepared to meet the needs of unhoused women in a shelter capacity. We currently provide food

resources to many agencies throughout the Helena area and envision a similar collaboration with Good Samaritan Ministries for the new shelter.

Helena Food Share fully supports the Good Samaritan Ministries' candidacy to utilize the funds earmarked to address homelessness in Helena this winter. Thoughtfully meeting the needs of unsheltered women, who often struggle in a traditional mixed-gender shelter setting, can begin a path to recovery, realignment, and restoration. We trust in Good Samaritan Ministries' ability to foster a safe and caring environment for those women in need.

We ask you to extend financial support to this project that so distinctly speaks to Helena's compassionate and innovative spirit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce Day". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bruce" and the last name "Day" clearly distinguishable.

Bruce Day
Executive Director

Ray and Susie Kuntz are against granting a conditional use permit for emergency shelter use at 648 Jackson Street in downtown Helena. We offer the reasons why we oppose this location, and offer potential solutions.

We are sympathetic of the growing homeless problem and the need to find solutions, but think having a homeless shelter in the middle of a growth area in downtown is a bad idea that will discourage any further development of the downtown area. We own property surrounding the proposed emergency shelter site including 803 and 807 Jackson Street, and have had growing theft problems as the homeless population has grown in the area. Granting the conditional use permit would clearly devalue our property.

We developed and maintain 50% ownership of the commercial property across the street – The Seeley Building. This building's 2021 construction is the direct result of the city's plan to revitalize downtown Helena. The building sits on the site of a formerly abandoned bus stop, and it has dramatically improved the look and feel of the downtown. This building has served as a catalyst for nearby improvements of other structures. We invested over \$18 million under the existing zoning. While plans sometimes change, the City should appreciate the negative impact this permit will have on its plans of downtown revitalization. Granting a conditional in this location is unfair to those who believed in the City's plans and invested in it. This homeless site will reduce the value of this building and leave any potential investor to walk away from plans with the City. Already today in the Seeley Building, we have employees afraid to park outside the building because of the homeless.

We also own commercial property on 320 Jackson Street and an apartment at 308 Jackson Street, near the existing God's Love shelter. In this area we have recurrent vandalism, trash accumulation, barbed wire cut on the roof and homeless trying to live in the front well and on the roof of the building, forcing us to invest in gates and additional locks.

We are in support of the proposal to develop the St John's hospital building into a homeless center. It is large enough to house the current needs of homeless.

For the immediate problem of this Winter, we recommend setting up one of the buildings at the Fairgrounds as an emergency center. It can be done quickly and offer a solution until late Spring. It is large enough to house the current needs immediately (and perhaps while the St John's facility is renovated).

Respectfully,
Ray & Susie Kuntz

ROCKY MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, INC.
Improving lives, strengthening communities

ROCKY MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, INC.
P.O. Box 1717 | 200 South Cruse Avenue | Helena, MT 59624-1717
phone: 406.447.1680 | toll free: 800.356.6544 | fax: 406.447.1629

November 13, 2023

Good Samaritan Ministries
Theresa Ortega, Executive Director
3067 North Montana
Helena, MT 59601

Dear Theresa,

I would like to take this opportunity to offer support for Good Samaritan Ministries to open an Emergency Women's Shelter in January 2024. This phase of a long-term solution for housing our unsheltered community members is a wonderful pilot-project solution. Emergency shelters - with wraparound services - play a critical role in ending homelessness. I am confident that Good Samaritan will offer services and referrals to help those who are open to receiving help. For others, this Emergency Shelter will be a life-saving facility during Montana's cold winters.

Thank you for taking on this important project.
Sincerely,

Lori Ladas

The Steward
501c3

30 South Davis Street
Helena, Montana 59601

November 22, 2023

Regarding a Montana Department of Commerce
Emergency Shelter Facility Grant

Dear Ms Ortega,

I appreciate being able to write this letter of support for your work at Good Samaritan Ministries as part their strong application for a Department of Commerce, Emergency Shelter Funding Grant. (ESFG). This grant will fund Good Samaritan's Emergency low barrier Warming Shelter with trauma-informed care for the whole person. Good Samaritan Ministries operates "Our Place Day Center" where they provide addiction services, mental health support, housing navigation, assistance gaining identification, and more. These services, provided in part through meaningful community partnerships, will be an integral part of the programming offered to residents of this emergency shelter. I am confident in Good Samaritan Ministries' ability to expand upon their portfolio of meaningful assistance to our Helena community.

The Steward is helping gather volunteers for the effort to open in January 2024, and are continuing on our own effort to build and site Extreme Weather Emergency Shelters for that portion of our unhoused neighbors who may still be caught out side and exposed during "Code

Blue” (temperatures including wind chill expected to fall below 32 degrees F) and “Code Red” (temperatures expected to rise above 95 degrees F) periods.

Our 23 year old Montana non/profit fully supports the Good Samaritan Ministries’ candidacy for a ESFG grant. The needs of the unsheltered are complex, but this project stands to bring together a breadth of collaborating agencies whose work can be transformed when those they work with are sheltered. The Steward stands in a broad cross section of our community determined to make a path to recovery, realignment, and restoration a true prospect in our community. The enduring passion and professionalism that define both the work and team at Good Samaritan Ministries deserve this endorsement from individuals, government, nonprofit organizations, faith communities, and the private sector.

Sincerely,
John B Driscoll
Senior Project Coordinator



of the Lewis and Clark Area

United Way of the Lewis & Clark Area

75 East Lyndale Avenue, Helena, Montana 59601
406-442-4360

www.unitedwaylca.org

November 20, 2023

To: City of Helena

Dear: Mayor Collins and City Commissioners

For more than 10 years various community organizations have considered more effective ways to address the needs of our unsheltered neighbors during our bitter cold winters. In recognition of the growing magnitude of this crisis, Helena's City Commission earmarked essential funds to shelter our most vulnerable neighbors this winter. The United Way of the Lewis and Clark Area eagerly writes to you to forward our endorsement of Good Samaritan Ministries' proposal to shelter women in the downtown area, adjacent to their highly impactful day center, "Our Place."

While the persistent need is compelling, Good Samaritan Ministries' passionate and professional programs and team make them the ideal candidate to fill the existing gap in emergency shelter services. With a longstanding relationship with God's Love, whose services have carried our community for many winters, I am confident that together, these agencies will work together effectively to keep our most vulnerable neighbors lodged through the colder months.

With a goal of opening in January of 2024, this pilot program will complement the services provided at "Our Place." Good Samaritan Ministries is well-prepared to meet the needs of unhoused women in a shelter capacity as they have fostered trust and relationships by providing meaningful, relevant, and trauma-informed services to this population at "Our Place." Regularly, they better the lives of our most marginalized community members through connection to addiction and mental health services as well as providing housing navigation and assistance regaining identification and Social Security enrollment. The existing collaborations that have made "Our Place" a respected and trustworthy program in our community will continue during Good Samaritan Ministries' emergency women's shelter program, demonstrating the strength of their proposal.

The United Way has walked hand-in-hand with Good Samaritan on this project for many years. The dream for this project and the associated services has spanned years, changes of staff, and has circled back around and is now finally becoming a reality. The United Way leads the Housing First Helena program, and our goal is to find housing and wrap-around services to the unsheltered individuals in our community. Ruth's Place will be one major step to helping us complete our goal. We will continue to work with and support Good Samaritan Ministries as the

Uniting resources, organizations, and people to transform our community for good.



Western Montana Railroad Historical Association

Kyle Holland
Planner II
City of Helena - Community Development Department
316 North Park Avenue, Room 445
Helena, MT 59623

November 27, 2023

Dear Mr. Holland,

This letter is in response to your announcement of a proposed land use change for 648 Jackson St., Helena.

Our non-profit organization is a tenant at an adjacent property (619 N Last Chance Gulch) and we have concerns regarding the proposed change. Due to the short time frame associated with the announcement, we were not able to discuss this issue during our regular monthly business meetings and thus this letter may not include a full list of our Association's concerns.

While we recognize that homelessness is a serious and growing issue in Helena that needs to be addressed by the city, we would hope that the city understands the potential negative impact that the homeless population has on visitation and business potential in the historic downtown. As an organization involved with preserving and showcasing railroad history for western Montana, we have visitors from all over the U.S. that stop by our facility. For some visitors we are their primary destination when coming to Helena. The existing homeless population in our vicinity has already given many of our visitors cause for concern. Potentially facilitating even more homeless concentrations in what should be the most vibrant and visited part of the city doesn't seem to be in keeping with the many downtown improvement studies or our desires for a safe and attractive area as a downtown tenant.

Treating the homeless in a compassionate and respectful way is certainly the goal but focusing their population in the most tourist attractive part of the city doesn't seem like a reasonable or rationale thing to do. Thank you for your time.

Regards,

WMRHA Board President
P.O Box 2016
Helena, MT 59624
Established in Helena, Montana - 2016

December 4, 2023

City Planning Division
316 North Park
Helena, MT 59623

RE: Conditional Use Permit for Emergency Shelter at 648 Jackson Street, Helena

Dear Zoning Commission and City Commission Members:

1. We need to help the unsheltered and those on the verge of losing shelter.

I believe that people must be willing to take care of themselves to the best of their physical and mental abilities. But I am also aware that is not always possible.

It is society's responsibility to help those who through no fault of their own cannot function as healthy individuals.

2. Concerns for Low Barrier population

The proposed shelter will be a "low barrier" shelter aimed at those who have mental illness or substance abuse. This is the portion of the unsheltered population that may be least likely to be willing or able to take care of themselves. It is also a population that is more likely to break the law simply by using illegal substances and illegally obtaining funds to purchase those substances. It is also a population that is more likely to be violent. My brother was that person, stealing from our mother, abusing medication, bruising his wife, threatening my sister and her husband. He destroyed the rental where he lived, went missing, and ended up in the psychiatric ward of a VA hospital.

3. Existing Need – Future Need

There is nothing in the application materials to substantiate an existing need for 26 emergency beds for women in the "low barrier" category. I do not doubt, however, that if there is insufficient existing need, the beds would soon be filled due to the growing influx of low barrier persons into Helena.

4. Safety - Generally

I live a few blocks from the proposed shelter. In the past 10 years, I have seen Helena work hard to make the downtown a vibrant place that attracts city residents and tourists. And it has indeed become a more lively place. But I fear that will be changing as I feel less safe downtown than I did five years ago. Tourists and residents are not going to come downtown when they are concerned about their safety. The increasing numbers of unsheltered who create unsanitary conditions, build fires, scatter trash and act erratically, agitated, and intoxicated or worse, is sad because clearly they need help. It's also frightening people away.

5. Where will Shelter Residents be between 9am-4pm?

I am absolutely concerned about the proposed shelter. The application indicates that there will be indoor places for the residents to go between 9am and 4pm, but our experience as neighbors is that they spill into surrounding areas, parks, alleys. God's Love is not open all day long, only certain times of the day. Do the services that are mentioned in the application have the capacity for the additional folks that will be in the shelter as well as others that may follow them into Helena? And, there will be shelter residents who do not want to be in any day-time facility that prohibits certain behaviors or activity. Instead they will be outside by their own choice, congregating with others who share that choice.

6. Shelter Residents who are Non-Compliant

Where will residents go if they are no longer allowed in the shelter if they are violent in the shelter or have a weapon? These violent and/or weapon-carrying individuals will add to the growing number of persons who have no shelter in our town, and likely within close proximity to the families in my neighborhood.

7. Effects on Downtown and Surrounding Areas

When downtowns begin to change in a way that results in fewer pedestrians and a feeling of safety at any time of the day or night, businesses and residents begin to leave. This is what causes decay and ultimately what caused so many downtowns to decline in the 1950s and ultimately resulted in the nationwide urban renewal of the 1970s. Huge assets were lost during the decline and subsequent urban renewal, at huge financial and social cost – including displaced persons and treasured historic buildings. In the early 21st century, Helena was still struggling to regain the vibrancy of a downtown that existed prior to the 1950s. The Downtown Plan that was developed a few years ago appears to be making a difference.

8. Shelter Does NOT Meet Approval Criteria

The proposed shelter should not be approved because there is no credible evidence to indicate that it will not adversely affect public safety (and therefore does not meet the criteria of Section 11-3-4 of Helena Zoning Ordinance for a conditional use permit):

- A. The proposed shelter will adversely impact public health, safety, or general welfare. This shelter will increase the number of persons with violent and addictive behaviors on city streets, at a minimum for some portion of each day. Persons who are noticeably intoxicated or worse, with sometimes aggressive behaviors to passersby are not in the best interest of the general welfare.
- B. The proposed shelter will adversely impact and impair the peaceful use of existing property or improvements in the vicinity. The "low barrier" population is already impacting the peaceful use of existing property. If a 26-bed facility is built with no particular indoor place for the women who shelter there to go during the day, they are likely to join others outdoors. In addition, there will be others who come to Helena for the shelter but who may be unable to get into the shelter because it is at capacity and they will join those in the streets.

Regarding other legal criteria for approving the shelter, I believe it is a stretch to think that the proposed shelter would meet the requirement for compliance with the Helena Downtown Neighborhood Plan. The intent of the plan is to revitalize downtown, and to do that one does not knowingly decrease the safety of persons in downtown.

In fact, it would be difficult to see how any proposed similar shelter would meet the intent of a neighborhood plan anywhere in Helena if safety was potentially jeopardized.

9. This is an Issue for the Entire City, not Just Downtown – We need a Comprehensive Plan Now

Consequently, if we as citizens of Helena are serious about addressing the unsheltered population, and I believe we are, we need to tackle this issue city-wide. We need to spread the responsibility to more locations in the city. If we do not, this issue is forced on downtown, despite expressed public opinion by business owners, property owners, and residents of downtown and nearby areas. If we do not as a city, plan for shelter and services for unsheltered individuals in various locations throughout town, we are no better than the cities that have punted their “problem populations” to other towns. This has been done in the past (and may still be occurring) by simply refusing to provide adequate services in their town, or worse, by giving them a bus ticket out of town. Let’s not let Helena start acting like that within its own city limits. This is a caring place and it’s clear we are already working to help people here who are recent arrivals.

We need a comprehensive plan for the spectrum of unsheltered individuals that ensures that downtown and nearby areas are not the ONLY place for shelter and services.

We need to continue building a great downtown and a great city. The downtown is the heart of any city. If it begins to deteriorate, we will lose huge investments in infrastructure and tax base as well. Tax revenue losses from the downtown core mean that other areas of the city have to make up the difference or the city will need to cut services. Let’s not re-create the issues that resulted in the exodus of the core of our city in the mid-20th century.

I will be more inclined to support any proposed shelter if we have a city-wide plan in place that spreads the responsibility for this issue across the city rather than leaving it almost exclusively to the downtown and surrounding area.

10. Temporary One-Season Shelter

I would support the emergency shelter for this season only, with that temporary time frame included as a condition of the permit. Hopefully before we have another winter season, the city can have a meaningful city-wide plan such as I propose in this letter. Then the city can reassess a longer time frame for this shelter within the context of the plan.

Sincerely,
Anne Cossitt

Christine Horner
639 Logan Street
Helena, MT 59601

Kyle Holland
Community Development Department
316 N Park Ave, room 445
Helena, MT 59623

November 30, 2023

Re: Conditional Use Permit – 648 Jackson Street

Kyle Holland,

There are many organizations in downtown generously serving the unhoused. God's Love has graciously carried the load and the Budget Inn across the street takes overflow. I have heard that the Helena Indian Alliance is considering turning their former building, two doors south of God's Love, into a shelter. I wonder if having two shelters, perhaps three, within a quarter mile of each other would irreparably alter downtown.

I would like to help our unhoused neighbors but feel protective of our downtown which is currently inundated with camps.

Safety is a concern. As a resident of Helena, I have a mental map in my mind of places to avoid. Including parks, tunnels, parking lots, parking garages, the back of Golden Girls, the back of the Holter Museum, the back of the Iron Front and more. Tourist and visitors are likely to stumble upon these places as they explore our historic downtown.

I fear that a concentration of shelters has the potential to **increase** the number of street camps, as many folks choose to set up camp close to a such facilities and may prefer not to sleep there. Certainly, our homeless problem needs to be addressed. Should downtown carry the burden exclusively? At what cost to our downtown, its businesses, tourism, and local residences?

Appreciatively,

Chris Horner



First Presbyterian Church of Helena

*Spreading the Good News of Christ through
Our Love, Words, and Actions*

December 1, 2023

RECEIVED

DEC 4 2023

City Comm. Dev. Dept.

First Presbyterian Church
535 Ewing
Helena, MT 59601
406-442-4775

To: City of Helena
Dear: Mayor Collins and City Commissioners

For more than 10 years various community organizations have considered more effective ways to address the needs of our unsheltered neighbors during our bitter cold winters. In recognition of the growing magnitude of this crisis, Helena's City Commission earmarked essential funds to shelter our most vulnerable neighbors this winter. First Presbyterian Church (FPC) eagerly writes to you to forward our endorsement of Good Samaritan Ministries' proposal to shelter women in the downtown area, adjacent to their highly impactful day center, "Our Place."

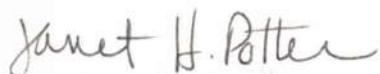
While the persistent need is compelling, Good Samaritan Ministries' passionate and professional programs and team make them the ideal candidate to fill the existing gap in emergency shelter services. With a longstanding relationship with God's Love, whose services have carried our community for many winters, I am confident that together, these agencies will work together effectively to keep our most vulnerable neighbors lodged through the colder months.

With a goal of opening in January of 2024, this pilot program will complement the services provided at "Our Place." Good Samaritan Ministries is well-prepared to meet the needs of unhoused women in a shelter capacity as they have fostered trust and relationships by providing meaningful, relevant, and trauma-informed services to this population at "Our Place." Regularly, they better the lives of our most marginalized community members through connection to addiction and mental health services as well as providing housing navigation and assistance regaining identification and Social Security enrollment. The existing collaborations that have made "Our Place" a respected and trustworthy program in our community will continue during Good Samaritan Ministries' emergency women's shelter program, demonstrating the strength of their proposal.

First Presbyterian Church of Helena is aware of the great need for an emergency housing shelter. Many unsheltered people come to the door of FPC looking for assistance with shelter, food and gas. We have financially supported Good Samaritan Ministries for years as they live out Jesus' commandment to love one an-

other. And we do so because they have the experience and expertise to meet the complex and complicated needs of the unsheltered community.

Presbyterian Church fully supports the Good Samaritan Ministries' candidacy to utilize the funds earmarked to address homelessness in Helena this winter. Thoughtfully meeting the needs of unsheltered women, who often struggle in a traditional mixed-gender shelter setting, can begin a path to recovery, realignment, and restoration. There is no organization more prepared nor positioned to take on this need, and we trust in Good Samaritan Ministries' ability to foster a safe and caring environment for those women in need. First Presbyterian Church humbly ask you to extend financial support to this project that so distinctly speaks to Helena's compassionate and innovative spirit.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janet H. Potter".

Sincerely,

Rev, Janet Potter, Interim Pastor

First Presbyterian Church



First Presbyterian Church of Helena

*Spreading the Good News of Christ through
Our Love, Words, and Actions*

December 1, 2023
First Presbyterian Church
535 Ewing
Helena, MT 59601
406-442-4775

Re: Montana Department of Commerce
EMERGENCY SHELTER FACILITY GRANT (ESFG) PROGRAM

Dear: Theresa

It is with great pleasure to write this letter of support for Good Samaritan Ministries as part their strong application for a Department of Commerce, Emergency Shelter Funding Grant. (ESFG). This grant will fund Good Samaritan's Emergency Warming Shelter with trauma-informed care for the whole person. Good Samaritan Ministries operates "Our Place Day Center" where they provide addiction services, mental health support, housing navigation, assistance gaining identification, and more. These services, provided in part through meaningful community partnerships, will be an integral part of the programming offered to residents of this emergency shelter. I am confident in Good Samaritan Ministries' ability to expand upon their portfolio of meaningful assistance to our unsheltered neighbors. This investment in our community will be a catalyst for stability, health, and housing permanency in the Helena Area — to the benefit of all.

First Presbyterian Church (FPC) of Helena is aware of the great need for an emergency housing shelter. Many unsheltered people come to the door of FPC looking for assistance with shelter, food and gas. We have financially supported Good Samaritan Ministries for many years as they live out Jesus' commandment to love one another. We do so because they have the experience and expertise to meet the complex and complicated needs of the unsheltered community.

First Presbyterian Church fully supports the Good Samaritan Ministries' candidacy for a ESFG grant. The needs of the unsheltered are sincere and complex, but this project stands to benefit a breadth of collaborating agencies whose work can be transformed when those they work with are sheltered. We at FPC are grateful to stand alongside a broad cross section of our community determined to make a path to recovery, realignment, and restoration a true prospect in our community. The enduring passion and professionalism that define both the work and team at Good Samaritan Ministries has led to a groundswell of endorsement from everyday individuals, government, nonprofit organizations, faith communities, and the private sector. We humbly ask you to join us.

Sincerely,
Rev. Janet Potter, Interim Pastor
First Presbyterian Church



Helena Police Department
Brett Petty, Chief of Police
406 Fuller Avenue 1st Fl
Helena, MT 59601

Phone: 406-447-8479
Fax: 406-442-3965

helenamt.gov

December 1, 2023

Re: Montana Department of Commerce
EMERGENCY SHELTER FACILITY GRANT (ESFG) PROGRAM

Dear Theresa,

It is my pleasure to write this letter of support for Good Samaritan Ministries as part their strong application for a Department of Commerce, Emergency Shelter Funding Grant. (ESFG). This grant will fund Good Samaritan's Emergency Warming Shelter with trauma-informed care for the whole person. Good Samaritan Ministries operates "Our Place Day Center" where they provide addiction services, mental health support, housing navigation, assistance gaining identification, and more. These services, provided in part through meaningful community partnerships, will be an integral part of the programming offered to residents of this emergency shelter. I am confident in Good Samaritan Ministries ability to expand upon their portfolio of meaningful assistance to our unsheltered neighbors. This investment in our community will be a catalyst for stability, health, and housing permanency in the Helena Area — to the benefit of all.

The Helena Police Department fully supports the Good Samaritan Ministries 'candidacy for a ESFG grant. The needs of the unsheltered are sincere and complex, but this project stands to benefit a breadth of collaborating agencies whose work can be transformed when those they work with are sheltered. We are proud to stand alongside a broad cross section of our community determined to make a path to recovery, realignment, and restoration a true prospect in our community.

In conclusion, the Helena Police Department works closely and meticulously with Good Samaritan Ministries on a daily basis. This valued partnership not only benefits each entity, but more importantly, benefits our Helena Community greatly.

Respectfully,

Brett Petty, Chief of Police
Helena Police Department

Kyle Holland

From: JUDY CARRIGAN <judy.carrigan@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, December 2, 2023 11:53 AM
To: Kyle Holland
Subject: Shelter downtown

Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

[You don't often get email from judy.carrigan@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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Dear Kyle,

I read in the paper that they are considering another shelter on Jackson for the homeless. Although I agree this is a monumental problem with no good solutions in Helena, I don't think a second shelter in proximity to the entrance to our downtown is a good solution. It feels unsafe around God's Love as it is currently and I think it puts burden on the businesses close by. My hairstylist had to lock herself into the salon due to homeless coming in when she was there alone or with a client. She ended up moving her business.

I wish that there was a location that was much larger for God's Love to move to that accommodates more people. Last Chance Gulch heading north from Downtown is the only place for downtown to grow in the future. We don't want to downgrade that as undesirable to development. The addition of the newer buildings on that street has been a big plus for the area and downtown.

I know I don't offer a solid solution but I think once the shelter is there on Jackson, it's there for good. And all the problems that surround a shelter. And that would be bad for our downtown in the big picture. A better thing would be an addiction treatment clinic as part of Pure Health. That works toward one of the root causes of homelessness.

Thanks for your time to read this.

Judy Carrigan

Kyle Holland

From: Marilyn Greely <greelymt@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 2:14 PM
To: Kyle Holland
Subject: 26 bed overnight shelter

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

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My name is Marilyn Greely. I own my home at 606 Jackson St. Helena, I am expressing my total support and need for the 26 bed shelter for women, Just not in the proposed site at 648 Jackson St.! I would like to ask the Dioces to consider moving 'Our Place' and this proposed shelter into the building where the Good Samaritan exists and moving the Good Samaritan thrift store into the building where Our Place and the proposed shelter exist. This would improve the belighted downtown sight with a retail space and move drug and temporary housing services away from an area where commerce should be encouraged! The more downtown shifts from being commerce oriented to service-oriented, the more belighted it becomes, the harder it is to want to come here to shop, eat and drink.

I strongly encourage a NO vote !!!

Marilyn Greely

Kyle Holland

From: April Sparks
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 2:34 PM
To: Kyle Holland
Subject: FW: Response to the CUP application

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

FYI



April Sparks

Administrative Assistant III, Community Development Department
(406) 447-8490 | apsparks@helenamt.gov | helenamt.gov
316 N. Park Avenue, Room 445, Helena, MT 59623



From: Meg White <megw76346@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 2:29 PM
To: citycommunitydevelopment <citycommunitydevelopment@helenamt.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Response to the CUP application

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

From: Meg White <megw76346@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Dec 4, 2023 at 2:19 PM
Subject: Response to the CUP application
To: <citycommunitydevelopment@helenamt.gov>

Helena Community Members:

My name is Meg White. I have been attending the emergency housing task force meeting since August of 2023. I live at 1310 Oro Fino Gulch, one eighth of a mile from where the homeless tent city resided April to October of this year.

I do NOT support changing the zoning regulations or opening a women's shelter as it is being pursued by Good Samaritan Ministries.

I can see that there is a HUGE need to address the homelessness situation in our beautiful city, however I don't believe that opening a low barrier shelter here or anywhere for that matter is the answer to this complicated issue. This shelter will not require women to be sober, compliant with mental health or addiction treatment plans, nor will they require women to participate in programs to receive services and housing support.

I don't think in good consciousness, that we can continue to put families, business owners and patrons' needs and safety aside. Especially after having the experiences that my family has had these past 7 months and observing what is currently happening in the downtown area daily. Drugs, addiction, mental illness, and crime are all a part of the cycle of homelessness. Until these issues are dealt with, until we require the unhoused to actively participate in whatever those solutions look like, nothing will change. If we are willing to house the unhoused without any requirements, the cycle will go on. I believe that we have to begin to do things differently if we are going to see different results.

Family friends of ours were in Helena over the Thanksgiving break and were excited to attend the Parade of Lights downtown. They have a 7 and 8 year old. Their very first experience of Downtown Helena was of an unhoused woman screaming at another unhoused woman, threatening to kill her.

A week ago, I drove through downtown Helena on a Saturday with my daughter and a friend only to see 3 police cars surrounding the encampment on the corner near God's Love. We sat at the traffic light watching unhoused individuals approach officers, waving their arms, and hollering at them. I asked the young ladies in my car to pray with me. We prayed for safety for all and for guidance in this situation as we work to find solutions.

Just last Sunday my daughter and I were downtown again. This time we were parked in front of the post office on the corner of Placer and Last Chance Gulch. It was the middle of the afternoon. We watched an unhoused woman walk out of the encampment, pass God's Love, pass Golden Girls, turn up the hill and walk into a doorway. She pulled her pants down, crouched in a doorway and relieved herself. We were in shock.

When we walk through downtown Helena we are constantly on alert, much like we were the past 7 months at our home. I can feel my daughter's hand tighten in mine as we walk past unhoused individuals. This summer, she ran into our home in tears, afraid, when she saw a flash light on the trail above us, certain that someone was meaning harm. She was unable to go out unattended to take care of her animals because we didn't know who was lurking around. We should not have to live this way because others are making choices to live the way they are.

People have said to me that if I just learned more about the unhoused, met them, spent time with them, that I wouldn't be afraid. I am not afraid of the unhoused as much as I am afraid of what their actions do to our community, the decay, trash, uncleanliness, the crime, drugs, addictions and mental illness all affect us negatively. If the things that you've heard from me today and the things that others are sharing don't convince you that what we're doing isn't working, I'd suggest that you spend some time downtown yourself.

I'm new to being involved in this whole issue. While we no longer have a homeless encampment just down the road from our home, I will not look the other way and pretend like we don't need to continue to be involved. I am trying to continue to steep myself in stories and search for solutions, that others have tried and are finding success with, because this community is our home and because the way that we have been doing things, just giving people a place to stay and handouts without any buy in on their part is not kind, it's not helping, it's not even humane. All it's doing is allowing the unhoused to stay in the circumstances that they are in now. Is it hard? Is it going to take our time and our resources? YES!! But would it be worth it? YES!!!

I will support a shelter that requires residents to work through addictions including treatment and support groups, to work with mental health facilities and counselors, a place where residents are held accountable for the decisions they make, where they are encouraged to take care of themselves and to learn what it's like to be a contributing member of the community, a mother, a sister, a friend. A place where they can receive help getting something comparable to a high school diploma, filling out resumes and finding jobs. A place where those more fortunate can donate their time and their resources to be mentors and positive role models. I will be the first to sign up for a shelter of this capacity, but I cannot endorse a shelter that does not address these issues.

Thank you for taking the time to listen. I hope that the future brings us all working side by side to change each other's lives for the better.

Sincerely,

Meg White

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Meg White

nothing can dim the light that shines from within - Maya Angelou
406-431-7811

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Meg White

nothing can dim the light that shines from within - Maya Angelou
406-431-7811