



General Public Comment Form

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Control has templated attribute(s) with invalid templated dependencies. Invalid dependencies: [63ABA158]. Please edit to correct and then save and reload the form.

First Name

ABIGAIL

Last Name

RAUSCH

E-Mail

amwrausch@gmail.com

Address

213 E BROADWAY

City

HELENA

ST

MT

Zip Code

59601

Phone

4064659214

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***If you register a question in the comment section below please note, the question will be recorded as general public comment and may not necessarily receive a response.**

Date

12/1/2023 12:00 AM

Comment Type:

- General Public Comment - no related agenda
- Regular City Commission
- Administrative Meeting
- Special Meeting / Work Session
- Boards/Committee Meeting

Meeting Date (if applicable):

Agenda Item Reference: (Please indicate agenda section including the number & letter. Example: 12B)

Public Comments:

As winter has arrived, it is crucial for us to address the pressing issue of insufficient public shelter capacity in Helena. Our community is facing a dire situation, and it is imperative that we come together to provide a solution for our most vulnerable neighbors.

Currently, there are many individuals in Helena without a safe and warm place to sleep. Recent increases in homelessness, coupled with the harsh winter weather, have exacerbated the situation, putting the lives of our community members at risk.

By expanding shelter capacity, we not only provide a lifeline for those in need but also enhance the overall well-being of our community. A safer and more secure environment benefits everyone. We should be fostering a sense of unity and shared responsibility.

I urge our community leaders to prioritize the expansion of public shelters in Helena. This is not a matter of charity; it's a fundamental necessity for the well-being of our community. Let us come together to ensure that everyone, regardless of their circumstances, has a safe and warm place to seek refuge this winter.

Let us remember our shared humanity and responsibility to care for one another. By expanding public shelters, we are not just providing shelter; we are offering hope, dignity, and a chance for a better future. Thank you for your attention to this critical matter, and I trust that our community will come together to make a positive and lasting impact.

If appropriate, someone may contact you. Would you like to be contacted by a City representative?

- Yes
- No

What is your preferred method to be contacted?

- Email
- Phone
- Mail

Public Information Acknowledgment

- I certify I am over the age of 18, and I understand that by submitting this form the information provided is considered a public record pursuant to Title 2 Chapter 6 of the Montana Code Annotated

Signature



Kyle Holland

From: April Sparks
Sent: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 8:09 AM
To: Kyle Holland
Subject: FW: Conditional Use Permit for Emergency Shelter - Public Response

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged



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: Amanda Glass <gpeople@q.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 10:57 PM
To: citycommunitydevelopment <citycommunitydevelopment@helenamt.gov>
Subject: Conditional Use Permit for Emergency Shelter - Public Response

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

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December 5, 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:

This email is in response to conditional use permit for emergency shelter use at 648 Jackson Street in downtown Helena. I currently own businesses in downtown Helena and have the last few years. As a community member, I have compassion for the growing issue and understand the need for an emergency shelter. As a business owner I strongly disagree with the location proposed in the heart of downtown Helena. When I thought of the idea of opening businesses downtown, I was excited to join what I had hoped to be a vibrant historic downtown, a place where families and tourists felt safe to visit and stay. In the past few months, the growth of the unsheltered population in downtown Helena has made me reconsider whether downtown is a viable location for my businesses. When entering downtown, you are greeted with a "Welcome to Downtown Helena" sign surrounded by encampments of unsheltered individuals, liquor bottles, drug paraphernalia, and debris.

My employees, customers, even delivery drivers are confronted with daily issues with the unsheltered. I have had unsheltered individuals camped out in front of my shops, drunk, leave garbage for me to pick up, and harass customers/visitors as they come and go. Given the information that this will be a “low barrier” shelter that will only be available during 4pm-9am is very concerning. I am worried about the overflow into downtown when the shelter is closed (9am-4pm, the main hours for most businesses downtown). I am not only worried about the safety of my patrons and employees, but the negative effect it will have on future growth and potential businesses in downtown Helena. I also feel, given the “low barrier” criteria it will increase unsavory behavior, creating an even more unsafe environment and will likely result in more emergency calls and police response.

I hope you will take my concerns into consideration. Thank you-

Amanda Glass

Sent from my iPhone



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First Name

Ciara

Last Name

Maxwell

E-Mail

ciaramax540@gmail.com

Address

225 Saints Loop

City

Helena

ST

MT

Zip Code

59602

Phone

5408188629

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Meeting Date (if applicable):

12/6/2023

Agenda Item Reference: (Please indicate agenda section including the number & letter. Example: 12B)

Zoning Commission Agenda Item B

Public Comments:

Helena's need for shelter capacity is dire and the entire community would stand to benefit from taking care of those without shelter. This permit should be approved to provide safe shelter for our city's most vulnerable residents.

If appropriate, someone may contact you. Would you like to be contacted by a City representative?

- Yes
- No

What is your preferred method to be contacted?

- Email
- Phone
- Mail

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First Name

Deb

Last Name

Halliday

E-Mail

halliday21@gmail.com

Address

1212 Stuart St

City

Helena

ST

MT

Zip Code

59601

Phone

4065466991

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12/6/2023 6:30 AM

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- Boards/Committee Meeting

Meeting Date (if applicable):

12/6/2023

Agenda Item Reference: (Please indicate agenda section including the number & letter. Example: 12B)

Public Comments:

I'm writing in support of Ruth's Place. Communities are only as strong as the least powerful among us, and we have the compassion, wherewithal and resources to establish a temporary shelter for the unhoused women of our community.

Thank you for your commitment to a fair and just Helena for all.

- Deb Halliday

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- No

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First Name

Jennifer

Last Name

Riddle

E-Mail

jriddle0616@gmail.com

Address

200 E Broadway St, Apt C

City

Helena

ST

MT

Zip Code

59601

Phone

8638381933

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12/6/2023 1:00 AM

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Meeting Date (if applicable):

12/6/2023

Agenda Item Reference: (Please indicate agenda section including the number & letter. Example: 12B)

Temporary Winter Shelter

Public Comments:

I am writing to express my support of and Helena's dire need for increased shelter capacity, especially as we enter the winter months.

As we know, winters in Montana are increasing harsh and unforgiving. Additionally, each year winter conditions prove particularly brutal and occasionally even fatal for the unhoused members of Helena's community and communities across our state.

I believe that we have an obligation and responsibility to our neighbors of all backgrounds, housed or unhoused, to ensure that Helena is a safe place to live.

I implore the commission to strongly consider this responsibility when deliberating matters of shelter capacity building in Helena. I ask that the commission upholds their duty to our community and chooses to support additional housing resources for Helenans in need.

If appropriate, someone may contact you. Would you like to be contacted by a City representative?

- Yes
- No

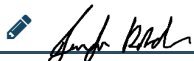
What is your preferred method to be contacted?

- Email
- Phone
- Mail

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Signature



Kyle Holland

From: judy Carrigan <judy.carrigan@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 8:48 AM
To: Kyle Holland
Subject: Comments

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

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Hi Kyle,

I wasn't aware that the shelter that was proposed was a women's shelter. That is a much needed thing here. So that changes my comment somewhat. It is a pressing need for women. I also wasn't aware of the services already available for addiction in that area.

But the needs of the businesses still need to be addressed because they are the anchors of the area. When we lost merchants downtown, it took years to recover and the area is just now becoming more vibrant again.

I think the bigger picture issue needing to be addressed in the future is what I previously commented on. What will the development of that area look like in the future in order to grow a vibrant, safe downtown?

Thanks again,
Judy Carrigan



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Control has templated attribute(s) with invalid templated dependencies. Invalid dependencies: [63ABA158]. Please edit to correct and then save and reload the form.

First Name

Justin

Last Name

Mosey

E-Mail

jmoseyhelena@gmail.com

Address

613 Jackson St.

City

Helena

ST

MT

Zip Code

59601

Phone

4064755956

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Meeting Date (if applicable):

12/6/2023

Agenda Item Reference: (Please indicate agenda section including the number & letter. Example: 12B)

Emergency Shelter Proposal

Public Comments:

I am expressing my concern over the proposed, permanent 26 bed overnight shelter with the entry on the corner of 13th and Jackson. My wife, Karli, and I own a home at 613 Jackson and have lived there since 2016. We believe that the proposed shelter is going to further erode the appeal of downtown Helena, negatively impact our safety and that of our neighbors as homeowners, and have further negative impact on an at-risk community based on location.

Each year we see more and more public vagrancy, obnoxious intoxicated individuals, and piles of abandoned wares in our neighborhood. The front porch of what was previously Dr. Birkamp's Naturopathic office has become an overnight crash pad. The small grassy space behind Helena Stampworks is a favorite place to smoke or shoot up during the day/sleep at night. Cartwright Park becomes a loitering/littering pad whenever the police move the people along from the concrete pad behind God's Love and the grassy area to its North. Regarding those aforementioned gathering places, they are frankly, an embarrassing deterrent to the businesses that fight to stay alive downtown.

The more downtown shifts from being commerce oriented to services-oriented, the more blighted it becomes, the harder it is to want to come here to shop, eat, and drink. The beautiful art-deco facade of the entrance to the proposed shelter will be negatively affected as you begin to see coffee cans full of cigarette butts and old lawn chairs start to accumulate out front. Look at the entrances to every other service from the Guardian Apartments, to God's Love, to Our Place, to the Mental Health Services building on Jackson. They all look like this. And there's a trail of discarded trash that connects them all.

As our property taxes keep going up, we feel less safe. The majority of folks on our block are older so we worry about our neighbors that live alone. Since we've resided here we've had one murder and at least two break-ins on our block. We both commute on foot to work and walk our dogs all over downtown. This was our primary reason for choosing our location, but it's beginning to feel like it's no longer a safer option. We have a fantastic view of the sunset and The Man Store parking lot. I regularly take time lapse videos of the sunsets and meanwhile observe many of the same people who linger in front of Our Place during the day conducting some awfully seedy business in the parking lot behind CMS and The Man Store, shielded from (most) public view. This has led my wife and I to purchase solar floodlights and "Keep Out" signage for shielded areas on our block.

A walk downtown is rare where we don't get pan-handled or cat called. We've both been personally accosted for no reason while walking home at night. The constant yelling and fighting and police interventions in those gathering places is getting scary. This saddens us because we've loved downtown and are trying hard to build upon its greatness.

This brings me to the choice of location. Talk to any of the friendlier street people and you'll find out that Our Place is already a social hub for those trying to obtain drugs. On the opposite side of the parking lot you have The Man Store and all of its desirables. Then there are all of the shady RVs in-between. This is a powder-keg combination to move an already at-risk population into.

As this is all driven by the Dioces, I would like to ask that they consider moving Our Place and this proposed shelter into the building where Good Samaritan (their retail store) exists, and moving Good Samaritan into the building where Our Place and the proposed shelter exist. This would improve the blighted downtown sight with a retail space and move drug and temporary housing services away from an area where commerce should be encouraged.

If appropriate, someone may contact you. Would you like to be contacted by a City representative?

- Yes
- No

What is your preferred method to be contacted?

- Email
- Phone
- Mail

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Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "D. M.", is written above a horizontal line.

Kyle Holland

From: April Sparks
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 11:51 AM
To: Kyle Holland
Subject: Fwd: Emergency Shelter Comments

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

FYI

Get [Outlook for Android](#)

From: Karli MOSEY <karli@bellhotelhelena.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 11:48:48 AM
To: April Sparks <APSPARKS@helenamt.gov>; Andy Shirliff <ASHIRTLIFF@helenamt.gov>; Emily Dean <EDEAN@helenamt.gov>; Wilmot Collins <WCOLLINS@helenamt.gov>; Sean Logan <SLOGAN@helenamt.gov>; Melinda Reed <MREED@helenamt.gov>
Subject: Emergency Shelter Comments

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December 5th, 2023

To: City Planning Division, Helena MT
Zoning Commission, Helena MT

To whom it may concern,

My name is Karli Mosey, I have been a resident in Helena for 9 years, working in the downtown area for the duration of that time. Our property is 400 feet from the proposed Emergency Shelter at 648 Jackson Street.

To date, I as a citizen have participated in the following with free will:

- Owned property at 613 Jackson Street (Sept 2016), paying property taxes increasing annually
- Managed Ten Mile Creek Brewery, 2015-present, acting as an ambassador to downtown and the Helena area at large
- Founded and presented Community Crate, recirculating more than \$80,000 into the local economy, supporting 150+ businesses/ artists/ organizations (2020-2021)
- Applied for an successfully received TIF \$ for the abatement and demolition of Memorial Apartments (2022), reducing blight in our community
- Personally taken on financial risk to develop a small business with a direct feed to the general tax fund via 4% bed tax (Bell Hotel, projecting tax contributions at \$35,000+ annually)

As conditions and services currently exist, I have witnessed the following behaviors during my daily commute to work, activities and scenarios that have posed a range of discomfort to a direct threat of safety:

- Drug selling, purchasing and use in public
- Urination, defecation and vomiting
- Flagrant littering, and misuse of property and facilities
- Physical, mental and emotional assault

- Trespassing/ breaking and entering in 2+ residences in our neighborhood
- Throwing, or using objects as weapons/threatening displays to entice violence
- Unattended waste, clothing, food, broken glass, medical supplies, etc.
- Loud / inappropriate language and interactions in front of families and youth moving through the area

Within the first 50 feet of my walk to work at 11am/3pm or 4pm I must determine the safest route to enter downtown based on activity between Guardian Apartments/ God's Love and "Triangle Park", and at my walk home from work at 4pm or 10pm, I intentionally take a longer, safer route bypassing downtown- adding .25 miles to my commute, which isn't much/ trip, but cumulatively becomes miles of avoidance of this unsafe area in our community.

Personally, I have invested more than 1,000 hours - sought out and obtained \$175,000 of TIF dollars and fundraised \$250,000 personal dollars in commitment to eliminate blight in Helena, working to clean up and transform the property at 40 E. Lyndale, formerly Memorial Apartments.

What an incredible disappointment to have volunteered more than 2 years of resources, energy, and vision seeking the improvement of a documented blighted property within Downtown Zoning, only to be sabotaged by our own community through the investment and support of a centralized hub of -that will act as an unsightly gateway into a downtown of commerce I am working so hard to promote and stimulate. The gesture trades one blighted location for another with proximity even closer to downtown and residential properties. Choosing this location for the Emergency Shelter insults the efforts I have invested to this point by bringing blight closer to my home and as a physical barrier between my future guests that are being encouraged to patronize downtown.

A thriving, intentional downtown oriented around commerce and culture is not being prioritized with this Emergency Shelter location. Assistive services are of necessity, but the at 648 Jackson Street further challenges the small business owners that give our community identity- presents an unsafe environment for the employees that staff these small businesses- and is a repellent for the potential consumer tasked with navigating through unsafe and unsightly locations.

I ask the City Planning Commission and Zoning Commission to closely evaluate the priority of what long term goals in Helena look like. Dignity for all residents of our area can and should exist, but at a location immediately on our most main street is a visual representation of how this community perceives its best use... Please recognize me as a citizen prioritizing Helena's progress and personally investing in it, with time, resources, and a vision of potential.

NIMBY is a reality in this situation, but everywhere with people is a neighborhood, and all neighborhoods have a purpose for their establishment. This neighborhood is zoned Downtown, the purpose should be commerce and culture.

Thank you for time
 Karli Mosey
 (608)780-2569

Final Questions:

1. What happens to individuals that are rejected entrance to the Emergency Shelter due to parameters?
 Ex: sobriety, program adherence, etc.
2. Are further services being budgeted for as the unsheltered population increases (transported here from Bozeman, etc.?)
3. Are there any case studies that support this strategy? Can we get access to these reports?

Kyle Holland

From: April Sparks
Sent: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 1:40 PM
To: Kyle Holland
Subject: FW: Women's Shelter
Attachments: 648-jackson-emergency-shelter-zoning-commission-additional-comments.pdf



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: Laura B Gerlach <lbsargent@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 11:53 AM
To: citycommunitydevelopment <citycommunitydevelopment@helenamt.gov>
Subject: Women's Shelter

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

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Hello,

Thank you for allowing me to express my opinion here. Rather than rewriting a letter already submitted I would like to repost Anne Cossitt's comprehensive letter with which I strongly agree. Ms Cossitt expresses very important points that I feel should be recognized by those involved in the planning, funding and management of this proposed facility and future plans.

We have a lot to consider with this shelter. Safety and shelter for the unhoused women in and near our city, the impact this shelter has on the private and business community and the what this shelter adds to the future of all concerned. Shelter from our cold winter nights is important for basic survival, yet addressing the cause of the individual's situation is vital. How did they get to this place and what can we do to help them climb out? Is that even an possible for some and if not what is the best option for those individuals?

Please allow me to re-submit Ms Cossitt's letter as my shared opinion.

Thank you very much,

Laura

Laura B Gerlach
N. Warren st
Helena, MT

Certified in Structured Literacy by:



MEd
Lexercise Teletherapist Partner
laura@hoptonreading.com
781-244-0541



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First Name

Linda

Last Name

Gryczan

E-Mail

LindaGryczan@gmail.com

Address

800 8th Ave

City

Helena

ST

MT

Zip Code

59601

Phone

4064313635

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Meeting Date (if applicable):

12/6/2023

Agenda Item Reference: (Please indicate agenda section including the number & letter. Example: 12B)

Support Women's Shelter

Public Comments:

Dear City Commission,

I write in support of funding for Ruth's Place, a temporary emergency women's shelter. We can all see the increase in the number of people living in tents in our parks, sidewalks and trails. There is not enough affordable housing or shelter capacity for Helena's unhoused.

Please support Ruth's Place and the nonprofit organizations who will set up, run and serve members of our community.

If appropriate, someone may contact you. Would you like to be contacted by a City representative?

- Yes
- No

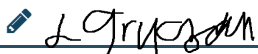
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Signature





Community Development Questions and Comments

Is your question or comment about a specific project?

- Yes
 No

Which project do you have a question or comment about?

Other

First Name

Mark

Last Name

ONEILL

Email

mark_r_oneill@hotmail.com

Street Address

26 11th Ave

City

Helena

State

MT

Zip Code

59601

Phone

4064426889

Date

This form is intended to help you either get answers or submit a comment about work done through the Community Development Department, including about a specific project being considered by City staff. Please select if you are asking a question or submitting a comment, and then, using the block below, submit your question or comment. A Community Development Department representative will contact you if appropriate. If your question or comment will not fit in the text box, please feel free to upload an additional document.

Please be advised that your comments may be regarding an application not yet deemed complete or sufficient by City staff. Please revisit the project website for updated information periodically and provide additional comments in the future, where necessary.

Find the list of current projects here: <https://www.helenamt.gov/government/departments/community-development/current-projects>

Public Question or Comment

- Question
- Comment

Question/Comment

In regards to the 26 bed facility planned for the corner of Helena ave and 13th Ave. I live 1 block away.

The intent of doing away with the asylums was to mainstream people with mental problems and have them model the behavior of healthy people in the community. They were to try to look and act like the normal people around them instead of modeling other bad behavior in an institution. When the City of Helena makes the area around Last Chance, Neil Ave, and Helena Ave into the homeless/crazy district, then those people get together in large numbers. And they begin to act like they are in a mental health institution. They model other crazy behavior.

You should want to spread them out in the community and put them into neighborhoods where there are businesses rather than into residential areas. That would be good planning.

Upload Additional Questions or Comments


If appropriate, someone may contact you. Would you like to be contacted by a City representative?

- Yes
- No

If yes, what is your preferred method of contact?

- Email
- Phone

Signature



Kyle Holland

From: Matthew Nottingham <mjnot22@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 9:07 AM
To: Kyle Holland
Subject: Objection to land use change

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

You don't often get email from mjnot22@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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 Zoning Commission members,

I am one of the owners of Helena Vision Center located at 630 North Last Chance Gulch. In the last 10 years my employees and patients have had to endure harassment, assaults, vandalism, public intoxication and sanitation issues caused by an increased homeless population downtown. These conditions will only get worse with approval of the conditional use permit for the homeless shelter downtown. I am writing to adamantly **OPPOSE** the land use change. If this is approved you will see more crime and drug use in an already unstable environment downtown and it is the obligation of the zoning commission and city commission to consider the effect this will have on the local businesses, residents, and citizens who frequent downtown. Our Place and the homeless residents of the proposed shelter have no obligation or responsibility to respect city laws or ordinances in place. This will create an unsafe environment for the community. Please consider my opinion when deciding on the CUP tonight. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Dr. Nottingham



Dr. Matthew J. Nottingham

p: (406) 442-6814
c: (406) 459-8854
e: mjnot22@gmail.com

630 N Last Chance Gulch, Ste 1200
Helena, MT 59601

www.helenavisioncenter.com



In Response to the Request for a Conditional Use Permit to Allow for Emergency Shelter Use in the Helena Downtown District

My Name is Monique Damuth. I reside at 188 Briarwood Ln. Helena, Montana. I have attended one Emergency Housing Task Force Meeting (EHTF) and listened to the November 9th and 16th meetings online.

I do NOT support changing the zoning regulations or opening a women's shelter as a Low Barrier Facility adjacent to Our Place which is run by Good Samaritan Ministries.

A Low Barrier Shelter is where no requirements are placed on the guests. Guests are typically allowed to stay while under the influence of alcohol, drugs or substance abuse without having to make any effort towards positive change.

In August 2023, I drove to the downtown Helena Post Office to mail a package and my 90 year old mother was with me. We noticed several homeless men and women sitting in the area between Finstad's and the post office. Their behavior was not good but I figured for a few minutes my Mom would be fine with her window down. Within a minute a very disturbing and disruptive man walked over from God's Love and continued his behavior next to my Mom who appeared very scared.

A year ago, I was leaving Helena Vision when a woman, under the influence of something, was leaving Our Place, she got on a bike with a basket and rode over the curb in front of me and fell off the bike into the Street. I proceeded to assist her in getting up as she grumbled and wobbled away on the bike.

Over the past 20 years in Helena, I have seen a large increase in people living in the parks downtown, even next to God's Love across from the Man Store. We attend Hannaford Street Bible Church and in the last four years, we have had encounters with homeless individuals who behave very poorly when confronted caringly.

I care about our homeless population in Helena. I understand many homeless have mental health or substance abuse issues. They have been hurt deeply and are broken but a meal and place to sleep is not going to heal them.

I walked by the Homeless Camp on Orofino Gulch in September and meet a man living at the camp named "Mr. Cast" He informed me that several of the people were living there because "They don't do well in residential programs". In the November 9th EHTF meeting, I listened to Rad speak. He informed the group he had lost his place on the housing list because he had not checked his email and gave a couple excuses. Teresa Ortega, from Good Samaritan, commented she had even helped him clean up his email. In these two situations above, it is those responses that are the consequences which cause their own homelessness.

To help the homeless person with mental health or substance abuse issues heal, feel better about themselves and be part of community they must be responsible and held accountable for their choices.

To live in a community there is governing authority, and we ALL must live by rules and regulations to provide safety and security for everyone. Therefore, it is imperative that individuals take part and be required to a continuum of care from the onset of their arrival (High Barrier). THIS IS THE KIND OF SHELTER I SUPPORT.

What kind of quality of life are we providing for the homeless if we only help keep them alive a few months a year?

There is no simple solution, but I hope Helena can continue to work together to ensure everyone's safety and security.

Thank you,

Monique Damuth

Kyle Holland

From: Niki Henriksen <nikihenriksen@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 9:01 AM
To: Kyle Holland
Subject: Objection to Land Use Change/CUP

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

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

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 Zoning Commission and Kyle Holland,

I am a co-owner of Helena Vision Center, located in the Seeley Building across the street from Our Place. My business has been located on the gulch for 77 years. I have worked downtown since 2010. I am very concerned about the proposed CUP and proposed plans for the shelter across the street. I oppose the shelter, and think that our tax money should be more carefully spent in creating a longer term solution to address the homeless crisis. I have a front row seat to what happens on a daily basis at Our Place and I think that losing this as a day use center is a huge mistake. Even if it's not written in the plans, that's what is going to happen when you add housing. In my business's last location (534 N. Last Chance), across from God's love in the Livery Square building, we saw so many inappropriate things happen. During work hours, I had glasses stolen, my front window shot, watched as a man stabbed someone, observed people have sex on the park benches, observed people using drugs and alcohol; I physically had to hold my door shut as a man with bloodied hands was having an acute mental health crisis and tried to get into my office. I was so tired of the homeless people using my bathroom for drug use, sink showers, to pass drugs to inmates that were coming in for eye exams, defecating on my sidewalk and in the parking lot, seeing needles and beer cans in my parking lot, having my patients and staff harassed and afraid to get out of their vehicle. I was fed up with my staff feeling scared to walk to their cars, in broad daylight and in the dark during the winter. All of this occurred, and God's love was not full. These people had housing and meals and services. We have a thriving downtown with businesses that bring thousands of people downtown daily, and you're going to ruin it by adding more housing. None of the money you plan to spend is going to help hold these struggling people accountable for their actions or create positive change. Every time we have to call the police, their response is the same. "We can't really do anything, do you want to press charges?" No one else can openly drink alcohol during the middle of the day. No one else can smoke crack behind buildings. No one else can leave cart loads of belongings on private property. You and I can't walk into a business and steal things and pawn them down the street with no repercussions. I obviously don't have the answers, but I don't think this shelter and location is the best option. You have a beautiful city with a wonderful downtown and thriving businesses, but you're going to expand and make permanent a huge public safety concern by allowing this to happen. You need to be invested in the everyday taxpayers that are taking on the stress and hardships of owning and operating small businesses that create revenue for our city, county, and state. We are the ones that need to have a voice in this matter.

Thank you for your time,
Nicole Henriksen, OD

--

Dr. Nicole A. Henriksen



p: (406) 442-6814
c: (406) 465-9360
e: nikihenriksen@gmail.com

630 N Last Chance Gulch, Ste 1200
Helena, MT 59601

www.helenavisioncenter.com





Community Development Questions and Comments

Is your question or comment about a specific project?

- Yes
 No

Which project do you have a question or comment about?

Other

First Name

Nicole

Last Name

Henriksen

Email

nikihenriksen@gmail.com

Street Address

1964 Ambrose Court

City

Helena

State

MT

Zip Code

59601

Phone

14064659360

Date

12-5-2023

This form is intended to help you either get answers or submit a comment about work done through the Community Development Department, including about a specific project being considered by City staff. Please select if you are asking a question or submitting a comment, and then, using the block below, submit your question or comment. A Community Development Department representative will contact you if appropriate. If your question or comment will not fit in the text box, please feel free to upload an additional document.

Please be advised that your comments may be regarding an application not yet deemed complete or sufficient by City staff. Please revisit the project website for updated information periodically and provide additional comments in the future, where necessary.

Find the list of current projects here: <https://www.helenamt.gov/government/departments/community-development/current-projects>

Public Question or Comment

- Question
 Comment

Question/Comment

Dear City Commission,

I am a co-owner of Helena Vision Center, located in the Seeley Building across the street from Our Place. My business has been located on the gulch for 77 years. I have worked downtown since 2010. I am very concerned about the proposed CUP and proposed plans for the shelter across the street. I oppose the shelter, and think that our tax money should be more carefully spent in creating a longer term solution to address the homeless crisis. I have a front row seat to what happens on a daily basis at Our Place and I think that losing this as a day use center is a huge mistake. Even if it's not written in the plans, that's what is going to happen when you add housing. In my last location, across from God's love in the Livery Square building, we saw so many inappropriate things happen. During work hours, I had glasses stolen, my front window shot, watched as a man stabbed someone, observed people have sex on the park benches, observed people using drugs and alcohol; I physically had to hold my door shut as a man with bloodied hands was having an acute mental health crisis and tried to get into my office. I was so tired of the homeless people using my bathroom for drug use, sink showers, to pass drugs to inmates that were coming in for eye exams, defecating on my sidewalk and in the parking lot, seeing needles and beer cans in my parking lot, having my patients harassed and afraid to get out of their vehicle. I was fed up with my staff feeling scared to walk to their cars, in broad daylight and in the dark during the winter. All of this occurred, and God's love was not full. These people had housing and meals. We have a beautiful downtown, businesses that bring thousands of people downtown daily, and you're going to ruin it by adding more housing. None of the money you plan to spend is going to help hold these struggling people accountable for their actions. Every time we have to call the police, their response is the same. We can't really do anything, do you want to press charges? No one else can openly drink alcohol during the middle of the day. No one else can smoke crack behind buildings. No one else can leave cart loads of belongings on private property. You and I can't walk into a business and steal things and pawn them down the street with no repercussions. I obviously don't have the answers, but I don't think this shelter is the best option. You have a beautiful city with a wonderful downtown and thriving businesses, but you're going to expand and make permanent a huge public safety concern by allowing this to happen. Please remember that you have an obligation to represent the concerns that the majority of tax payers and your constituents have voiced, not your own personal agendas.

Upload Additional Questions or Comments

If appropriate, someone may contact you. Would you like to be contacted by a City representative?

- Yes
 No

If yes, what is your preferred method of contact?

- Email
 Phone

Signature





General Public Comment Form

The following information will be archived in a public record database, accessible online. To view all submitted comments visit the [Public Comment Repository](#).

Control has templated attribute(s) with invalid templated dependencies. Invalid dependencies: [63ABA158]. Please edit to correct and then save and reload the form.

First Name

Rebecca

Last Name

Warren

E-Mail

rebeccawarren170@gmail.com

Address

570 S. Rodney St.

City

Helena

ST

MT

Zip Code

59601

Phone

4064229941

Please enter your public commentary below. This is generic public comment form and will be archived, as such. The Mayor and City Commissioners will receive a copy of this form. For those wishing to speak directly to their elected officials on specific agenda items, attendance of a public meeting is strongly encouraged.

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***If you register a question in the comment section below please note, the question will be recorded as general public comment and may not necessarily receive a response.**

Date

12/4/2023 12:00 AM

Comment Type:

- General Public Comment - no related agenda
- Regular City Commission
- Administrative Meeting
- Special Meeting / Work Session
- Boards/Committee Meeting

Meeting Date (if applicable):

Agenda Item Reference: (Please indicate agenda section including the number & letter. Example: 12B)

Public Comments:

Dear members of the Zoning and City Commissions,
I urge to to approve the application of Good Samaritan Ministries to create a shelter for 26 women in the building adjacent to Our Place.
As a former downtown employee and partner to a downtown business owner, I understand Mr. Seeley's concerns about trash and feces near his property. In general, my experiences with unsheltered folks were positive, but there was some foul language and trash associated with the "God's Love guys" traveling between the shelter and the library. Nothing major. And I believe that the addition of a night-time shelter, with bathrooms and for women, might improve Mr. Seeley's situation, not make it worse.
You have an opportunity to help relieve a tragic and visible situation in our community. I hope that you vote to accept Good Samaritan's compassionate offer.
Thank you for your good work,
Becky Warren
570 S. Rodney St.

If appropriate, someone may contact you. Would you like to be contacted by a City representative?

- Yes
- No


What is your preferred method to be contacted?

- Email
- Phone
- Mail

Public Information Acknowledgment

- I certify I am over the age of 18, and I understand that by submitting this form the information provided is considered a public record pursuant to Title 2 Chapter 6 of the Montana Code Annotated

Signature





Community Development Questions and Comments

Is your question or comment about a specific project?

- Yes
 No

Which project do you have a question or comment about?

Other

First Name

Samuel

Last Name

Hunthausen

Email

samuel.hunthausen@gmail.com

Street Address

920 N Rodney St

City

Helena

State

MT

Zip Code

59601

Phone

4064597648

Date

12/6/2023

This form is intended to help you either get answers or submit a comment about work done through the Community Development Department, including about a specific project being considered by City staff. Please select if you are asking a question or submitting a comment, and then, using the block below, submit your question or comment. A Community Development Department representative will contact you if appropriate. If your question or comment will not fit in the text box, please feel free to upload an additional document.

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Find the list of current projects here: <https://www.helenamt.gov/government/departments/community-development/current-projects>

Public Question or Comment

- Question
 Comment

Question/Comment

Public Comment Case # CUP2311-001

I am writing in opposition to the Conditional Use Permit Application for 648 Jackson Street, which is located in my neighborhood. The application outlines a radically bad proposal to address the homeless problem in Helena.

The proposal is openly and shockingly discriminatory, excluding a certain portion of the population based on sex.

If the applicant is successful, it will set the city on the trajectory to disseminate our neighborhood and downtown core. The application imposes almost no minimal standard of conduct for the people it will shelter. The applicant states "the shelter will meet people where they are." It normalizes drug use and will lead to further community decay and increased public safety risk. We need this population to meet us where we are--by working toward sobriety, by producing goods or services through work, and by finding ways to contribute to our community. We need to raise their standard of living, not reduce everyone else's. The naive structure of this model allows and incentivises the people it will service to leave the shelter to use, and in many cases this will mean drug use in the alleys and public areas in our neighborhood, and secondhand cigarette and marijuana smoke drifting from the shelter's smoking patio.

The style of shelter proposed does not reduce homelessness or minimize its negative effects; it increases demand for these types of services and will only draw more transient people here to consume the limited resources our resident needy working poor truly need. Approve a shelter like, and we will find more needles in alleys, more littering, more campers in parks and streets, more wildland, structure, and car fires, fewer carts available when we go grocery shopping, more demand and risk to law enforcement, and more loiterers ignoring crosswalk signals and walking through traffic at malfunction junction. This city does not have the tax base or charitable community to offset the negative externalities this type of shelter would bring.

As a side note, public access to the consideration for this proposal has been absolutely dismal. I have watched the city website closely for information on this issue. The item was on the December 4th Commission meeting, which I made plans to attend. It was then removed from that agenda, moved into a closed administrative meeting, and placed on this December 6th agenda with no reasonable timely notice provided. Not surprisingly, almost all of the public comments now posted to the website are supportive of the application, and it gives the impression that the special interest homeless industry lobby has had greater access to its city government than its permanent residents and taxpayers.

Sincerely,
Sam Hunthausen
920 N Rodney St.

Upload Additional Questions or Comments

If appropriate, someone may contact you. Would you like to be contacted by a City representative?

- Yes
 No

If yes, what is your preferred method of contact?

- Email
 Phone

Signature





General Public Comment Form

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Control has templated attribute(s) with invalid templated dependencies. Invalid dependencies: [63ABA158]. Please edit to correct and then save and reload the form.

First Name

Sarah

Last Name

Elkins

E-Mail

sarahelkins@xinsys.net

Address

432 Harrison Ave

City

Helena

ST

MT

Zip Code

59601

Phone

4064310355

Please enter your public commentary below. This is generic public comment form and will be archived, as such. The Mayor and City Commissioners will receive a copy of this form. For those wishing to speak directly to their elected officials on specific agenda items, attendance of a public meeting is strongly encouraged.

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***If you register a question in the comment section below please note, the question will be recorded as general public comment and may not necessarily receive a response.**

Date

12/18/2023 6:00 PM

Comment Type:

- General Public Comment - no related agenda
- Regular City Commission
- Administrative Meeting
- Special Meeting / Work Session
- Boards/Committee Meeting

Meeting Date (if applicable):

12/18/2023

Agenda Item Reference: (Please indicate agenda section including the number & letter. Example: 12B)

Ruth's Place temporary housing shelter

Public Comments:

I support Ruth's Place, the temporary emergency women's shelter being proposed at the meeting. Our community doesn't have enough shelter, especially in winter, for our most vulnerable people in Helena.

If appropriate, someone may contact you. Would you like to be contacted by a City representative?

- Yes
- No

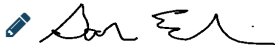
What is your preferred method to be contacted?

- Email
- Phone
- Mail

Public Information Acknowledgment

- I certify I am over the age of 18, and I understand that by submitting this form the information provided is considered a public record pursuant to Title 2 Chapter 6 of the Montana Code Annotated

Signature





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Control has templated attribute(s) with invalid templated dependencies. Invalid dependencies: [63ABA158]. Please edit to correct and then save and reload the form.

First Name

Victoria

Last Name

Hill

E-Mail

victorianoellehill@gmail.com

Address

521 Breckenridge Street

City

Helena

ST

MT

Zip Code

59601

Phone

4064804729

Please enter your public commentary below. This is generic public comment form and will be archived, as such. The Mayor and City Commissioners will receive a copy of this form. For those wishing to speak directly to their elected officials on specific agenda items, attendance of a public meeting is strongly encouraged.

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***If you register a question in the comment section below please note, the question will be recorded as general public comment and may not necessarily receive a response.**

Date

12/5/2023 2:00 PM

Comment Type:

- General Public Comment - no related agenda
- Regular City Commission
- Administrative Meeting
- Special Meeting / Work Session
- Boards/Committee Meeting

Meeting Date (if applicable):

12/6/2023

Agenda Item Reference: (Please indicate agenda section including the number & letter. Example: 12B)

Zoning Commission Mtg Re Temporary Women's Shelter

Public Comments:

I am writing in support of the proposed temporary women's shelter in my neighborhood. Helena's need for more shelter capacity is extreme and our entire community would benefit from caring for those without shelter. I urge the Commission to support the zoning of this shelter.

If appropriate, someone may contact you. Would you like to be contacted by a City representative?

- Yes
- No

What is your preferred method to be contacted?

- Email
- Phone
- Mail

Public Information Acknowledgment

- I certify I am over the age of 18, and I understand that by submitting this form the information provided is considered a public record pursuant to Title 2 Chapter 6 of the Montana Code Annotated

Signature

