

From: [David Breslin](#)
To: [PDR Land Use Admin](#)
Subject: Written comments regard Orc No 2022-372 Special Use Permit for 2800 3rd Street.
Date: Wednesday, December 28, 2022 5:37:12 PM

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My name is David Breslin and I am homeowner in an adjacent lot to the 5th street Baptist Church and my blow concerns/comments are with respect to a requested year-round special use permit – ordinance no 2022-372 for 2800 3rd Street.

Only recently did I learn of the petition to change the Church's zoning classification and have attempted to contact my Councilwoman's Office (Ellen Robertson) about this issue but was disparaged and blamed by her assistant for not being away "aware" of this change and for not attending "community meetings" earlier this year... No meetings were advertised outside of the church or educational center and no one from the church ever reached out to discuss or inform of this requested change.

First off, Violence and Crime. I think that most of the community would agree that the rampant gun violence in this area is a major concern that must be addressed by the city, not just intermittent shootings outside of convenience stores but that occur all over. Day after day I see police reports on my ring app of gunshots being fired in less a mile from where this shelter is going to be stood up. It has been sadly proven time and time again that some transients, just like some renters, just do not care about the communities they live in or the properties. As unattached, temporary residents they have no vested interest in a home, neighbors or community which is why many shelter locations suffer from drugs, loitering, littering and panhandling. I have reviewed the application package that was submitted to the city and found no evidence of rules or conduct, number of strikes given to person in violation of these rules or anything to protect the local community from personal or property crimes. Maybe I have missed this documentation. I have seen where a security guard will be assigned to the educational center but they aren't going to have anything to with activities outside of the Church's property. This will leave homeowners waiting on Richmond City's understaffed police force which has more important things like gun crimes to address. Please note that I am not saying that all homeless are violent, disrespectful of other's property or will loiter/harass others but there are those that will and these concerns have not been addressed in the slightest here.

Second, Existing noise issues with the applicant. In no less than a year here, I have seen the types of neighbors that this Baptist Church can be when they host outside events. It may not be the Church's goal with any of these to cause a disturbance and neighborhood nuisance but they certainly are by playing music at a very high volume and/or with very high bass for hours on end. This noise permeates walls, concrete and all) and travels blocks without any regard for the peaceful enjoyment, or even simple living, in the vicinity. Certainly, any organization that has such short-sightedness for the community should be given extra scrutiny when asking to bring in transients.

Third, Property value. This area of Highland Park is being called “transitional” ... at least that’s the line I was sold when I bought here last winter. Prices and home values are going up around the city but here they have skyrocketed (my property taxes alone have gone up 20% this year and there seems to be little desire by council or the city to mediate that). New people are trying to move in, repair old, dilapidated houses and that is a good thing. This is causing property values to go up..... but granting this permit for a year-round homeless shelter is going to not only slow down the property value growth but reverse the progress. People aren’t going to want to spend \$400,000 to live next to a homeless shelter in a transient neighborhood that appears to be sliding backwards. Certainly this will trigger regular appeals on assessments as taxpayers know they are being over-assessed with this in the neighborhood.

Finally, Council has already acted. In March 2021, City Council amended the Zoning Ordinance to permit certain types of emergency, transitional, and permanent supportive housing options by right in a number of mixed-use zoning districts (B-1, B-2, B-3, B-4, I, M-1, OS, R-73, and RO-2) (ORD. 2020-261). My question to the committee and the Council is has EVERYONE of these properties been fully utilized to the point we need to ask additional variances? I’m assuming, which can be a leap of faith I know, that there was careful deliberation and research done in 2021 before Council approved that change yet I see report after report of the city trying to find neighborhoods to locate these shelters in... neighborhoods where the local taxpayers don’t want them.

In light of the above concerns, I respectfully request the City Planning Commission recommend denying this special use permit for the establishment of a year-round homeless shelter and that city council abides by that recommendation. From what I have read online in the news, Council has rightfully denied petitions in similar circumstances and so I will hope they will do the same here.

If City Council ultimately decides to approve this special use permit to all the 5th Street Baptist Church to become a permanent homeless shelter then they owe the local residents a comprehensive crime prevention and a property value remediation plan.

City Residents, Taxpayers and Voters deserve that.

I respectfully request that this written comment be entered into the formal record for the planning commission meeting and that my comments are submitted along with the final recommendation the Richmond City Council.

Thank you
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