



# Richmond City Council

The Voice of the People

Richmond, Virginia

## The Honorable Ann-Frances Lambert

Councilmember, Richmond City Council, Richmond Northside 3rd Voter District

March 17, 2023

Kevin Vonck  
Director  
Department of Planning, Development and Review  
900 E. Broad St.  
Room 511  
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Director Vonck,

I am writing this letter in support of The Cottage School's (a 501(c)3 organization) request for a Special Use Permit to open an Early Care and Education Center at the Ginter Park Presbyterian Church at 3601 Seminary Avenue. This is a time in the Commonwealth when quality early child care and educational needs have been at the forefront of the State's agenda, and the City of Richmond should lead the way in this important initiative.

The Cottage School is planning to serve 56 children and occupy a space that was once used for child care years ago. It is currently used by the church as a space for children in Sunday School and other church related activities thus, it is designed for use by children. I believe that the Cottage School's partnership with the Church would serve to strengthen community outreach and would provide a critical response to the needs of our community.

It is my understanding that the Church is zoned R1 and R48 and one of the critical zoning issues seems to be that the church's existing playground which is considered to be in the Church's second "front yard" adjacent to Chamberlayne and Walton Avenues (the Church's front yard is actually facing Seminary Avenue and borders Walton). The Cottage School's leadership has determined from the Department of Education's Department of Licensing specialists that the school does not need a playground as long as they have outdoor space so the playground could remain under the purview of the church. There are several other businesses in the surrounding area as well as other schools so the zoning as residential/single family use is already in question.

Our constituents in the Northside Community are in need of quality Child Care options for children. With only minimal advertising through word of mouth, Facebook and Next Door the Center has 56 children on their waitlist and the existing delay in opening has caused some of my constituents who are in need of childcare considerable distress. Moreover, it has also impacted workforce availability in the entire RVA community, therefore, I strongly support approval of this Special Use Permit request.

Sincerely,

Ann-Frances Lambert  
Councilmember



GINTER PARK  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

March 21, 2023

Kevin Vonck  
Director Department of Planning, Development, and Review  
900 E. Broad St. Room 511  
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Director Vonck,

I am writing in support of The Cottage School's request for a Special Use Permit to open an Early Care and Education Center at the Ginter Park Presbyterian Church (3601 Seminary Ave, Richmond, 23227), which I pastor. The approval of this request will serve to support the growing need for quality childcare in our Northside community.

Ginter Park Presbyterian Church is particularly excited about The Cottage School's leadership team, their extensive training and experience, and their vision for addressing the practical and mental health needs of children and families in our neighborhood. These leaders use a strength-based approach to honor the gifts and perspectives of each family and child, to encourage creativity and wonder, and to help children appreciate one another and their differences. They welcome all kinds of teachers and families – aiming for equity and building a diverse yet cohesive community. We will consider The Cottage School's ministry an extension of the church's ministry.

For many years the church has had a playground on the premises, at what is considered the back of the church. The Cottage School will make alterations to the fence of the playground, after which the playground will comply with all city zoning ordinance requirements. The church is a multi-use facility and is equipped to support safe and effective operations for a large volume of people; the Education Building has ample classroom space and facility requirements to support the requested occupancy of 64 children.

The delayed opening of The Cottage School has caused a great deal of distress for parents on the School's waiting list. We sincerely hope this Special Use Permit will be granted quickly!

Thanks and blessings,

Carla Pratt Keyes, Pastor

May 1, 2023

Kevin Vonck  
Director Department of Planning, Development, and Review  
900 E. Broad St. Room 511  
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Director Vonck,

I am the current president of the Lewis Ginter Residence Association. I am writing in support of The Cottage School's request for a Special Use Permit to open an Early Care and Education Center at the Ginter Park Presbyterian Church (3601 Seminary Ave, Richmond, 23227. I know the need for quality day care throughout the City of Richmond is hard to find. The approval of this request will serve to support the growing need for quality childcare in our Northside community.

GPRA is particularly excited about The Cottage School's leadership team, their extensive training and experience, and their vision for addressing the practical and mental health needs of children and families in our neighborhood. These leaders use a strength-based approach to honor the gifts and perspectives of each family and child, to encourage creativity and wonder, and to help children appreciate one another and their differences. They welcome all kinds of teachers and families – aiming for equity and building a diverse yet cohesive community.

It is my understanding that the delayed opening of The Cottage School has caused a great deal of distress for parents on the School's waiting list. We sincerely hope this Special Use Permit will be granted quickly! We will consider The Cottage School a welcome neighbor and look forward to having them become an integral part of our community.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns.

Warm wishes,

Melody Imburg  
President, GPRA  
3616 Hawthorne Avenue  
Richmond, VA23222  
mimburg@gmail.com

## GPRA Planning and Zoning Committee Recommendation

The P&Z Committee has looked over the documents and agree there is no reason to oppose this request. In general, adding more daycare for young kids would appear to be a good thing for the GP neighborhood.

While we recommend the Board support this request, there are a few considerations to pass on to the Board for the applicant to consider.

1. Creating/Maintaining a playground in a “front yard”. The application appears to assume that placing the playground in one of the church’s front yards is grandfathered in because it has existed for a number of years. Perhaps the planning staff request an analysis of space around the church to see if the playground could be relocated to another area of the grounds, such as a portion of the parking area nearer to the fellowship hall. If feasible, this would bring the playground into alignment with the zoning requirements by locating it in the R-48 district, but out of the “front yard”. It may also make for a safer and healthier space for the kids being further away from the street traffic. Recognizing it may be a cost burden that the school can’t afford, it looks like perhaps the playground could be moved to the northernmost area of the existing parking lot, and the existing playground used to recover the lost parking spaces.
2. Playground fencing limited to 4 ft. The application states that the school will install a 4ft opaque fence around the existing playground. If the playground is located to a more centralized part of the campus an opaque fence may not be necessary.
3. Traffic Planning. If relevant, perhaps planning could require a traffic control plan for drop-offs and pickups. This may not be very difficult given the ample parking space available on-site, but for the safety of the kids, it would be good to know that they require parents to pull into the parking lot for pickup and drop-off rather than using one of the streets.

Thanks;

Stephen Weisensale, AIA, CSI  
Chair, GPRA Planning & Zoning Cmte  
[Zoning@historicinterpark.org](mailto:Zoning@historicinterpark.org)

March 20,2023

**Mr. Kevin Vonck**  
**Director of Planning and Development Review**  
**Land Use Administration**

**Dear Mr. Vonck**

This petition is in support of the request for a Special Use Permit submitted by The Cottage School. The school is seeking to open a childcare center at Ginter Park Presbyterian Church located at 3601 Seminary Avenue. This church is a multi-use facility and is equipped to support operations for more than 500 people.

The church is equipped to operate as a Child Care Center since there was one located there in previous years. It is our understanding that The Cottage School will make alterations to the existing playground to comply with all city zoning ordinance requirements.

The delayed opening of the Child Care Center has caused a great deal of distress for many of us and we sincerely hope this Special Use Permit is granted to The Cottage School. The approval of this request will serve to support the current need for quality child care, and more specifically infant care, in our Northside community.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this petition.

Signature	Name	Address	Email address	Telephone
Carol Green	Carol Green	3601 Seminary Ave Richmond, VA 23227	thecottageschoolgp pc@gmail.com	
Leigh Crandall	Leigh Crandall	2206 Stuart Avenue Richmond, VA 23220	leighcrandall@gmai l.com	917-714-8604
Julia Green	Julia Green	1 David Drive, Henrico VA 23229	juliatgreen@gmail.c om	404-545-4670
Micah Morris	Micah Morris	1302 W Laburnum Ave. RVA 23227	micah.m.morris@g mail.com	202.253.0989
Katrina Graf	Katrina Graf	1404 Lorraine Ave Richmond VA 23227	katrinaajensen@g mail.com	3192104561
Diana Price-Mitchell	Diana & Matthew Mitchell	1515 Laburnum Park Blvd. Richmond, VA 23227	daprice616@gmail. com	703-395-6277

March 20,2023

Micah Graf	Micah Graf	1404 Lorraine Ave Richmond VA 23227	grafmctcu@gmail.com	2103239941
Bethany Hartford	Bethany Hartford	3031 Marlboro Dr Richmond, VA 23225	bethanyhartford9@gmail.com	3306221349
Michael Walsh	Michael Walsh	1319 Amherst Ave Richmond VA 23227	mwash022@gmail.com	757-897-7472
Amanda Reynol	Amanda Reynolds	1214 Brookland Parkway, Richmond VA 23227	reynolds.amandamay@gmail.com	804-543-5800
Phillip Sperry	Phillip Sperry	1214 Brookland Parkway, Richmond VA 23227	phil.sperry@gmail.com	703-582-9045
Nebiat Gereme	Nebiat Gereme	3607 Brook Rd Richmond, VA 23227	daniel.nebi96@gmail.com	314-497-5149
Daniel Muluneh	Daniel Muluneh	3607 Brook Rd Richmond, VA 23227	daniel.nebi96@gmail.com	757-201-1487
Sophia Harrison	Sophia Harrison	1615 Wilmington Ave, Richmond VA 23227	sophiamharrison98@gmail.com	804-922-7357
Alex Ambrose	Alex Ambrose	6734 Monitor Rd, Richmond VA 23225	laambrose22@gmail.com	843-504-0670
Andrew Scott	Andrew Scott	6734 Monitor Rd, Richmond, VA 23225	andrewsc1990@gmail.com	703-801-9352
Jessica Sagara	Jessica Sagara	1817 Maple Shade Ln, Richmond, VA 23227	russoj513@gmail.com	908-251-1797
Ryan Hartford	Ryan Hartford	3031 Marlboro Dr Richmond, VA 23225	rhartford06@gmail.com	330-429-5986
Donnell Smith	Donnell Smith	1 David Drive. Henrico, VA 23229	smithmiddleton@gmail.com	443-690-8719
Roberto Baibich	Roberto Baibich	2206 Stuart Ave Richmond, VA 23220	me@robertobaibich.com	917-727-4105

March 20,2023

David Dominique	David Dominique	605 N 37th St Richmond VA 23223	davedominique@g mail.com	818-915-9607
Amber Esseiva	Amber Esseiva	605 N 37th St Richmond VA 23223	amberesseiva@gm ail.com	786-514-9281
Mary Artus	Mary Artus	1609 Laburnum Park Blvd Richmond VA 23227	catesmb@gmail.co m	804 357 4706
Brian Bills	Brian Bills	2703 Kensington Ave Unit 2 Richmond VA 23220	brian.w.bills@gmail. com	434.420.6007
Alexis Jorgensen	Alexis Jorgensen	1224 Rennie Avenue Richmond VA 23227	alexisblight@gmail. com	443-812-3017
Isaac Jorgensen	Isaac Jorgensen	1224 Rennie Avenue Richmond VA 23227	idjorgensen58@gm ail.com	410-259-5660
Ben Sagara	Ben Sagara	1817 Maple Shade Lane Richmond VA 23227	sagarabt7@gmail.c om	804-839-5811
Andrew Mason	Andrew Mason	1517 Nottoway Ave Richmond VA 23227	andrewscottmason @gmail.com	919-622-2122
Anne Mason	Anne Mason	1517 Nottoway Ave Richmond VA 23227	anne.lh.mason@g mail.com	786-633-9544
Alana Hughes Boone	Alana Hughes Boone	2711 Seminary Ave Richmond, Va 23220	hughes.alana@gm ail.com	8043807656
Lewis Benton Boone Jr	Lewis Benton Boone Jr	2711 Seminary Ave Richmond, Va 23220	auspiciousturtle@g mail.com	6785920661
Blair Marasco	Blair Marasco	2014 Stuart Ave, Richmond, VA 23220	blairpmarasco@gm ail.com	8609663215
Patricia Moon	Patricia Moon	12239 Framar Drive Midlothian,Va 23113	pmoon873@gmail.c om	804-310-8917






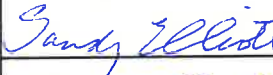
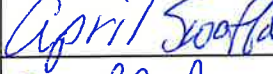

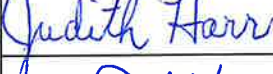
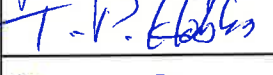

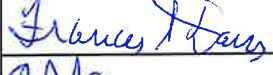

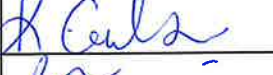




**Dear Mr. Kevin Vonck, Director of Planning and Development Review, Land Use Administration,**

This petition is in support of the request for a Special Use Permit submitted by The Cottage School. The school is seeking to open a childcare center at Ginter Park Presbyterian Church located at 3601 Seminary Avenue. The approval of this request will serve to support the growing need for quality childcare in our Northside community.

For many years the church has had a playground on the premises, at what is considered the back of the church. The Cottage School will make alterations to the fence of the playground, after which the playground will comply with all city zoning ordinance requirements. The church is a multi-use facility and is equipped to support safe and effective operations for a large volume of people; the Education Building has ample classroom space and facility requirements to support the requested occupancy of 56 children and families who would be served by The Cottage School.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this petition.

Signature	Name	Address	Email address	Telephone
	Amy W. CLARK	10388 Summer Hill Rd 23116	clarkamy01@gmail.com	804-512-9334
	Kimberly Carswell	8557 Brittenwood Cir	klcarswell@cymcast.net	804-356-6310
	Mary Hobbs	3815 Hawthorne Avenue	hobbs.maryc@gmail.com	804-244-6800
	Sandy Elliott	9072 Craney Island Mech VA 23116	sndrlite@yahoo.com	804-426-2190
	April Swofford	2611 DeRose Ave Henrico 23228	April.Swofford@gmail.com	804-615-3920
	Jack August	7901 Shadowbeng Ct Richmond 23227	jaugert@gmail.com	225-772-0160
	Judith Harr	4109 Hermitage Ave.	extra_billys@juno.com	804 839 8593
	Tom Hobbs	3815 Hawthorne Ave.	hobbs.coach@gmail.com	(804)244.1565
	Edward Dail	3119 Floyd Ave	arched1@aol.com	804 475-5396
	Frances Davis	1432 Loretta Ave Richmond, VA	<del>frances</del>	(804) 262-4673
	Andrew Bird	3401 Brook Rd Richmond, VA		804-743-5191
	Katie Carboni	8401 Brook Rd Richmond	katherine.carboni@upsem.edu	609.280.1108
	Glenna Finnicum	4709 Taylors Crossing Ct. Glen Allen 23059	gfinn5@verizon.net	804-266-3206
	David L. Ross	3503 Seminary Ave Richmond, VA	dross125@comcast.net	804-358-7242







**From:** [Brian Bills](#)  
**To:** [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#)  
**Subject:** Support for Ordinance Number ORD.2023 – 174  
**Date:** Monday, June 5, 2023 10:20:57 PM

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Hello Alyson Oliver,

My name is Brian Bills, and I'm a resident of Richmond. My wife and I are having our first child this fall, and we've been trying to figure out childcare options. There is a serious shortage of childcare spaces in our community. That is one of the reasons I support The Cottage School's application to open a child care center (Ordinance Number ORD.2023 – 174).

I also believe that in general, it should be legal to take care of children in a safe, habitable building. We shouldn't have to beg City Council for permission to open a childcare site in our city. This is the type of activity our City codes should encourage and make as easy as possible!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Brian Bills  
2703 Kensington Ave #2  
Richmond, VA 23220

**From:** [Benjamin Sagara](#)  
**To:** [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#)  
**Subject:** Please Open the Cottage School  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 6, 2023 8:19:52 AM

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Hi,

There is an INSANE lack of available child care. Please figure this one out. The City of Richmond is failing it's children and their parents.

Thank you,

Ben Sagara  
1817 Maple Shade Lane, Richmond Va

**From:** [Leigh Crandall](#)  
**To:** [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#)  
**Subject:** Writing to support The Cottage School  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 6, 2023 8:20:40 AM

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Hi Alyson,

Hope you're having a great week. I'm writing in support of the **Special Use Permit for The Cottage School** (Ordinance Number ORD.2023 – 174). As I'm sure you know there is a shortage of childcare options in Richmond and allowing this wonderful new school to get started as soon as possible would be so helpful to working parents who need the care for our kids.

Much appreciated!

Sincerely,

Leigh Crandall

phone: 917-714-8604

**From:** [Belinda McGehee](#)  
**To:** [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#)  
**Subject:** Ordinance Number ORD.2023 – 174  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 7, 2023 11:49:34 AM

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Hi Alyson,

I am writing to you in support of Ordinance Number ORD.2023 – 174. I am having a baby in June and need to return to my teaching job in the fall. My husband and I have been on daycare waitlists since December 2022 and still don't have a guaranteed spot. We are in desperate need of reliable childcare in the Northside.

The Cottage School would fill a major need in our community. The founders of The Cottage School are passionate, professional, and responsive. We would love for our child to be able to attend a daycare with a nurturing and supportive staff.

Thank you,

Belinda McGehee



**From:** [Michael Walsh](#)  
**To:** [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#)  
**Subject:** My Support for Ordinance Number ORD.2023 – 174  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 7, 2023 9:23:38 AM

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Hi Alyson,

I am writing to you in support of Ordinance Number ORD.2023 – 174. I am a soon-to-be parent living in the Northside of Richmond and have seen first hand how difficult it is to find quality child care. We have been trying to get onto waiting lists since December with no luck. We are desperately in need of more daycares in our area.

The approval of this special use permit will be a huge relief to my family, and it will allow the passionate and professional operators of The Cottage School to fill a major need in the community.

Thank you,

Michael Walsh  
1319 Amherst Ave, Richmond, VA 23227

**From:** [Melanie Sterling](#)  
**To:** [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#)  
**Cc:** [The Cottage School Administrative Team](#)  
**Subject:** Ordinance Number ORD.2023 – 174 for The Cottage School at Ginter Park Presbyterian Church  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 7, 2023 12:02:22 AM

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**CAUTION:** This message is from an external sender - Do not open attachments or click links unless you recognize the sender's address and know the content is safe.

Dear Alyson,

I am writing in support of The Cottage School at Ginter Park Presbyterian Church (Ordinance Number ORD.2023 – 174) being granted a special use permit to operate a daycare and preschool.

I have lived at 3606 Seminary Avenue, across the street from the Ginter Park (GP) Presbyterian Church, for over 35 years. During my years living on Seminary Avenue., the GP Presbyterian Church has been a vital hub for community activities. As more young families move into and invigorate our Richmond communities, there is a real need for childcare.

The GP Presbyterian Church offers a perfect facility to accommodate a school. The Cottage School will be a welcomed addition to our neighborhood and will provide critically needed quality childcare and educational services for our young children and their families.

Sincerely,  
Melanie Sterling

--

Melanie R. Sterling, M.Ed.  
Retired Faculty  
Virginia Commonwealth University  
Contact #: 804-399-2440  
[mrsterli@vcu.edu](mailto:mrsterli@vcu.edu)



**From:** [Alexis Jorgensen](#)  
**To:** [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#)  
**Cc:** [Isaac Jorgensen](#)  
**Subject:** Ordinance Number ORD.2023 – 174  
**Date:** Thursday, June 8, 2023 10:22:26 AM

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Hi Alyson,

This correspondence is in reference to **Ordinance Number ORD.2023 – 174**. My husband, Isaac Jorgensen, and I are residents of Northside. We are voicing our support of the issuing of a Special Use Permit to The Cottage School at Ginter Park Presbyterian Church. We are expecting our first born next month. As you may know, there is a lack of available and affordable daycare for the many families with small children in the Northside area. By allowing The Cottage School to open its doors, a great need will be fulfilled for us as a family and the neighborhood as a whole.

Best,

Alexis Anne Jorgensen ([alexisblight@gmail.com](mailto:alexisblight@gmail.com))

Isaac Daniel Jorgensen ([idjorgensen58@gmail.com](mailto:idjorgensen58@gmail.com))

**From:** [Leah Harms Reams](#)  
**To:** [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for The Cottage School - ORD. 2023 – 174  
**Date:** Thursday, June 8, 2023 10:04:59 AM

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Good morning, Alyson -

I'm writing in support of the Cottage School's special use permit - ORD. 2023 -174.

The Richmond Region is facing a shortage of quality, affordable childcare, which I have experienced first hand. Over the past 1.5 years, I've had to join more than 30 waitlists (and pay hundreds of dollars to do so) to secure care for my son. During that time, we have only been admitted to two centers, one of which closed unexpectedly this spring due to financial constraints. I have had to take more than a month off of work in order to accommodate the gaps in care.

I have toured The Cottage School and met the founders. They are a passionate and caring team who will no doubt bring quality care to Richmond families. And Ginter Park Presbyterian Church offers a beautiful and welcoming space for children to learn and grow.

I am currently on the Cottage School waitlist, although my son is enrolled elsewhere. Whether we end up enrolling with The Cottage School or not, their opening will help fill a critical need for Richmond families, and I fully support the permitting necessary to open its doors as quickly as possible.

I look forward to attending the Planning Commission meeting on June 20. In the meantime, please feel free to reach out with any questions.

Thank you!

Leah Reams  
[leahrhams@gmail.com](mailto:leahrhams@gmail.com)

**From:** [Michaela Ross](#)  
**To:** [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#)  
**Subject:** Support for Ordinance Number ORD.2023 – 174  
**Date:** Thursday, June 8, 2023 1:48:03 PM

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Alyson Oliver,

My name is Michaela Ross, and I'm a resident of Richmond. My husband and I are having our first child this fall, and we've been trying to figure out childcare options. There is a serious shortage of childcare spaces in our community. That is one of the reasons I support The Cottage School's application to open a childcare center (Ordinance Number ORD.2023 – 174).

I want Richmond to be a place that is welcoming and supportive of all residents, including families with young children. We desperately need more high-quality childcare, which is what The Cottage School plans to provide. Not only will it help local families (potentially including mine), but will support the community as a whole by allowing parents to continue working while children are receiving nurturing and supportive care to become great community members themselves.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Michaela Ross  
2703 Kensington Ave #2  
Richmond, VA 23220

**From:** [Carla Keyes](#)  
**To:** [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#)  
**Subject:** Cottage School SUP Support - Ordinance Number ORD.2023 – 174  
**Date:** Friday, June 9, 2023 4:06:34 PM

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**CAUTION:** This message is from an external sender - Do not open attachments or click links unless you recognize the sender's address and know the content is safe.

Dear Ms. Oliver,

I am writing in support of The Cottage School's request for a Special Use Permit (**Ordinance Number ORD.2023 – 174**) to open an Early Care and Education Center at the Ginter Park Presbyterian Church (3601 Seminary Ave, Richmond, 23227), which I pastor. The approval of this request will serve to support the growing need for quality childcare in our Northside community.

Ginter Park Presbyterian Church is particularly excited about The Cottage School's leadership team, their extensive training and experience, and their vision for addressing the practical and mental health needs of children and families in our neighborhood. These leaders use a strength-based approach to honor the gifts and perspectives of each family and child, to encourage creativity and wonder, and to help children appreciate one another and their differences. They welcome all kinds of teachers and families – aiming for equity and building a diverse yet cohesive community. We will consider The Cottage School's ministry an extension of the church's ministry.

For many years the church has had a playground on the premises, at what is considered the back of the church. The Cottage School will make alterations to the fence of the playground, after which the playground will comply with all city zoning ordinance requirements. The church is a multi-use facility and is equipped to support safe and effective operations for a large volume of people; the Education Building has ample classroom space and facility requirements to support the requested occupancy of 64 children.

The delayed opening of The Cottage School has caused a great deal of distress for parents on the School's waiting list. We sincerely hope this Special Use Permit will be granted quickly!

Thank you for including this note in the public comment for the meeting!  
Many blessings,  
Carla

Carla Pratt Keyes  
Pastor, Ginter Park Presbyterian Church  
3601 Seminary Ave, Richmond, VA 23227  
804.359.5049 x1002

*Pronouns: she/her/hers*

*I check email three times per day, Tuesday through Sunday.*

**From:** [Daniel And Nebi](#)  
**To:** [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#)  
**Subject:** Ordinance Number ORD.2023 – 174  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 13, 2023 1:28:00 PM

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Hi Alyson,

Our email is in regards to Ordinance Number ORD.2023 – 174.

We (Nebiat Gereme and Daniel Muluneh) are in desperate need of quality childcare in the city of Richmond. We have been on multiple waiting lists for 20 months and have still not been able to secure a spot in a safe and reliable childcare development space for our son. The Cottage School at Ginter Park Presbyterian Church has experienced childcare providers and is located in a safe space. We have been awaiting their opening for months now and hope that this wait can soon be over.

We do not want to leave the city but the lack of childcare and quality education is making us consider relocating. If you need further information from us please reach out.

Thank you,  
Nebi & Daniel



**From:** [Blair Marasco](#)  
**To:** [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#)  
**Cc:** [Patricia Moon](#)  
**Subject:** Planning Commission meeting on June 20th  
**Date:** Thursday, June 15, 2023 1:20:39 PM

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Hello Ms. Oliver,

I am writing in regards to the Planning Commission meeting on June 20th when the Commission will be reviewing Ordinance Number ORD.2023 – 174: To authorize the special use of the property known as 3601 Seminary Avenue for the purpose of a day nursery, for up to 64 children, within a church, upon certain terms and conditions. (3rd District)

I am a parent of a child who has applied to The Cottage School and is eagerly awaiting their opening. I have been actively and tirelessly searching for affordable daycare options in the city of Richmond since my family moved here two years ago. We are one every wait list that has been available, and, in that two year time frame, not one spot has become available. There is a significant lack of daycare options within the city limits especially for children under the age of 2. It is unrealistic for most families to wait 1.5-2 years for a spot to open and more daycares need to be opening in the city to serve it's families. I sincerely hope you allow The Cottage School the special use needed for the property they have partnered with as it is a significant need in our community and not a large risk.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me for further comment. I appreciate it!

Sincerely,  
Blair Marasco

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**Blair Powers Marasco**

**From:** [Roberto Baibich](#)  
**To:** [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#)  
**Subject:** In support of the Cottage School  
**Date:** Friday, June 16, 2023 12:27:40 PM

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Hi Alyson,

I'm writing in support of the Cottage School's special use permit (ordinance 2023-174). As a parents I'm thrilled that there will be such an excellent new childcare option in Richmond, especially given the city's shortage, and ask that the use of the space at 3601 Seminary Ave be supported.

Thank you,

Roberto Baibich

**From:** [James Webber](#)  
**To:** [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment, Support for Ordinance Number ORD.2023 – 174  
**Date:** Thursday, June 15, 2023 9:03:32 PM

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Hello Ms. Oliver,

We are writing to express our strong support to authorize the Cottage School's Special Use Permit (Ordinance Number ORD.2023 – 174). This permit will support an Early Care and Education Center at the Ginter Park Presbyterian Church (3601 Seminary Ave, Richmond, 23227).

Like many who have submitted public comments, we are parents of a young child and have struggled to find childcare in the City of Richmond. The lack of quality childcare options, particularly in our northside community, has been a burden. Approval of the Cottage School's Special Use Permit will make an important difference for our family and many others who have been eager to welcome the Cottage School into our neighborhood.

Thank you for considering this crucial matter.

Jimmy ([jsw5060@gmail.com](mailto:jsw5060@gmail.com)) and Meredith ([mlwebber22@gmail.com](mailto:mlwebber22@gmail.com)) Webber

**From:** [Middleton Smith](#)  
**To:** [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#)  
**Cc:** [Patricia Moon](#); [Julia Smith](#)  
**Subject:** Cottage school special use - ORD.2023 - 174  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 20, 2023 9:39:45 AM

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Ms. Oliver

This email is in strong support of ORD.2023 - 174. The opening of The Cotttage School will greatly benefit the working parents of Richmond and child care is currently in short supply.

Again I request you look favorably upon this special use permit.

Best regards,  
Middleton Smith

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Laura Heeter](#)  
**To:** [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#)  
**Cc:** [PDR Land Use Admin](#)  
**Subject:** In Support of ORD 2023-174  
**Date:** Monday, June 19, 2023 8:22:57 PM

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Hi,

My name is Laura A. Heeter and I am writing to you in support of ORD 2023-174. I represent only myself and do not have any professional or economic relationships that would benefit from approval of this ordinance. I live in the Fan (2nd District) and work full-time as a commercial interior designer with the local office of a DC-based firm.

In January of this year, my husband and I welcomed a daughter, who is fast approaching six months of age. We are currently on the waitlist for the Cottage School at Ginter Park Presbyterian Church, as well as six other waitlists. In our search for child care, I have reached out to over 20 facilities, at least 50% of which never even responded. We've been on several waitlists since last summer, with no hope of getting a spot until sometime next year (at which point our daughter will be over a year old and we will have been on some lists for close to two years). Nanny services, the only reasonable alternative, are limited and cost-prohibitive for many. Richmond, like much of the US, clearly has a severe undersupply of child care services, and any opportunity to expand the supply must be seriously considered.

The Cottage School is of dire importance to the community - this child care is urgently needed. We toured the facility, have met and corresponded extensively with Carol Green, and strongly believe the Cottage School will be an asset to Richmond families, particularly within City Limits and on the Northside. They are opening this facility because they are passionate about it and bring a wealth of knowledge and experience, as well as because they recognize the incredible gap in services available and services needed.

Please vote in favor of ORD 2023-174, which is a vote for Richmond's working parents.

Sincerely,

Laura A. Heeter

--

**Laura A. Heeter**  
[laura.a.heeter@gmail.com](mailto:laura.a.heeter@gmail.com) | 571.213.6326  
[www.linkedin.com/in/lauraheeter](http://www.linkedin.com/in/lauraheeter)

**From:** [Andrew Heeter](#)  
**To:** [PDR Land Use Admin](#); [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#)  
**Subject:** In Support of ORD. 2023-174  
**Date:** Monday, June 19, 2023 9:37:58 PM

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Hello,

My name is Andrew Heeter, and I am a resident of Richmond in the 2nd District. I represent only myself and have no personal or professional relationships that would benefit from the approval of ORD. 2023-174 to authorize the Cottage School to operate a nursery at 3601 Seminary Avenue. I strongly support the approval of this ordinance.

My wife, Laura, and I recently had a daughter, who is now nearly 6 months old. We have been registering for daycare waitlists since summer of 2022. This process has been time consuming, expensive (~100 dollars on average to join a waitlist), and frustrating, as the limited number of existing daycares are so inundated with inquiries that it is often difficult to even get a response. Additionally, many of the existing daycares in the metro area are located outside of the city limits which is a challenge for families who reside and work in the City.

We have reached a point where we have both returned to work and are in need of reliable, safe, and affordable child care. Our interactions with Carol Green with the Cottage School have been extremely positive and reassuring, and I am confident that she and the staff will provide the child care that families like ours in the City of Richmond desperately need. I fear that if the City does not act quickly whenever possible to enable an expansion in childcare options, young families will leave the City in favor of the surrounding counties. Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Best,  
Andrew Heeter

--

Andrew Heeter  
[andrew.d.heeter@gmail.com](mailto:andrew.d.heeter@gmail.com)  
717-991-4078

**From:** [Julia Green](#)  
**To:** [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#)  
**Cc:** [Middleton Smith](#); [Patricia Moon](#)  
**Subject:** In support of ORD.2023 – 174  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 20, 2023 9:39:48 AM

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To Alyson,

I strongly support **ORD.2023 – 174**, to open up The Cottage School at Ginter Park Presbyterian Church. Childcare is a necessity for working parents, and nearly impossible to secure in Richmond. Please hear our petition and approve the opening of the school.

Thank you,

**Julia Taylor Green**

Mother of Donnell Middleton Smith IV, born in Richmond April 1, 2023

**From:** [Matt Mitchell](#)  
**To:** [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#)  
**Cc:** [Diana Price](#)  
**Subject:** ORD.2023 – 174 - Support for Special Use Permit  
**Date:** Monday, June 19, 2023 1:19:29 PM

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Dear Secretary Oliver,

My wife and I enrolled our newborn in the Cottage School at Ginter Park Presbyterian Church. As you are likely aware, child care is very difficult and expensive to find in the city of Richmond. We strongly urge the Council to support the Cottage School and open it as soon as possible. Please see below for our full legal names, address, and contract information. Thank you for sharing our comments with the Council. We do not represent any organizations or have any professional or economic relationships that would be affected by the adoption of the legislation. We are simply local parents looking for a great child care solution. Having met with the Cottage School staff and toured the facility at the Ginter Park Presbyterian Church, we are extremely confident in their capabilities and urge the Planning Commission to grant a Special Use Permit to the Cottage School.

**Legal Names**

Matthew Sean Mitchell  
Diana Allison Price

**Address**

1515 Laburnum Park Blvd.  
Richmond, VA 23227

Best,  
Matt Mitchell

--

Matthew Mitchell  
626 863 3008



**From:** [Emily Mason](#)  
**To:** [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#)  
**Subject:** Ord.2023-174  
**Date:** Monday, June 19, 2023 8:16:00 PM

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We are writing in support of Ord.2023-174, authorizing special use of property at 3601 Seminary Ave. for the purpose of a day nursery.

As parents of a toddler we would love to see this much needed daycare operating in our Northside neighborhood.

Emily & Brian Mason  
1319 Nottoway Ave.

**From:** [Lindsey](#)  
**To:** [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#)  
**Subject:** re: ORD. 2023-174  
**Date:** Monday, June 19, 2023 4:10:32 PM

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Hello:

I am writing in support of ORD. 2023-174. There is a need for additional opportunities for infant and child care in the city. As a new parent to a child under one year of age and City of Richmond resident, our family has been on several waitlists looking for care for our child within a reasonable distance from where we live.

Thanks,  
Lindsey Wetherby

**From:** [Claire Russell](#)  
**To:** [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#)  
**Subject:** Support for ordinance number ORD.2023-174  
**Date:** Monday, June 19, 2023 8:49:51 PM

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Dear Ms. Oliver,

I am writing in strong support of the Special Use Permit for the Cottage School at Ginter Park Presbyterian Church (ordinance number ORD.2023-174). I am the mother of a 6 week old, and I have unfortunately had a very hard time finding daycare for my son. I know I am not alone in this struggle as many Richmond families are facing the challenge of not enough daycare options being available in the city. For context, I started looking as soon as I found out I was pregnant in September of 2022, a full year before I needed a slot in September 2023. Despite applying so early, I am still without a viable daycare option for my son. Of the two places I applied, one closed in the past year unexpectedly and the other very recently told me they no longer have September 2023 availability. There is a daycare crisis in Richmond, and while the opening of the Cottage School will certainly not fix the issue, it will help. If you have any questions or need further information, please let me know.

Thank you,  
Claire Russell

**From:** [Katrina Jensen](#)  
**To:** [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#); [Micah Graf](#)  
**Subject:** Ordinance Number ORD.2023 – 174  
**Date:** Friday, June 23, 2023 9:51:57 AM

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Hello,

My name is Katrina Graf and I am a mother of two boys ages 6months and 3 years. I am a full time speech pathologist and my husband is a software engineer. We live in the Bellevue neighborhood near Ginter Park. We have experienced first hand the shortage of child care options in Richmond, especially for our infant. Nine days prior to the end of my maternity leave, we were informed that our planned childcare facility would be closing permanently. After visiting and calling 9 facilities in the greater Richmond area, we found only one available opening, in Short Pump. The other facilities, we were told, had no availability for 6-12 months. Had we not found this one spot, I would have had to quit my job.

We were so excited to hear of the potential opening of The Cottage School just minutes from our home and have been impressed with all of our interactions with the Cottage School staff. Our area is in desperate need of child care options for young children in order for we as parents to maintain our participation in the local workforce. We ask for your support in the opening of The Cottage School. Thank you.

Katrina and Micah Graf

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Julia Green](#)  
**To:** [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#)  
**Cc:** [Middleton Smith](#); [Patricia Moon](#)  
**Subject:** In support of ORD.2023 – 174  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 20, 2023 9:39:48 AM

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To Alyson,

I strongly support **ORD.2023 – 174**, to open up The Cottage School at Ginter Park Presbyterian Church. Childcare is a necessity for working parents, and nearly impossible to secure in Richmond. Please hear our petition and approve the opening of the school.

Thank you,

**Julia Taylor Green**

Mother of Donnell Middleton Smith IV, born in Richmond April 1, 2023