

Community Alternatives Assisted Living, LLC

618/620 North 32nd Street
Richmond, Virginia 23223

October 5, 2020

Neighbors

Re: Special Use Permit Responses

I am writing this letter to address some of the issues that came to my attention after engaging the Special Use Permit Process. I first want to thank you for bringing these issues to my attention. Like many of you, I am a property owner in the City of Richmond and hold reverence for a peaceful community.

In the past, I have submitted letters to our neighbors soliciting feedback about any concerns that my business may present. The letters seemed to be a proactive and instrumental strategy for remedying issues/concerns quickly. Individuals in the community have called, texted and sent videos and pictures at times. In addition, my personal contact information has been provided to neighbors and posted at the entrance of each facility. When I have been made aware of issues I have addressed them. The agency has been licensed and in good standing with the Virginia Department of Social Services since 2012.

A summary of issues brought to my attention:

1. Residents drinking alcohol and loitering
2. Panhandling
3. Police Response to the facility
4. Expansion

We provide services to persons who are mentally ill and sometimes dually diagnosed with substance use/abuse issues. When we have admitted persons with substance abuse issues it has been with the understanding that they are in treatment with goals of sobriety. Unfortunately, sobriety is not an easy reality for many people afflicted in such a way. The agency exhausts its ability to serve such persons in concert with Richmond Behavioral Health Authority and other entities. Persons suffering from significant substance abuse issues have been discharged or scheduled for discharge within thirty (30) days of the date of this letter.

Residents are allowed to sign in and out of the facility as there is no legal authority restricting them from doing so. We encourage appropriate socialization and discourage any infringement on neighbors and/or their property. There have been times when the agency has received calls about alleged negative behavior by

residents. In instances where we have not been able to confirm that it is a resident of this agency we, have instructed persons to call the police. There have been numerous times where the individuals in question have not been residents of this agency. We are in a position to counsel persons from this agency about their behavior but have no jurisdiction of the community at large.

To date, there have been four (4) neighbors who have brought concerns to my attention over the years. In each instance, I have addressed the concerns timely and with mutual agreement for resolution. It is my goal to continue working with neighbors and amicably coexisting in Church Hill.

The depiction of police response to our agency is grossly over represented. The majority of EMS calls to our agency are for health. I will reiterate that we serve persons with mental illness. Due to the known frequency of psychiatric relapse for persons who suffer from serious mental illness it is likely that persons will require psychiatric hospitalization from time to time. Most individuals are transported by ambulance to an area hospital. For safety reasons, the protocol for the City of Richmond is that the police also respond for such calls. Assisting individuals with hospitalization in a proactive stance that represents evidence based practice and affords safety for all stakeholders.

It appears that most people focused on our expansion in regards to the number of bed spaces we wish to add. In that same regard, there seems to be oversight in the mention of indoor recreation space where we can afford a great deal of entertainment; additional office space for counselors, psychiatrists, and art therapists etc. to work on site. The indoor recreation space affords an area for residents to utilize that is not subject to weather conditions. The additional space and services also affords a greater staff to resident ratio and the addition of security guards.

In summation, the agency has moved rapidly to discharge any residents whose behaviors may not be becoming. The agency has a stance to discharge quickly (within 30 days) when needed. We continue to maintain an open door policy with receiving concerns at 804-437-2187/Denesha.Alexander@gmail.com. Furthermore, we are unable to change the City's protocol with ambulance and police response. We continue to advance our mission working to serve persons with mental illness within the scope of the Americans with Disabilities Act and care with inclusion in the milieu. We look forward to offering more services in house to promote indoor recreation; increased staff to client ratio with expansion and inclusion of security personnel.

Kind Regards,

Denesha Alexander, PhD

Community Alternatives Assisted Living, LLC

618/620 North 32nd Street
Richmond, Virginia 23223

April 24, 2019

Neighbors

Re: Complaints

My name is Denesha Alexander. I am the owner and serve as the Administrator of Community Alternatives Assisted Living, LLC. The agency continues to be licensed by the Virginia Department of Social Services and is in good standing with the regulatory authority. The agency's license does not afford restricting movement of residents.

I have operated my business for several years here in Church Hill and plan to continue doing so. It has been brought to my attention that some residents may be loitering; consuming alcohol; doing illicit drugs and vandalizing property in the area. I hope this is not the case, as I continue to strive for a way to amicable coexist in the community. I can certainly appreciate the concern of homeowners regarding the aforementioned unfavorable behaviors. I encourage you to contact law enforcement if you observe these behaviors. In addition, if you believe an individual is a resident of the facility please let me know. I do have the ability to discharge persons causing issues in the neighborhood and will do so if I can validate any persons causing concern. You may reach me at 804-437-2187. You may send photos or videos to 804-437-2187 or Denesha.Alexander@gmail.com.

I look forward to addressing any concerns and maintaining the neighborhood. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me.

Regards,

Denesha Alexander
Owner