

May 31, 2018

To: Alexandria City Council and Planning Commission
City Hall, 301 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314

RE: Letter of Support for Friends of the Guest House Application for Special Use Permit
(SUP) # 2018-00029

Recommended Action: The Alexandria Housing Affordability Advisory Committee (AHAAC) unanimously and wholeheartedly recommends that City Council approve the Friends of the Guest House application for 116-120 South Payne Street (SUP # 2018-00029). Friends of the Guest House is seeking this permit to enable it to enter into a lease for and subsequently renovate an existing office building at 116-120 S. Payne Street. The new facility would allow this established and well-regarded organization to consolidate several scattered sites in the West End, improve the efficiency of its operations, and modestly increase its capacity to serve additional clients through the addition of five beds. The organization has served over 3,000 women since its founding in 1974, and its clients have demonstrated a recidivism rate far below the national average. For clients who complete its one-year program, the recidivism rate after three years is less than 10% (as compared to a national rate of 40-70%).

The Need: Friends of the Guest House has a waiting list of over 300 women who are seeking to enter its Residential Program. The mission of the organization is to provide women the structure, supervision, and support they need to move beyond who they were to become who they want to be. It does so by providing much needed transitional housing for approximately six months paired with intensive, longer-term counseling, health care and legal referrals, job training, education and other services. These services are critical to empowering the organization's formerly incarcerated clients to successfully transition back into the community and workforce.

Impact on Affordable Housing: Granting the SUP will allow for up to five additional individuals to access safe, reliable, and quality transitional housing as they work hard to reintegrate into the community and reunite with their families. Friends of the Guest House currently serves up to twenty-six women and granting this SUP would allow the organization to increase its capacity by approximately 20%.

The organization's focus on building clients' educational and life skills enhances their employment prospects which, in turn, provide pathways to higher incomes and a broader range of housing options.

The application is consistent with and supports the policies and goals of the City's Housing Master Plan and Strategic Plan.

Thank you for considering this application.

Sincerely,
Robyn Konkell
Chair, Alexandria Housing Affordability Advisory Committee

To: Madeleine Sims
Subject: RE: 116-120 S Payne Street

From: DCCRANE@COMCAST.NET <DCCRANE@COMCAST.NET>
Sent: Sunday, April 29, 2018 7:24:57 PM
To: Madeleine Sims
Cc: Ann Horowitz
Subject: Re: 116-120 S Payne Street

Madeleine and Ann,

As a resident close to the property at 120 S. Payne Street, I would like to have the Alexandria City consider my concerns regarding this Special Use Permit (SUP). I have included the concerns below within the body of this email and as a PDF attachment.

As I have mentioned, I am out of town and may not be able to be present for any hearing that may arise regarding this SUP. Please have my concerns be considered in the City's review of this SUP.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your time. Please confirm receipt of this email.

Dan Crane
703-626-4409
dccrane@comcast.net

**Concerns Regarding the Special Use Permit (SUP) for
Friends of Guesthouse
At 120 South Payne Street**

OVERCROWDING AND MINIMAL OVERSIGHT:

1. High density and concentrated living for nine (9) patrons on each of second and third floors and three (3) patrons on the first floor;
2. No apparent accommodations for one overnight staff member shown in flooring plan of SUP;
3. No dedicated interior space for guests to visit with patrons, thus, relegating any visiting, at times, to outdoor areas, possibly in the parking lot/side patio/rear exterior emergency stairway-deck, which are adjacent to a large number of residences; and
4. Only one staff member overseeing 21 patrons overnight, i.e., low ratio of staff-to-patron (1:21) during overnights.

PARKING AND DELIVERIES:

1. With such a large number of patrons at the Friends shelter on a 24 hour basis, parking for guests, staff and the patrons on the property appears insufficient;

2. One shelter is already present in the 100 block of S. Payne at 125 S. Payne Street (ALIVE! - https://www.alive-inc.org/alive_house.htm), and with this added Friends shelter, this will be a second shelter within the 100 block of S. Payne (ALIVE! does create double parking issues on Payne Street along with blocking of the alley servicing the parking lot of 120 S. Payne and the alley parking for the Prince Street residences when ALIVE's! patrons arrive/depart); and
3. Deliveries, e.g., groceries, will be made through the kitchen door that fronts on the alley, possibly impacting access for neighbors to alley parking for the Prince Street residences (note item 2 within this category).

SAFETY:

1. Unspecified smoking areas within property; and
2. Three-floor, outdoor, wood stair system is a fire hazard as an emergency exit for such concentrated living conditions.

NOISE

Open construction of the three-floor, outdoor wood stairway system in the rear of the building will function as a porch/deck for patrons with attendant noise to surrounding neighbors.

June 3, 2018

Alexandria Planning Commission

Re: 120 S. Payne SUP 2018-0029 Friends of Guest House


I had planned on attending the public hearing to support this SUP but a last minute business trip has caused me to be out of town.

At the outset it is not a question of who occupies the property but what is the impact on the adjacent neighbors. The property in question shares a public, albeit unnamed, alley that provides access and off street parking for an additional 5 residents and 2 businesses. The recent uses have been office functions with a number of cars and parking limitations and there was a possible sale to a daycare provider that could not meet a transportation plan. The current application is clearly less of an impact.

Our major issue is the possibility of 21 residents plus staff assembling in the public/common alley. My biggest concern is that residents will assemble and/or smoke in the alley. I have been provided with a House Rules Handbook that governs this issue and I am satisfied that there are internal controls to address the issue but I wonder if it may be feasible to require the inclusion of the house rules as a SUP condition. Additionally, an appropriate smoking receptacle should be required.

Once again, I support the SUP and commend Friends of Guesthouse for their efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark S. Feldheim". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Mark S. Feldheim
1215 Prince Street