

From: [Lisa C. Kunz](#)
To: [Krista Artis](#)
Subject: FW: [All City Commissioners] Tent city rezone.
Date: Monday, June 6, 2022 9:10:15 AM

From: Lisa C. Kunz
Sent: Monday, June 6, 2022 8:41 AM
To: Bob Kelly <bkelly@greatfallsmt.net>; Eric Hinebauch <ehinebauch@greatfallsmt.net>; Joe McKenney <jmckenney@greatfallsmt.net>; Rick Tryon <rtryon@greatfallsmt.net>; Susan Wolff <swolff@greatfallsmt.net>
Cc: Greg Doyon <gdoyon@greatfallsmt.net>; Jeff Newton <jnewton@greatfallsmt.net>; Jeffrey Hindoien <jhindoien@greatfallsmt.net>; Craig Raymond <craymond@greatfallsmt.net>
Subject: FW: [All City Commissioners] Tent city rezone.

FYI

Lisa

From: Lisa C. Kunz
Sent: Monday, June 6, 2022 8:39 AM
To: 'marilynch@bresnan.net' <marilynch@bresnan.net>
Subject: RE: [All City Commissioners] Tent city rezone.

Good Morning Marilyn –

Thank you for your comments for Commission/staff consideration during Petitions and Communications, Agenda Item 2, on tomorrow evening's City Commission agenda.

For clarification, here is a link to a recent press release pertaining to the First United Methodist Church Homeless Encampment: <https://greatfallsmt.net/citymanager/first-united-methodist-church-homeless-encampment>, and a portion of the draft minutes of the last Commission meeting wherein Manager Doyon provided an update on the church situation: **The First United Methodist Church has filed an application for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to operate an emergency shelter on its property. The process will require public hearings with the Planning Advisory Board and the City Commission. A formal "Notice of Violation" has been issued to the Church regarding the presence of tents and camping activity on the property in violation of the zoning code. The City will also be commencing a nuisance complaint process based on the level of complaints the City is receiving about the church property.**

You can sign up to receive email notifications when agendas are posted for the Planning Advisory Board and the City Commission: <https://greatfallsmt.net/newsletter/subscriptions>. Meetings are aired on cable channel 190 and live streamed on the internet: <https://greatfallsmt.net/livestream>. Recordings of the meetings are also posted on the City's website: <https://greatfallsmt.net/meetings>.

Best regards,

Lisa Kunz

City Clerk/Records Manager

Civic Center Room 204

406.455.8451

From: City of Great Falls Montana <webmaster@greatfallsmt.net>

Sent: Sunday, June 5, 2022 5:23 PM

To: City Commissioners <CityCommissioners@greatfallsmt.net>

Subject: [All City Commissioners] Tent city rezone.

Marilyn Christman (marilynych@bresnan.net) sent a message using the contact form at <https://greatfallsmt.net/>.

I heard you are considering rezoning the Methodist church so they can have the tent city. Wow I need to say I am very opposed. Please consider children in the neighborhood, home owners, business owners with more weight than the church. We do not want to become another San Francisco, Seattle, or Portland where crime, rape human trafficking, cartel and drugs and more beco.e out of control. I cannot make your meeting please use this email as if I were there. I don't know why you would even consider this a topic. How about making communities better for locally owned businesses. Let's bus these people in the tent city to Washington DC doorstep.

From: [Lisa C. Kunz](#)
To: [Bob Kelly](#); [Eric Hinebauch](#); [Joe McKenney](#); [Rick Tryon](#); [Susan Wolff](#)
Cc: [Greg Doyon](#); [Krista Artis](#); [Jeff Newton](#); [Jeffrey Hindoien](#); [Craig Raymond](#)
Subject: FW: CUP 1st Methodist Church, I agree with this letter by Carol Robinson. My name is Karen Czech I am a citizen of Gt Falls Mt, thank you!
Date: Monday, June 6, 2022 2:09:58 PM

FYI

Lisa

-----Original Message-----

From: Lisa C. Kunz
Sent: Monday, June 6, 2022 2:09 PM
To: 'Richard Czech' <rnkczech@gmail.com>
Subject: RE: CUP 1st Methodist Church, I agree with this letter by Carol Robinson. My name is Karen Czech I am a citizen of Gt Falls Mt, thank you!

Hi Karen – Thank you for your comments.

Your comments will be shared with the City Commission and appropriate staff for consideration during Petitions and Communications, Agenda Item 2, on tomorrow evening's City Commission agenda.

As I explained to Carol, the church's application for a CUP is not currently on a Commission agenda for consideration. For clarification, here is a link to a recent press release <https://greatfallsmt.net/citymanager/first-united-methodist-church-homeless-encampment>.

Best regards,

Lisa Kunz
City Clerk/Records Manager
Civic Center Room 204
406.455.8451

-----Original Message-----

From: Richard Czech <rnkczech@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 6, 2022 10:38 AM
To: commission <commission@greatfallsmt.net>
Subject: CUP 1st Methodist Church, I agree with this letter by Carol Robinson. My name is Karen Czech I am a citizen of Gt Falls Mt, thank you!

Dear City Commissioners and Mayor

I am a citizen of Great Falls, Mt. I was born here.

I am requesting that you DO NOT approve the CUP (Conditional Use Permit) that 1st Methodist Church has requested.

The city of Great Falls keeps wanting to expand its tax base by attracting new businesses to our great city.

But if Great Falls expands its vagrant population you are not going to attract the new businesses you want.

You can't have both.

I have personally talked to GF police personnel and they assured me the situation at the church is not a homeless problem....these people just want to "hang out" and "have a good time" aka drugs & alcohol.

Warmer weather is coming and this situation is going to get worse. We .. YOU.. need to stop it before it becomes out of control like L.A., San Francisco, Portland, Or., and Seattle.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Carol Robinson

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Lisa C. Kunz](#)
To: [Krista Artis](#)
Subject: FW: CUP 1st Methodist Church
Date: Monday, June 6, 2022 9:10:24 AM

From: Lisa C. Kunz
Sent: Monday, June 6, 2022 8:53 AM
To: Bob Kelly <bkelly@greatfallsmt.net>; Eric Hinebauch <ehinebauch@greatfallsmt.net>; Joe McKenney <jmckenney@greatfallsmt.net>; Rick Tryon <rtryon@greatfallsmt.net>; Susan Wolff <swolff@greatfallsmt.net>
Cc: Greg Doyon <gdoyon@greatfallsmt.net>; Jeff Newton <jnewton@greatfallsmt.net>; Jeffrey Hindoiien <jhindoiien@greatfallsmt.net>; Craig Raymond <craymond@greatfallsmt.net>
Subject: FW: CUP 1st Methodist Church

FYI

Lisa

From: Lisa C. Kunz
Sent: Monday, June 6, 2022 8:52 AM
To: 'Tim Brubaker' <carol1326@yahoo.com>
Subject: RE: CUP 1st Methodist Church

Good Morning Carol – Thank you for your comments.

Your comments will be shared with the City Commission and appropriate staff for consideration during Petitions and Communications, Agenda Item 2, on tomorrow evening's City Commission agenda. The church's application for a CUP is not currently on a Commission agenda for consideration. For clarification, here is a link to a recent press release <https://greatfallsmt.net/citymanager/first-united-methodist-church-homeless-encampment>.

Best regards,

Lisa Kunz

City Clerk/Records Manager
Civic Center Room 204
406.455.8451

From: Tim Brubaker <carol1326@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, June 4, 2022 3:48 PM
To: commission <commission@greatfallsmt.net>
Subject: CUP 1st Methodist Church

Dear City Commissioners and Mayor

I am a citizen of Great Falls, Mt. I was born here.

I am requesting that you DO NOT approve the CUP (Conditional Use Permit) that 1st Methodist Church has requested.

The city of Great Falls keeps wanting to expand its tax base by attracting new businesses to our great city.

But if Great Falls expands it's vagrant population you are not going to attract the new businesses you want.

You can't have both.

I have personally talked to GF police personnel and they assured me the situation at the church is not a homeless problem....these people just want to "hang out" and "have a good time" aka drugs & alcohol.

Warmer weather is coming and this situation is going to get worse. We .. YOU.. need to stop it before it becomes out of control like L.A., San Francisco, Portland, Or., and Seattle.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Carol Robinson

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

From: [Lisa C. Kunz](#)
To: [Bob Kelly](#); [Eric Hinebauch](#); [Joe McKenney](#); [Rick Tryon](#); [Susan Wolff](#)
Cc: [Greg Doyon](#); [Krista Artis](#); [Jeffrey Hindoien](#); [Jeff Newton](#); [Craig Raymond](#)
Subject: FW: Church Problem w/homeless
Date: Tuesday, June 7, 2022 11:20:12 AM

FYI

Lisa

From: Lisa C. Kunz
Sent: Tuesday, June 7, 2022 11:19 AM
To: 'sldurkin@bresnan.net' <sldurkin@bresnan.net>
Subject: RE: Church Problem w/homeless

Good Morning Steve – Thank you for your comments. Your comments will be shared with the City Commission and appropriate staff for consideration.

The First United Methodist Church’s application for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) is not currently on a Commission agenda for consideration. For clarification, here is a link to a recent press release <https://greatfallsmt.net/citymanager/first-united-methodist-church-homeless-encampment>.

As set forth in the press release, the Church’s application for a CUP will first go before the Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission. If you cannot attend in person, public comments can be submitted to the Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission. The deadline for written comments will be set forth on the Board’s agenda.

You can sign up to receive email notifications when agendas are posted for the Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission and the City Commission: <https://greatfallsmt.net/newsletter/subscriptions>. Meetings are aired on cable channel 190 and live streamed on the internet: <https://greatfallsmt.net/livestream>. Recordings of the meetings are also posted on the City’s website: <https://greatfallsmt.net/meetings>.

It is anticipated the recommendation of the Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission will be on the City Commission’s July 19th agenda for consideration.

Lisa Kunz

City Clerk/Records Manager
Civic Center Room 204
406.455.8451

From: sldurkin@bresnan.net <sldurkin@bresnan.net>
Sent: Tuesday, June 7, 2022 10:57 AM
To: commission <commission@greatfallsmt.net>
Subject: FW: Church Problem w/homeless

OOps I forgot to attach my name to this letter
Steve Durkin
1101 23rd ave SW
GF Mt

From: sldurkin@bresnan.net
To: "commission@greatfallsmt.net"
Cc:
Sent: Tuesday June 7 2022 10:55:13AM
Subject: Church Problem w/homeless

Please do not rezone the Methodist church downtown to benefit the homeless incampment that has taken over their property. If you rezone this one you will be rezoning more of these properties around town, it's a slippery slope and you'll be opening up a can of worms. Our town deserves so much better than this. Please do not make Great Falls a smaller version of Seattle or San Francisco!

Great Falls City Commission Meeting Comments June 7th, 2022

My name is Anna Kelly and I am a resident and constituent of downtown Great Falls. I am here to make a public comment on the City's action against First United Methodist Church.

There was a storm of Facebook comments in response to the city's Press Release on May 31st announcing the lawsuit against the UMC. Many of these comment streams demonstrated an overt hostility towards our unhoused neighbors, including sentiments asking unhoused folks to "help themselves" or "decide to change," particularly in reference to mental health and addiction. There is no person who would *choose* the chance of freezing to death over shelter, no person who chooses hunger, no person who chooses the ridicule this city imparts on its unhoused population.

Poverty, mental illness, and addiction are not choices. Or character traits. Or moral failings. They are conditions and illnesses of unjust systemic crises that specifically target people of color, people with disabilities, and people in the LGBTQ community. Homelessness is not simply an inconvenience to city zoning efforts. It's a public health epidemic and deserves to be prioritized as such (and I do not mean in the way that the Republican party has prioritized pandemic safety).

At the beginning of this year, the waiting period for psychiatric services at both Alluvion and the Center for Mental Illness was over four months. That doesn't start to cover whether one could afford those services or use a phone or computer to make an appointment.

Right now, our only emergency overnight shelter rejects folks with ~~visible mental illness~~ or addiction, as well as people with pets and people who are LGBTQ. In four months, it will be cold again. We need permanent solutions, and we also need solutions to keep folks safe *in the meantime*, not just one, two, five years down the line if we eventually have another shelter. The UMC has done the best job possible to ensure folks in our community lived to this spring. If there is a nuisance in our city, it is that we find human remains in a bush on a street corner and don't get any follow up, but we do now have a lawsuit.

The phrase "to pull oneself up by their bootstraps" was an idiom originally akin to 'when pigs fly'—to denote that something was impossible. And making a choice to simply not experience homelessness anymore, without the support of accessible social services, is exactly that—impossible. It is an absolute failure of government and an ableist mockery of community care.

In conclusion, I would like to urge the City Commissioners to both reconsider their action against the UMC and prioritize directing funds, particularly from COVID relief programs, to effective and nondiscriminatory services for our unhoused community including accessible mental health and addiction services and low-barrier emergency shelter.

June 7, 2022

Rev. Stephen Underwood
Pastor, Central Christian Church
Great Falls, MT

I am here to address the City's declared course of action regarding the encampment of unhoused persons on the property of the First United Methodist Church.

I could spend my time here this evening discussing how the First Amendment and the Religious Land Use Act of 2000 override municipal zoning laws, since caring for the poor is a fundamental pillar of Christian faith and practice, and since, to borrow phrasing from the plaintiff's memorandum in *Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church vs. the City of New York*, "It is for the Church, not the government, to decide how the Church exercises its religious beliefs."

But I trust that those precedents will re-assert themselves through the legal system, as they did when *Fifth Avenue Presbyterian* won their case in federal court.

Rather, I will spend my time addressing how the City of Great Falls has lied and enabled lies about our unhoused neighbors and those who are actually working to help them.

In the official press release from last week, the City stated that it had "hoped that First United Methodist Church would work with the Great Falls Local Continuum of Care and other existing service providers to assist the homeless."

Reverend Wakeley and others working with the community at the Methodist church *have* worked with the Continuum of Care, which is indeed made up of many caring individuals and organizations.

But the needs of the community far outstrip the services offered by the Continuum, especially given the fact that the only emergency shelters (which are often at capacity) not only have substance-based and companion-animal restrictions on those who can seek shelter, but also are operated by an exclusionary religious non-profit that is openly transphobic and homophobic.

The work that is happening at First UMC is *necessary work* that is filling a gap in the social support system, a gap that, as Reverend Wakeley has said time and again, prevents the most vulnerable in the community from progressing through the Continuum and into a life of stability and healing.

The City has contributed to a false narrative that Reverend Wakeley and the First UMC are simply disregarding the concern of their neighbors and enabling troublemakers, when nothing could be further from the case.

The conversation about this community has been poisoned by falsehood from the beginning, with at least one person using a fake Facebook account to spread disinformation about this community: disinformation that one of our City Commissioners has shared to their own personal page, allowing the vitriol and the libelous claims to fester unchecked.

There are of course issues with the encampment community. But each of the legitimate issues that have been raised are issues that Reverend Wakeley and the coalition that has assembled to advocate for this community are working to address. Conversations about security, sanitation, substance use, and rule of life are *ongoing* as the situation evolves, and the limited time and labor of volunteers is being coordinated to address issues that arise. The City has apparently taken for granted that the “plaintiffs” in this court of public opinion are in the right, rather than understanding how very complicated this issue is, and working with the community to find a just resolution, not simply a convenient one.

The Church does not have “power over” in the manner that the State does. It cannot force compliance and so must rely on “power with,” to cultivate communities based in mutual respect and interdependence. That process is messy and slow, which is apparently intolerable to some, but the messy and slow process of care rather than control is the only way to bring about genuine healing within our community. The City and its government must decide whether it prefers the comfort of a few over justice and the public good.