

## Pamela S. Ulmer

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**From:** Robin Lester <robinlester88@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 8, 2023 2:36 PM  
**To:** Pamela S. Ulmer; Meghan T. Rupkey  
**Subject:** Special Use Permit 1111 and 1123 North Main St.

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Hello,

My name is Robin Lester with Dollar General located beside the area in review for special permit homeless shelter parking. With all due respect, again I will state that I am opposed to this special use permit. And again my concern is the increase of drugs, drug use amongst the homeless population at this site. Even though a homeless person may not have a bed or parking, a homeless shelter and parking would draw a gathering/living/loitering area for the homeless people. In turn this will cause the area to be less safe and would drastically bring the real estate values down on homes and businesses all around.

This is good for no one including the city. Who wants their home or business to be worth less? Who wants the area they live in or work at to be less safe?

It may be possible, that if the permit is not deviated from its current use status that the City of Harrisonburg might find another use for the brick building in the back. That is why I would like for this request to Not be approved. If this special use permit is granted you will be paving the way for a bad situation in the future.

I'm quite surprised you would pick an area flourishing with homes and businesses for a homeless shelter with parking. It would be nice if the city would consider other locations where so many hard working families and businesses would not be impacted because more than likely they will.

Statistics prove that Cars are the second dwelling place for homeless people if they have one. Also statistics show that homeless shelters are among the top dwelling areas for homeless people. Two very serious reasons this is not a good idea.

Again, I completely understand and respect the fact that the city is trying to help the homeless population as they should, I just do not believe placing this homeless shelter and parking in this area is going to be good for the community or the city. Statistics show that homeless people use drugs on a regular basis. How can you even consider this risk? Please consider denying this request. I would love to see more discussion on it than what I saw on the video at the last meeting. It doesn't appear that you are considering local families, children, businesses at all. I feel confident there are more appropriate locations for a homeless shelter and parking. I also feel confident there are many other uses the City could consider for the property.

Please seriously weigh out the long term consequences because I firmly believe there will be.

Does the city have a plan to protect the property from loitering? Does the city have a plan to protect the area from homeless people gathering in a parking lot and adjoining areas? Does the city have a plan to prevent drug use happening out in the open for all to view? I hope you will ask and get answers to these questions because this is what you are looking at in the near future. Will you please reply the answers back to me? I hope I'm wrong but according to statistics and what's happening in other cities this is more than likely what lies ahead.

Please don't take this in the wrong spirit. I'm not trying to be closed minded and disrespectful to anyone including the homeless population. Homelessness breaks my heart and I believe in offering help however it is a very serious matter with serious consequences and should be handled with utmost wisdom and planning.

Don't be intimidated by the city or even other board members if you truly believe what I am stating is even partially true. An entire community is at stake.

Also, will you read this letter out loud at the meeting on Feb.14th? I want all board members and others to hear what I have to say in case they haven't considered these matters.

If the city has a plan to prevent drug use, loitering, tents being pitched and whatever else could happen in the parking and nearby areas please let me know. Since I have a business next door, I feel I should be informed.

In conclusion , even if you don't have citizens at the meeting it doesn't mean you shouldn't consider what is best and safest for them. It is your responsibility to truly consider the people in this area and do what is right by them. They pay the taxes and make it what it is and should be respected and protected. Don't make a quick haphazard decision because that is indeed the easy thing to do.

I write these words and pray you will do the right thing.

Thank you,

Robin Lester