

November 22, 2024

Ann Arbor Planning Commission, Planning Commission Staff, Ann Arbor Council members

**Re:** Council Resolution 24-1560 - expansion of in-home commercial uses

Dear Planning Commission and staff,

The following is a statement of what I experienced when an individual opened a business in my neighborhood, on my block, during school opening hours, and on a weekday. As you consider the proposed resolution referenced above, please also consider the inconvenience, nuisance, and hazards presented while this business operated. I hope that the commission will try harder to publicize the commission's interest in this resolution before sending it through for approval. Honestly, if my neighbor had not brought the proposed resolution to my attention, I wouldn't have known anything about it.

I live 10 blocks west of downtown, one block from Eberwhite Elementary. A few years ago, a neighbor opened a café in her house. Customers flocked to the café, which operated once a week, when school students are riding bikes and walking up to school. In addition, many parents drive their children to school and park on the block to walk them up to school to wait for the bell. Because café customers were parking nose to tail on Soule, there were far fewer spaces for parents to park. In addition, since customers were unfamiliar with the neighborhood, they appeared to not be aware that extra caution and care was necessary when small children are walking and riding to school without parents. Although the café owner told customers to park in the church parking lot (about a block away from the café) since customers weren't familiar with the neighborhood, they didn't know where to park so they opted to park as close as possible to the café. In their haste to get in line, customers cut across my lawn. I found litter, cigarette butts, e-cigarette cartridges, and dental picks discarded on the sidewalk leading up to the café.

The cafe was very popular. The café was not a small-scale mom and pop shop selling eggs or baked goods from their back door. Rather, the café seemed to attract people with nice cars and money to spend at the latest, hip establishment.

I don't remember that the owner sought agreement from her neighbors before starting her business so there was no buy in from the neighbors, nor was there any assessment of the neighborhood impact, the hours of operation, or alignment with neighborhood standards.

As a long-term resident and taxpayer in Ann Arbor, I am aware of many small businesses that operate just outside of residential neighborhoods west and south of town where rents are reasonable, and businesses can share a commercial kitchen and appropriate parking. Would the planning commission explore this option as an alternative to the resolution? It wouldn't impact in town neighborhoods, nor require further costs and time from the planning commission.

I strongly recommend that the planning commission take a lesson from what happened in my neighborhood before a decision is made. My statement should serve as a convincing statement and plea to slow down and ask for input from the community.

Sincerely,

Robin Sedman, 700 Soule Blvd, Ann Arbor 48103