



Roll Call Number

Agenda Item Number

41

Date April 6, 2026

RESOLUTION HOLDING PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING REQUEST FROM KENT LEHS (OWNER), FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 3820 11TH STREET, TO REZONE THE PROPERTY FROM “N5” NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRICT TO “NX2” NEIGHBORHOOD MIX DISTRICT, TO ALLOW THE CONVERSION OF AN EXISTING ONE-HOUSEHOLD RESIDENTIAL BUILDING TO A GROUP LIVING USE

WHEREAS, the City Plan and Zoning Commission has advised that at a public hearing held on March 5, 2026, its members voted 6-5-1 in support of a motion to recommend DENIAL of a request from Kent Lehs (Owner), for property located at 3820 11th Street, to rezone the property “N5” Neighborhood District to “NX2” Neighborhood Mix District, to allow the conversion of an existing one-household residential building to a Group Living use and determined the requested rezoning is not in conformance with the PlanDSM: Creating Our Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Property is legally described as follows:

THE NORTH ½ OF LOT 6 IN PETERSON’S ADDITION TO OAK PARK, AN OFFICIAL PLAT, NOW INCLUDED IN AND FORMING A PART OF THE CITY OF DES MOINES, POLK COUNTY, IOWA.

WHEREAS, on March 23, 2026, by Roll Call No. 26-0372, it was duly resolved by the City Council that the request for approval of the proposed amendment and rezoning be set down for hearing on April 6, 2026, at 5:00 p.m., at the City Council Chambers; and

WHEREAS, due notice of said hearing was published in the Des Moines Register, as provided by law, setting forth the time and place for hearing on said proposed rezoning; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with said notice, those interested in said proposed rezoning, both for and against, have been given opportunity to be heard with respect thereto and have presented their views to the City Council.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Des Moines, Iowa, as follows:

1. Upon due consideration of the facts, and any and all statements of interested persons and arguments of counsel, any objections to the proposed rezoning of the Property are hereby overruled, and the hearing is closed.

Alternative A

MOVED by _____ to DENY the proposed rezoning. Second by _____.

Date April 6, 2026

Alternative B

MOVED by _____ to continue the public hearing until April 20, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 1200 Locust Street, Des Moines, Iowa, and to direct the City Manager and Legal Department to prepare the necessary legislation to **APPROVE** the requested rezoning for Property from “N5” Neighborhood District to “NX2” Neighborhood Mix District, to allow the conversion of an existing one-household residential building to a Group Living use, and determining the requested rezoning is in conformance with the PlanDSM Creating Our Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan.

Second by _____.

(NOTE – APPROVAL REQUIRES SIX VOTES DUE TO OPPOSITION OF GREATER THAN 20% OF RELEVANT PROPERTY OWNERS AND DUE TO THE PLAN & ZONING COMMISSION RECOMMENDING DENIAL)

FORM APPROVED:

/s/ Chas M. Cahill
 Chas M. Cahill
 Assistant City Attorney

(ZONG-2026-000003)

COUNCIL ACTION	YEAS	NAYS	PASS	ABSENT
BOESEN				
SIMONSON				
VOSS				
BARRON				
WESTERGAARD				
MANDELBAUM				
GATTO				
TOTAL				
MOTION CARRIED		APPROVED		
_____ Mayor				

CERTIFICATE

I, LAURA BAUMGARTNER, City Clerk of said City hereby certify that at a meeting of the City Council of said City of Des Moines, held on the above date, among other proceedings the above was adopted.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal the day and year first above written.

_____ City Clerk



March 12, 2026

Communication from the City Plan and Zoning Commission advising that at their March 5, 2026 meeting, the following action was taken on request from Kent Lehs (owner), for the following regarding property located at 3820 11th Street:

- A) Determination as to whether the requested rezoning is in conformance with the PlanDSM Creating Our Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan.
- B) Rezone property from “N5” Neighborhood District to Limited “NX2” Neighborhood Mix District, to allow the conversion of an existing one-household residential building to a Group Living use.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION: 6-5-1

After public hearing, the members voted as follows:

Commission Action:	Yes	Nays	Pass	Abstain	Absent
Leah Rudolphi		X			
Chris Draper		X			
Laura Kessel		X			
Todd Garner	X				
Johnny Alcivar		X			
Carolyn Jenison	X				
William Page	X				
Andrew Lorentzen					X
Clayton Elwell			X		
Katie Gillette	X				
Rick Trower	X				
Jane Rongerude					X
Dominic Anania	X				
Matt Connolly		X			

Approval of the following motion:

Part A) The requested rezoning is in conformance with PlanDSM: Creating Our Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan.

Part B) **Denial** of the request to rezone the subject property from “N5” Neighborhood District to Limited “NX2” Neighborhood Mix District.



STAFF RECOMMENDATION TO THE P&Z COMMISSION

Part A) Staff recommends that the requested rezoning be found not in conformance with PlanDSM: Creating Our Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan.

Part B) Staff recommends approval of the rezoning of the subject property to Limited “NX2” Neighborhood Mix District subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Any use as permitted and limited within the “N5” Neighborhood District and a “Group Living Use”.
- 2) Any Group Living Use with up to a maximum of four (4) residents.

STAFF REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **Purpose of Request:** The applicant is proposing to convert an existing one-household dwelling to a 6-bed rooming house. This is considered a Group Living – Other use within Section 134-3.3.2 of the Municipal Code and includes Fraternity/Sorority Houses, Dormitories, and Rooming Houses. These group living uses are subject to supplemental use regulations and are classified as a Conditional Use, which requires approval by the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

The proposed use requires rezoning to the “NX2” District. The applicant has requested to rezone to a Limited “NX2” District restricting uses to Group Living and One-Household Residential.

Should the rezoning be approved, the applicant would be required to bring the property to full compliance with all applicable zoning conditions and permitting requirements.

2. **Size of Site:** 0.131 acres (5,702 square feet).
3. **Existing Zoning (site):** “N5” Neighborhood District.
4. **Existing Land Use (site):** The subject property includes a one-household dwelling unit and a two-car attached garage.
5. **Adjacent Land Use and Zoning:**

North – “N5”; Uses are two-household residential.

South – “N5”: Uses are one-household residential.

East – “N5”; Uses are one-household residential.

West – “N5”; Uses are one-household residential.

6. General Neighborhood/Area Land Uses: The subject property is located along 11th Street, a few blocks north of the Euclid Avenue corridor. It is located in an area predominantly consisting of one-household residential, two-household residential, and some scattered small scale multiple-household residential uses.

7. Applicable Recognized Neighborhood(s): The subject property is located within the Highland Park/Oak Park Neighborhood Association. All neighborhood associations were notified of the public hearing by emailing of the Preliminary Agenda on February 13, 2026, and the Final Agenda on February 27, 2026. Additionally, separate notifications of the hearing for this specific item were mailed on February 13, 2026 (20 days prior to the public hearing) and February 23, 2026 (10 days prior to the public hearing) to the Highland Park/Oak Park Neighborhood Association and to the primary titleholder on file with the Polk County Assessor for each property within 250 feet of the site.

All agendas and notices are mailed to the primary contact(s) designated by the recognized neighborhood association to the City of Des Moines Neighborhood Development Division on the date of the mailing.

The applicant will provide a summary of the neighborhood meeting at the public hearing.

8. Relevant Zoning History: On January 21, 2026, a Notice of Violation was issued to the subject property relating to Section 134-2.2.5.I, N5 District, table 134-3.1-1, Principal Use Table, section 134-3.9, Accessory Uses, of the Municipal Code of the City of Des Moines. Upon inspection there was found to be prohibited uses (Other group living uses), which are not principal or accessory allowed uses in the N5 zoning district.

9. PlanDSM: Creating Our Tomorrow Plan Land Use Plan Designation: Low Density Residential.

10. Applicable Regulations: Taking into consideration the criteria set forth in Chapter 18B of the Iowa Code, the Commission reviews all proposals to amend zoning boundaries or regulations within the City of Des Moines. Such amendments must be in conformance with the comprehensive plan for the City and designed to meet the criteria in 414.3 of the Iowa Code. The Commission may make recommendations to the City Council on conditions to be made in addition to the existing regulations so

long as the subject area owner agrees to them in writing. The recommendation of the Commission will be forwarded to the City Council.

I. ADDITIONAL APPLICABLE INFORMATION

- 1. Project Overview:** The applicant proposes to convert an existing one-household dwelling into a group home with up to 6 residents. The residents are expected to utilize shared living space within the 4-bedroom house. The submitted application indicates residency is available to those aged 50-plus and have been displaced due to unforeseen circumstances. The residents are expected to be independent, while the 'lead resident' is expected to be responsible for the oversight of any home rules. The applicant is expected to provide professional oversight and general property maintenance.
- 2. Conditional Use Approval:** Any Group Living Use including Other Group Living Uses and Correctional Placement Residence require a Conditional Use Approval by the Zoning Board of Adjustment per Section 134-3.3.2.
- 3. Supplemental Use Regulations:** The applicant is proposing conversion of a one-household residence to a 6-Bed rooming house with potential correctional placement. This is consistent with a Group Living Use and subject to supplemental use regulations.

Other Group Living Uses includes Fraternity/Sorority Houses, Dormitories, and Rooming Houses. These group living uses are subject to the following supplemental use regulations:

1. The proposed location must provide residents with adequate access to public transportation.

The subject property is within a quarter mile of the Dart bus route and transit stop along Euclid Avenue and has access to at least two (2) on-street parking spaces adjoining the subject property along Garden Avenue.

2. A permit for such use is subject to the reconsideration by the board of adjustment if at any time the neighborhood services director determines that the facility has become detrimental to the neighborhood.

Board of Adjustment action is required to allow this project to proceed. A Conditional Use is needed to allow a Group Living Other Use or Correctional Placement Residence per section 134-3.3.2.

3. Each bedroom must have 80 square feet of usable floor space per bed and usable floor space of at least eight feet in any major dimension. For purposes of calculating usable floor space, any parts of a room having less than seven

feet of ceiling height may not be counted. Rooms in which beds are located may not be used for purposes other than bedrooms.

A floor plan submitted with the application indicates four (4) bedrooms with square footage values which satisfies the minimum requirement of 80 square feet of usable space per bed.

4. Each such facility must contain at least one lavatory and one toilet per 10 residents or fraction thereof and one tub or shower per 15 residents or fraction thereof. At least one bathroom with tub or shower, toilet and lavatory must be located on each floor that is occupied by resident bedrooms.

A floor plan submitted with the application indicates one full bathroom and a half bath on the floor occupied by the resident bedrooms.

5. Each such facility must contain areas for dining and recreational purposes. When space is used for multi-purpose dining and recreational purposes, the area must include at least 30 square feet of floor area per resident bed. When space is provided exclusively for dining, the area must include at least 15 square feet of floor area per resident bed. When space is provided to be used exclusively for recreational purposes, the area shall total at least 15 square feet of floor area per resident bed and at least 50% of the required area must be in one room.

A floor plan submitted with the application indicates a dining/living room space that is approximately 418 square feet in area, thereby providing a minimum of 30 square feet of floor area per resident bed.

Should the group home at any point be used as a Correctional Placement Residence, it will be subjected to additional supplemental use regulations pursuant to Section 134-3.3.2B of the City Code.

4. **PlanDSM Creating Our Tomorrow:** The future land use designation for the property is "Low Density Residential." PlanDSM describes this designations as follows:

Low Density Residential: Areas developed with a mix of single family and two family residential units with up to 6 units per net acre.

The subject parcel is currently zoned "N5" District. The Zoning Ordinance describes the "N5" District as, "intended to preserve the scale and character of neighborhoods developed with a mix of bungalow and two-story houses, predominantly in the Victorian, Revival, and Arts and Crafts styles pursuant to House D building type in section 135-2.16 of this code."

The applicant is proposing to rezone the subject property to a Limited “NX2” District. The Zoning Ordinance describes the “NX2” District as “intended for a mix of single household houses with appropriately scaled and detailed multiple-household building types in the same neighborhood.” The “Limited” allows a conditional rezoning subject to the use of the property for Group Living and One-Household Residential.

Staff believes that the proposed rezoning would not have a negative impact on the surrounding neighborhood so long as the use is restricted to Group Living and One-Household Residential and is in accordance with the proposed conditions of approval. The Limited “NX2” District that restricts the allowed uses to Group Living and One-Household Residential only allows the rezoning to be found in conformance with the existing Low Density Residential designation and does not require an amendment to the Future Landuse Plan.

5. **Staff Rationale:** The 1,524 square foot, 1-story, one-household dwelling proposed to be used for a group home with up to 6 residents consists of four (4) bedrooms. There is a 2-car attached garage. The existing built area does not leave sufficient space for additional off-street parking spaces on the property. Chapter 135-6 requires 1 bicycle parking space per bed and 0.5 off-street vehicle spaces per resident. Based on the applicant’s proposal, 6 bicycle parking spaces and 3 off street vehicular parking spaces are required. Staff does not believe there is sufficient space on the subject property to accommodate these requirements and may cause congestion adjoining the property which may negatively impact the immediate neighbors. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the rezoning request to allow a group home subject to a maximum of four (4) residents. A four-resident group home would require 4 bicycle parking spaces and two (2) off-street parking spaces.
6. **Building and Fire Codes:** Any future construction or use of the site must comply with all applicable Building Code, International Fire Code with accessibility requirements of the ANSI A117.1 standard for accessibility, International Building Code and International Existing Building Code. These codes require accessible parking where parking is provided, an accessible route from accessible parking to an accessible entrance, accessible means of egress, and accessible routes throughout the building.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Bert Drost presented the staff report and recommendation.

Will Page asked what this home could be used for if the zoning was denied.

Bert Drost stated it could be used as a single-family home or a “family home”.

Leah Rudolphi inquired what the “family home” designation means.

Bert Drost explained as an example, a group of disabled people chose to live together.

Jason Van Essen noted that the definitions and qualifications for certain group living uses, such as a “family home” are set by State law and the City has little ability to regulate them. The applicant’s business model did not meet the definition of a “family home” as set by the State.

Katie Gillette asked if the applicant had agreed to the staff recommendation of only four residents.

Bert Drost stated that they were still requesting up to six residents.

Chris Draper confirmed that the property only included four bedrooms and the recommendation of four residents was based on the bedroom count and 80 square feet per person.

Bert Drost stated the recommendation was primarily based on parking as the requirements would be to provide 0.5 parking spaces per resident and this property can only offer two. It was also felt that given the limited yard space and home size, four residents would be a more appropriate number.

Matt Connolly asked if there was a basement in the home.

Bert Drost believed there was a basement but deferred to applicant.

CHAIRPERSON OPENED PUBLIC HEARING

Xolisa Nikani, 3119 Windrose Lane, Waukee, owner of Grace Hands Homes, explained that her program provides housing for elderly individuals and veterans who need stable, long-term independent living arrangements. She clarified that the home would not operate as a halfway house and would not provide medical services. Each potential resident would be screened prior to acceptance to ensure a good fit for the home. She noted that most residents do not own vehicles and emphasized that having six residents helps keep housing costs affordable. She also expressed her commitment to being proactive in addressing any concerns before they become issues within the neighborhood. She requests a minimum of five residents be approved to help keep this population housed.

Carolyn Jenison asked if she currently has other properties that she is operating.

Xolisa Nikani stated they are working on closing on another property.

Carolyn Jenison asked for confirmation that this was her first property.

Xolisa Nikani stated that this is their first project that they have residents in.

Carolyn Jenison asked what the average monthly rent would be for each resident living in the home.

Xolisa Nikani stated it started at \$700/month and could go from there depending. They have been trying to work with Polk County Community Services and mentioned other organizations that have closed due to funding. Mostly it is funded by individual's Social Security or Disability income.

Carolyn Jenison questioned the screening criteria for residents, noting that mental health conditions were listed as a disqualifying factor, yet it appeared the program would still accept individuals experiencing mental illness. She asked for clarification on how those determinations would be made.

Xolisa Nikani stated they only accept people with Depression Level 1 & 2. Individuals with mental health conditions that are not able to live independently, are not allowed, but can be referred to other options better suited to care for their mental illness needs.

Rick Trower asked whether this was the first residential project the applicant had undertaken or if she had previous experience operating similar homes.

Xolisa Nikani stated she had opened a group home before on 9th Street, but it was closed down by the City. The home closing taught them the lessons they needed to understand how to do things the correct way and get things in order. This is what led her to request the zoning change and do things right.

Rick Trower asked if she knew she was violating the zoning ordinance when she started the group home to allow six unrelated people to live in the same home.

Xolisa Nikani stated she did not know. She noted that she is a passionate person and in her experience as a hospice nurse, she noticed how people in shelters were unable to get health or hospice services because they did not have an address. This was the group of people she was attempting to help. She is now trying to work closely with the City to do things correctly in the future to continue to help this population.

Rick Trower inquired if this business was a non-profit or for-profit business.

Xolisa Nikani stated it is a for-profit business.

Johnny Alcivar asked how they planned to house 5-6 individuals when there were only four bedrooms.

Xolisa Nikani stated that two of the bedrooms were big enough to accommodate two people. She was open to others coming to view the space, with adequate notice, as she wants to be transparent as possible.

Johnny Alcivar asked for confirmation that she did not actually own the home.

Xolisa Nikani stated they were working in partnership with the landlord, and he had given them the house to use with the understanding that they are responsible for anything that would happen in the home. She also noted the challenges getting owners to rent homes for this kind of living arrangement. She hopes to be able to buy homes that are properly zoned in the future.

Johnny Alcivar asked if having 5-6 residents affected the amounts of the rent being charged or the profit margins.

Xolisa Nikani stated it was the amount of rent being charged. She would be happy to provide financial information in the future that will show there is not much profit in this business.

Johnny Alcivar explained that the Plan and Zoning Commission is only a recommending body. The rezoning will be decided by the City Council.

Will Page asked whether a professional staff member would reside in the home with the residents. While he expressed admiration for the intent of the project, he voiced concern that with that many individuals living together, additional on-site assistance might be necessary.

Xolisa Nikani stated that the house lead does not provide care. She noted that some of the members in the home have case workers, advocates, or Iowa Home Healthcare that come to assist if they have extra needs. The house lead role is mostly to ensure that house rules are being followed.

Carolyn Jenison asked about her first project, the home on 9th Street, and inquired about what was going on with that property.

Xolisa Nikani stated that the home had been shut down by a City of Des Moines inspector. She learned from this experience what she needed to do in the future to do things right. She previously didn't understand that she could seek a rezoning of the property.

Carolyn Jenison asked if the owner of 9th Street had given them the home.

Xolisa Nikani stated that they had been given the home to rent.

Matt Connolly asked if Kent Lehs was the landlord of both this property and the first one. Also, asked if there were staff living at the current property.

Xolisa Nikani stated that Kent Lehs did not own the first home and they do not have staff at the current location as all residents are able to live independently.

Matt Connolly asked if the reason she was coming to the Commission was due to an enforcement by City Inspection.

Xolisa Nikani confirmed that the property was under enforcement.

Brian Jones, 1118 Garden Avenue, spoke in opposition to the proposed group home. He questioned the floor layout that had been provided and noted he had previously been inside the home. In his opinion, the house could not comfortably accommodate six residents, adding that the back bedroom was essentially a three-season room. He also raised concerns about parking, explaining that vehicles often pull up near the garage and block the sidewalk because the driveway is too short to fully accommodate a car. He further stated that there have been repeated police and ambulance calls to the property and described it as an ongoing source of concern in the neighborhood.

Julie Traver, 1112 Garden Avenue, spoke in opposition to the proposed group home. She cited concerns about the small size of the house, limited yard space, and the plan to house six unrelated, transient residents without professional staff present. While acknowledging the positive intent of the program, she stated she believed the arrangement could lead to problems. Traver also referenced past disturbances at the property, including garbage accumulation and multiple police and ambulance calls that she said have blocked the narrow street. She further expressed concern that the home does not provide adequate space for group living, noting the lack of common areas and that residents would likely need to share bedrooms.

Loretta Stubbs, 1125 Garden Avenue, spoke in opposition to the proposed group home, noting that she has lived in the neighborhood since 1976. She referenced her previous experience working at Broadlawns and expressed concerns about how quickly situations involving individuals with mental health challenges can escalate. Stubbs stated that the owner's comment that staff could arrive within 20 minutes did not seem adequate. She expressed the opinion that the project had not been fully thought through and that placing so many residents in such a small home would not be appropriate.

Aaron Shineflew, 1135 Garden Avenue, spoke in opposition to the proposed group home. He stated that he believed the house was too small to accommodate six residents and noted the lack of yard space and limited parking. He also expressed concerns about the absence of on-site staff and questioned how situations would be managed if problems escalated quickly. Additionally, he raised concerns about the potential impact the project could have on property values in the surrounding neighborhood.

Rebuttal

Xolisa Nikani acknowledged the neighbors' concerns, reiterating that the four women currently living in the home do not have serious mental health conditions, noting that some experience depression. She emphasized that experiencing homelessness does not necessarily mean an individual has a history of drug use or criminal behavior. Nikani

explained that residents are screened prior to acceptance, and individuals with more serious needs are referred to other services. She also noted that residents have the right to call an ambulance if they require medical assistance. Nikani concluded by offering her contact information to neighbors and encouraged them to reach out to her directly if any concerns arise.

CHAIRPERSON CLOSED PUBLIC HEARING

COMMISSION ACTION

Carolyn Jenison referenced her previous experience with Grace Hands Home in her neighborhood and stated she would not support the request or the staff recommendation.

Will Page stated that he shared the concern about residents living in the home without an on-site staff member managing the property. While he acknowledged the need for this type of housing, he expressed the opinion that the property was not appropriately zoned for this type of group living arrangement and that he would not support the request.

Todd Garner asked the applicant if the property was financially viable with only four residents.

Xolisa Nikani stated no.

Laura Kessle inquired if having the four women living there now, if it was financially working.

Xolisa Nakani stated she was having to offset some of the expenses herself to be sure these women still had a home.

Chris Draper acknowledged the concerns raised by neighbors but stated that evidence shows group homes with appropriate restrictions can provide a net benefit to both the community and individuals in need of housing. He noted that it is not always realistic to expect providers to obtain larger properties when affordability is a barrier to offering these services. Draper shared that in his own neighborhood, a group home with five residents created fewer disturbances than another nearby home with only two occupants who frequently had domestic issues. He also commented that some concerns about mental health had been mischaracterized during the discussion. Draper concluded by stating he would support allowing the use, but with a limit of up to five residents.

Matt Connolly expressed support for the need for transitional housing in the community, noting that individuals with mental illness are not necessarily criminals. He suggested that the staff recommendation limiting the home to four residents was reasonable and

encouraged the applicant to consider renegotiating the lease in order to make the project financially viable under that limit.

Rick Trower referenced the applicant's statement that the group home would not be financially viable with only four residents. He stated that allowing more residents in the home was also not acceptable, and therefore he would recommend denial of the request.

Johnny Alcivar had concerns about shared bedroom space and did not feel that any more than four residents would be appropriate. He sees an uphill battle getting past City Council and then the Zoning Board of Adjustment. He would be inclined to support the staff recommendation of four residents.

Todd Garner stated that due to the long-term financial constraints of only having four residents, he does not find it appropriate to change the zoning and recommends denial of the request.

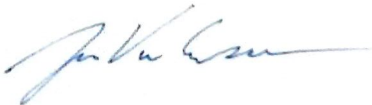
Todd Garner made a motion for:

Part A) The requested rezoning is in conformance with PlanDSM: Creating Our Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan.

Part B) Denial of the request to rezone the subject property from "N5" Neighborhood District to Limited "NX2" Neighborhood Mix District.

THE VOTE: 6-5-1 (Johnny Alcivar, Chris Draper, Matt Connolly, Laura Kessle and Leah Rudolphi opposed. Claton Elwell passed)

Respectfully submitted,

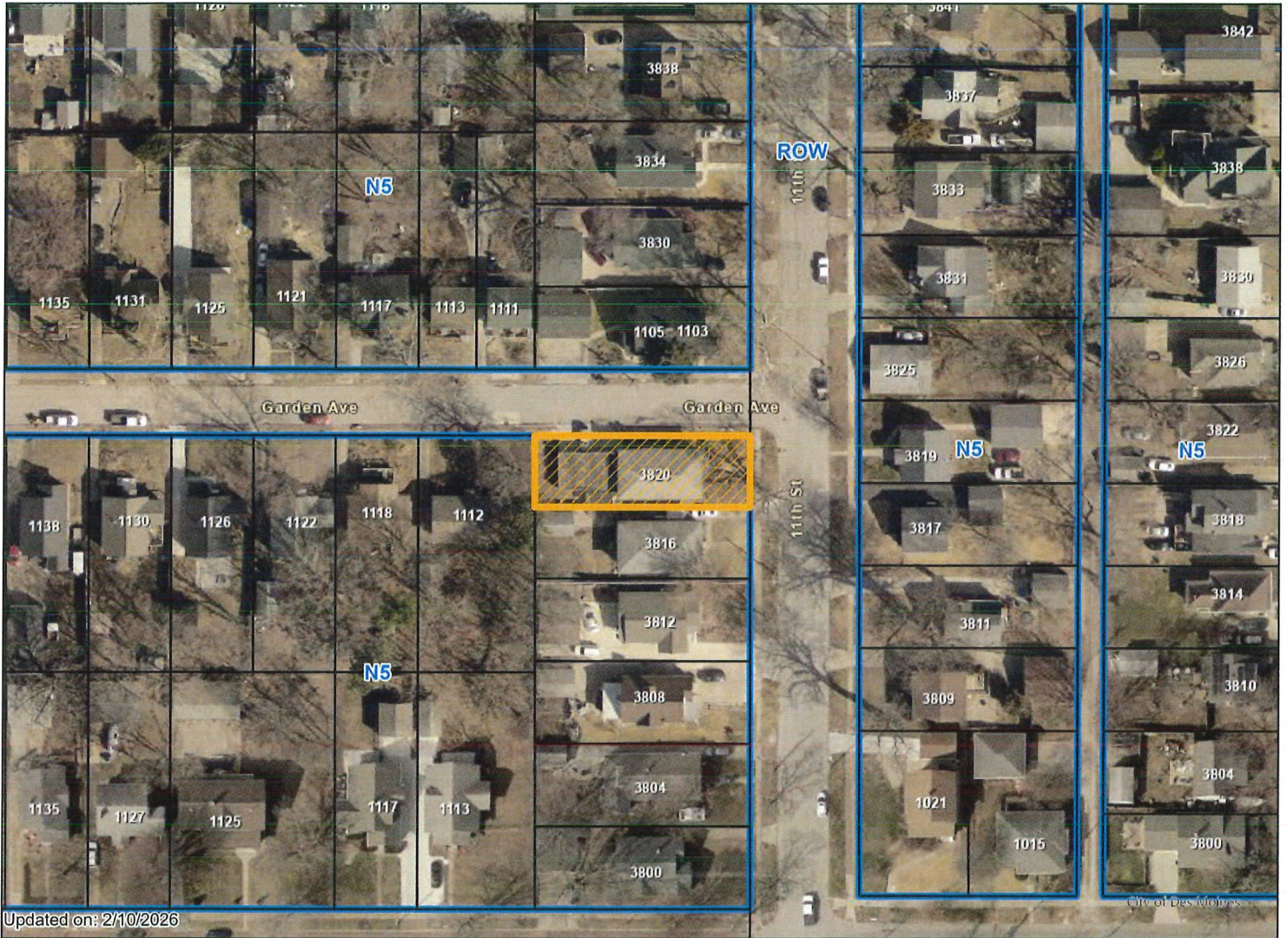


Jason Van Essen, AICP
Planning & Urban Design Administrator

JMV:mrw

Kent Lehs, 3820 11th Street

ZONG-2026-000003



Updated on: 2/10/2026

Project Description: Grace Hands Homes Residential Rezoning

Applicant: Grace Hands Homes

Request: Rezoning from N5 to NX2 Proposed Use: Residential Independent Shared Living (Single Housekeeping Unit)

Description:

Grace Hands Homes is a professional housing provider requesting a rezoning of the subject property from N5 to NX2. This application is a proactive step to align the property's use with the City of Des Moines' modern residential standards for shared-living environments. The home serves as a permanent, non-transient residence for up to six (6) independent adults who live and function together as a Single Housekeeping Unit.

Operational Strategy & Management:

Grace Hands Homes is committed to professional oversight and neighborhood harmony. Our model includes:

- Long-Term Residential Stability: While residency is structured as a month-to-month arrangement to ensure safety and strict adherence to house rules, the home is intended for indefinite, long-term residency. Residents consider this their primary, permanent home and remain as long as they choose, provided they uphold the community standards of the household.
- On-Site Oversight: The home utilizes a "Lead Resident" model. This individual is a full-time resident of the home who oversees daily household operations, manages property maintenance, and ensures all members follow our "Good Neighbor Policy" to maintain a quiet, respectful atmosphere.
- Resident Independence & Safety: All residents are ambulatory, independent adults. The residence operates as a standard R-3 residential occupancy; all occupants are capable of self-preservation and unassisted emergency evacuation, requiring no specialized fire suppression systems beyond standard residential smoke and carbon monoxide detection.
- Outsourced Support: Grace Hands Homes is a housing provider only. No medical, clinical, or assisted-living services are provided on-site by the business. Any support services required by residents are sourced independently through third-party providers (such as the VA or home health agencies), exactly as any other private resident in an NX2 neighborhood would do.
- Compliance & Neighborhood Compatibility: This rezoning to NX2 will allow for the appropriate residential density for six unrelated adults while preserving the architectural form and quiet character of a single-family dwelling within the community.

Founder's Profile: Grace Hands Homes

Our Vision

At Grace Hands Homes, we believe that housing is more than a roof; it is a restoration of dignity. We specialize in providing safe, stable residential environments for older adults (ages 50+) who have been displaced by life's unpredictable circumstances.

The Background of our Founder

Our foundation is built on over two decades of dedicated service in the healthcare and eldercare sectors.

- **25+ Years of Caregiving:** Since 2000, I have been on the front lines of older adults and elderly care, ensuring the safety and well-being of our most vulnerable population.
- **Hospice Specialization:** For the past 5 years, I have focused on hospice care, a role that requires the highest level of empathy, regulatory compliance, and attention to detail.

Our "Why"

We serve those to whom "life happened." Whether it was a late-life divorce, the loss of a spouse, or a sudden financial shift, many of our residents are good people who found themselves without a home. We provide a bridge back to stability for:

- **Seniors in Transition:** Adults 50+ looking for a safe, structured community.
- **Returning Citizens:** Older individuals re-entering society who require a drug-free, supportive environment to successfully rebuild their lives.

Our Standards

We operate with a "Zero-Compromise" safety policy. By transitioning properties from N5 to NX2 compliance, we ensure that our residents aren't just housed, but are living in a home that meets the rigorous safety standards they deserve.



Grace Hands Homes
FOR US, ITS PURPOSE

disqualifying factors

- active criminal convictions: involving extreme violence, sexual offenses, or current significant threats to others.

- History of severe behavioral issues: that cannot be managed within independent shared living home setting, including ongoing aggression or disruptive behavior.

- Unstable mental health conditions: that require intensive, specialized Care not available in a independent shared living home.

- Active substance abuse: that cannot be managed through Independent Living home and treatment plan.

- Significant medical needs: that require extensive, specialized Care beyond the capabilities of independent shared living home.

- Inability to contribute to daily living activities: due to physical or cognitive limitations without significant support.

 515-528-1027
 515-655-8531
 www.gracehandsvh.com
 Info@gracehandsvh.com





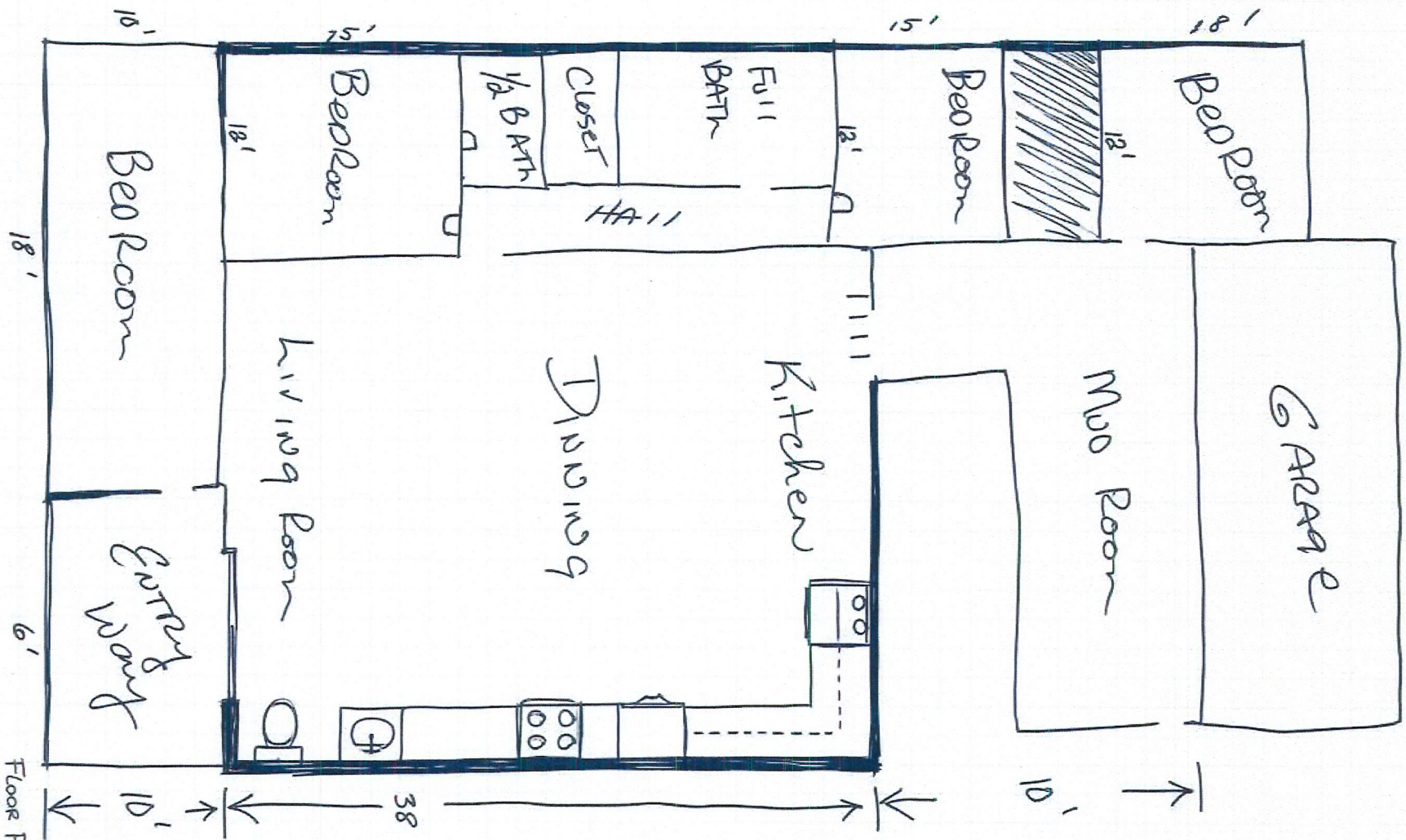












Floor Plan
Drawn by: [Your Name]
Date: [Current Date]
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"

From: [Grace Hands Homes](#)
To: [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)
Subject: Neighborhood Meeting Summary – Grace Hands Homes Residential Shared Living Home
Date: Wednesday, March 4, 2026 8:48:58 PM
Attachments: [1000052107.png](#)

EXTERNAL EMAIL - This email was sent by a person from outside your organization. Exercise caution when clicking links, opening attachments or taking further action, before validating its authenticity.

Hi Sreyoshi

I am writing to provide a summary of the neighborhood meeting held this evening regarding the proposed Grace Hands Homes Residential Shared Living Home.

Two neighbors attended the meeting. A sign-in sheet and photos of the meeting room are attached for documentation purposes.

I provided an overview of the proposed use, including occupancy, resident profile (older adults and veterans on fixed incomes), oversight structure, and access to public transportation.

The neighbors voiced concerns primarily related to:

- Parking
- Exterior property maintenance
- Stability and long-term occupancy

I addressed the parking concern directly. The residents we serve are on fixed incomes, and the majority do not own vehicles. Currently, only one individual associated with our program has a vehicle. As a result, we do not anticipate traffic or parking congestion at the property.

I also emphasized our commitment to maintaining the exterior of the home to neighborhood standards and ensuring ongoing accountability for property upkeep.

There were questions regarding turnover and the property's history. I shared that our goal is long-term, stable housing. We aim to provide permanent residency for individuals who have experienced prolonged housing instability, not short-term or high-turnover placements.

Additional questions were asked regarding resident screening. I explained that referrals are carefully reviewed to ensure they are an appropriate fit for the home. If a situation presents needs beyond what we are equipped to safely manage, we decline the referral in order to maintain a peaceful living environment for both residents and the surrounding neighborhood.

I provided my direct phone number to those in attendance and shared that I am approximately 20–25 minutes from the property and able to respond promptly if needed.

The discussion remained respectful and constructive. Please let me know if any additional information is needed prior to the Council meeting.

Thank you,

Xolisa (Lisa) Nikani
Founder/Director
Grace Hands Homes
Residential Independent Shared Living
xolisa@gracehandsvh.com
515-528-1027
515-864-0493
6701 CORPORATE DR # 4296
Johnston, IA 50131
www.gracehandsvh.com

FOR US, IT'S PURPOSE.



Reservation reminder for NS-5232 Grace Hands Homes



Des Moines Public Library

To You

Mar 1



Hello Xolisa Nikani,

Each room has tables and chairs available for use, which may be manipulated to suit your needs. At the end of the meeting, make sure all tables and chairs are free of any markings prior to returning to the room's original configuration. No cleaning supplies are provided.

Your request also includes the following:

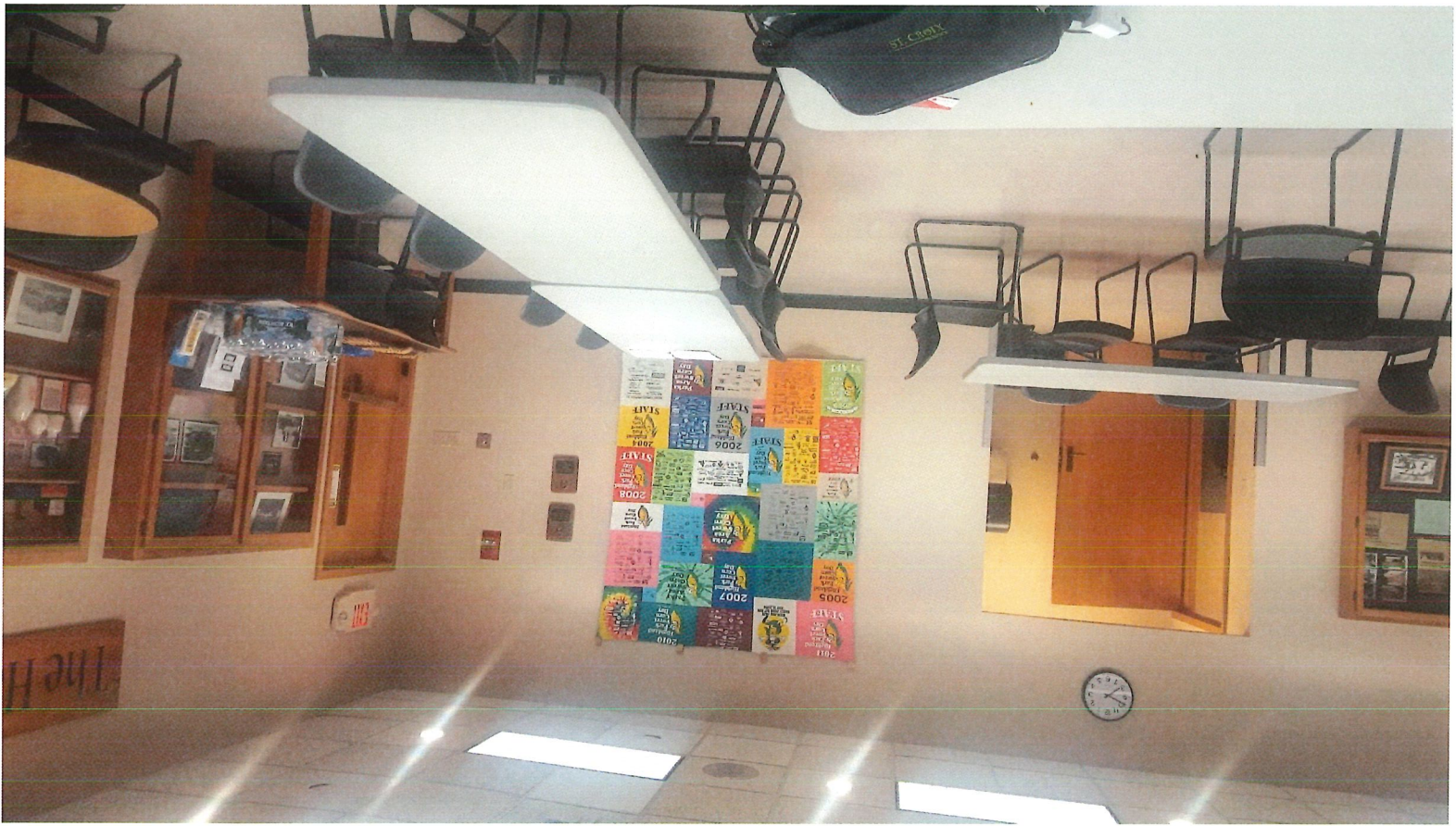
- Use of Trash Brute (must select when serving food).

Thank you,
Des Moines Public Library

This message was sent because you reserved a room at Des Moines Public Library.

← Reply







John A. Brown

Brian Jones

• **Opening**

"Thank you all for coming tonight. I know change in a neighborhood can raise questions and concerns, and I truly appreciate the opportunity to explain what I'm proposing and to listen."
Pause.

• **Explain Clearly What It Is (and What It Is Not)**

"The proposal is to convert the existing single-family home into a small group living home for up to six residents. These would be individuals over the age of 50 who are currently displaced and living on fixed incomes such as SSI or SSDI."

Very important: Say that clearly, Slowly.

"This is not a correctional facility. It is not a halfway house. It is not a treatment center. It is simply shared housing for older adults who cannot afford market-rate housing."

• **Address Parking Immediately (Before They Do)**

"One of the concerns raised has been parking. I want to address that directly. The residents we serve are extremely low-income and typically do not own vehicles. Realistically, we expect zero to possibly one vehicle at the property at any time. The home also has a two-car garage and access to transit along Euclid."

This neutralizes fear.

• **Oversight & Accountability**

"There will be structure. There will be house rules. There will be a lead resident responsible for oversight, and I will remain actively involved in management and maintenance. If any issues arise, I will be accountable."
Neighbors care about accountability more than anything.

• **Tone Shift to Shared Values**

"I'm not trying to change the character of the neighborhood. I'm trying to help stabilize vulnerable older adults so they aren't sleeping in cars or moving from couch to couch."

Say "vulnerable older adults."

• **Invite Questions (But Stay Controlled)**

"I'm happy to answer questions."

If someone gets emotional:

Stay calm.

Do not argue.

Do not debate.

Say: "I understand that concern."

The calmer you are, the more reasonable you look.

Grace Hands Shared Living Home Highland Park / Oak Park Neighborhood

About the Home

- Single-family home with up to 6 residents.
- Residents are 50+ adults on fixed incomes (SSI/SSDI).
- Independent living: Residents manage their own day-to-day activities.
- A lead resident lives in the home to oversee house rules.
- Grace Hands Management oversees the property and responds to any concerns.

Key Facts

- Parking & Traffic: Majority Residents do not own cars, so parking and traffic impact is minimal.
- Transit Access: The home is within ¼ mile of DART bus service along Euclid Avenue.
- Shared Spaces: Residents share living areas, dining, and bathrooms.
- Safety & Oversight: House rules are enforced, and management is responsible for property maintenance.

Purpose: To provide stable housing for older adults who have experienced displacement and are unable to afford market-rate housing, while maintaining the character of the neighborhood.

Questions & Feedback

- We welcome your questions and input.
- Contact: Lisa
- Email: xolisa@gracehandsvh.com
- Phone: 515-528-1027

"Our goal is to support vulnerable neighbors while keeping the neighborhood safe, stable, and friendly."

Item: ZONG-2026-000003

Date: 2-2-26

Please mark one of the following:

- I support the request
- I am undecided
- I oppose the request

Staff Use Only
RECEIVED
 DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
 MAR 4 2026

Titleholder Signature: Kristine King

Name/Business: Kristine King

Impacted Address: 1021 Douglas Ave

Comments: I've noticed an increase in police presence on 11th St since the property became a group residence.
I also had an issue with unknown males loitering around my property when they were visiting a person in the residence on several incidences.

Item: ZONG-2026-000003

Date: 2-25-24

Please mark one of the following:

- I support the request
- I am undecided
- I oppose the request



Titleholder Signature: Debbie K NICHOLSON

Name/Business: Debbie K Nicholson

Impacted Address: 3826 10th STREET

Comments: _____

Item: ZONG-2026-000003 Date: 2/26/2026

Please mark one of the following:

- I support the request
- I am undecided
- I oppose the request

Staff Use Only
RECEIVED
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
MAR 3 2026

Titleholder Signature: Juliel Franer

Name/Business: _____

Impacted Address: 1112 Garden Ave

Comments: This will make for an even more transient, unstable population. Parking issues potential conflict issues, property not suitable for the stated use. As a rental property it has already been a less than ideal "neighbor". I say NO!

Item: ZONG-2026-000003 Date: 2-26-26

Please mark one of the following:

- I support the request
- I am undecided
- I oppose the request

Staff Use Only
RECEIVED
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
MAR 3 2026

Titleholder Signature: Alan E. Gray

Name/Business: ALAN E. GRAY

Impacted Address: 3817TH ST.

Comments: I MOVED HERE BECAUSE IT WAS A NICE QUIET NEIGHBORHOOD, IF THE ZONE CHANGES THE NICE QUIET NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGES, THIS NEIGHBORHOOD WASN'T DESIGNED FOR GROUP HOMES AND SHOULD BE KEPT THAT WAY FOR THE PEOPLE THAT LIVE HERE, NOT BE CHANGED FOR THE PEOPLE WHO DON'T LIVE HERE.

Item: ZONG-2026-000003

Date: 2-26-26

Please mark one of the following:

- I support the request
- I am undecided
- I oppose the request

Staff Use Only
RECEIVED
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
MAR 3 2026

Titleholder Signature: 

Name/Business: _____

Impacted Address: _____

Comments: _____

ZONG-2026-000003

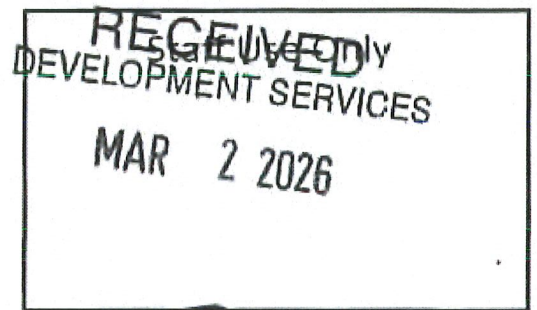
Item:

Date:

2-29-2026

Please mark one of the following:

- I support the request
- I am undecided
- I oppose the request



Titleholder Signature:

Brian D Jones

Name/Business:

BRIAN D JONES

Impacted Address:

1118 Garden Ave DSM

Comments:

House as a rental has always
 been causing problems. LOUD, always
 coming and going, traffic
 PARKING on Sidewalks, have to walk in
 street. Never kept up on yard/snow removal

Item: ZONG-2026-000003

Date: 2-26-2026

Please mark one of the following:

- I support the request
- I am undecided
- I oppose the request

RECEIVED
STAFF SERVICES
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES ONLY
MAR 2 2026

Titleholder Signature: Rodney M. Newcomb

Name/Business: Rodney M. Newcomb

Impacted Address: 3819 11th St, Des Moines, Ia 50313

Comments: On my security cameras, I have observed residents of 3820 11th St going into neighbors yards late at night - stealing construction materials and observing other properties.

Item: ZONG-2026-000003

Date: 2-26-26

Please mark one of the following:

- I support the request
- I am undecided
- I oppose the request



Titleholder Signature: David Barzen

Name/Business: DAVID BARZEN

Impacted Address: 3830 11th Street

Comments: This house has already been a public nuisance with people hanging out day and night with pot smoke billowing into the neighborhood from the driveway. Not sure how allowing it to be used for group living will make it better.

Item: ZONG-2026-000003

Date: 022626

Please mark one of the following:

I support the request *with limits*

I am undecided

I oppose the request

Staff Use Only
RECEIVED
DEVELOPMENT SER.

MAR 2 2026

Titleholder Signature: Karen A. Peterson

Name/Business: Karen A. Peterson

Impacted Address: 1118 Seneca Ave

Comments: My concerns: I have spoken with Lisa
who rents said property at 3820 11th St. I do
not believe she should be charging the rents to
her clients so high. 2 people sharing 1 bedroom
up to 6 or more people sharing the house. \$800
And Lisa is not there much. My info is based

on a past client of hers

From: [Grace Hands Homes](#)
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: Follow-Up Regarding Grace Hands Home Occupancy
Date: Monday, March 9, 2026 8:01:03 AM

EXTERNAL EMAIL - This email was sent by a person from outside your organization. Exercise caution when clicking links, opening attachments or taking further action, before validating its authenticity.

Hello,

Thank you again for the time and consideration the City Council and staff gave to the Grace Hands Homes residence during the recent meeting.

During the discussion, council members asked whether it would be possible for the home to operate with four residents rather than the larger number that had originally been requested. After taking time to review our options and make the necessary arrangements, we would like to confirm that we are willing to accept and move forward with the four-resident occupancy as approved.

Our primary goal is to maintain a stable and safe home for the individuals currently living there, and we appreciate the city's willingness to allow the residence to continue operating within that limit.

As we move forward, we would like to request clarification on one related matter. In order to ensure appropriate support and supervision within the home, we are exploring the possibility of having a live-in caregiver who would provide 24-hour supervision for the four residents. This individual would serve in a staff capacity rather than as an additional resident.

If needed, we would appreciate the opportunity to return to the City Council to discuss this arrangement or receive guidance from staff on whether a live-in caregiver would be permissible under the current approval.

Thank you again for your time and assistance. Please let us know the best next steps.

Sincerely,
Grace Hands Homes

Xolisa (Lisa) Nikani
Founder/Director
Grace Hands Homes
Residential Independent Shared Living
xolisa@gracehandsvh.com
515-528-1027
515-864-0493
6701 CORPORATE DR # 4296

