

# Kingdom Boundaries reps withdraw rezoning for halfway house in All Saints

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Leaders of a Sioux Falls-based prison aftercare organization have withdrawn an effort to begin operating a halfway house in the All Saints neighborhood following months of pushback to which the organization's director said he doesn't believe has as much to do with zoning regulations as residents have claimed.

The rezoning, which had been sought by Kingdom Boundaries Prison Aftercare, would have transformed two apartment buildings into their fourth halfway house in the city, in addition to three adjacent properties currently on South Summit Avenue.

Some neighbors, though, had said they were concerned about the potential effects of the rezoning itself. Under city code, halfway houses are zoned in the same way as "larger institutional buildings," something neighbors said gave them concerns that other non-residential uses could begin moving into All Saints.



But Ministry Director Jeff Haverhals said Tuesday night he believed the arguments were more about the people they hoped to house, not the actual usage of the land.

"This whole thing has been about sex offenders," he said, shortly after reading several Bible verses regarding the importance of forgiveness of sins.

Steve Harrison, who runs public relations for Kingdom Boundaries, said while he didn't have exact numbers, more than half of the people served by the organization would be classified as sex offenders.

Former police officer Mitch Miller, also a board member of Kingdom Boundaries, told the council during public input, sex offenders had significantly lower recidivism rates when compared with all former inmates.

The topic had come up occasionally. Resident George Hamilton called the building a "Trojan horse trying to slip in" and described it as a "40-bed all-male sex offender living facility" at the council's July 18 meeting, but most residents maintained their reticence was strictly based on zoning.



Harrison said despite their attempts at answering questions and providing statistics, they were "just not met with any kind of welcome whatsoever," and described the withdrawal as "kind of a statement of peace."

Haverhals has admitted purchasing the buildings was a snap decision, and one he wishes he could have made with more consultation of the city, but has stated their efforts were an attempt to be able to fully meet their vision of helping more people, not an attempt to sneak the project by the neighborhood.

Harrison said Kingdom Boundaries was "exploring all the opportunities available to us" as the owners of the buildings, including potentially using them as housing for former inmates without providing the services of a halfway house.

He said the organization will continue to look toward building a facility at 2901 West Maple St. in northwestern Sioux Falls, where they expect to be able to house 56 people along with space for offices and a chapel.