

Board of Zoning Adjustment

Public Comments



HOUSING AUTHORITY

OF THE COUNTY OF KERN

Creating brighter futures...one home, one family at a time

Date: 08/11/2020

RE: Kern Project Roomkey Conditional Use Permit Hearing

Dear Board Members,

I regret that I am unable to attend today's hearing in person, and want to thank City staff for sharing this letter with you. If approved, Kern Project Roomkey will be another resource to help our community fight COVID-19. We must come together now as to find ways to combat this pandemic and support efforts to control its spread. This crisis has highlighted that those involved in upholding public health – from health care providers to local government agencies – and homeless service providers are locked together in a shared fate. We must now create a vision, and agenda for addressing homelessness together.

There are currently 226 unsheltered homeless people in the high-risk category for poor health outcomes, up to and including death, if they contract COVID-19. These 226 Bakersfield residents are over the age of 65, have underlying health conditions, or a combination of both. We know them by name, we know their stories, and we know the urgency in which we must find shelter for them. Homelessness has always been a matter of life and death for the people experiencing it, and COVID-19 has underscored that point.

I ask that you approve the proposed Kern Project Roomkey Conditional Use Permit. By approving this application, you are strengthening Bakersfield's fight against COVID-19, and potentially saving the lives of 20 of the 226 people who desperately need to find a safe location to shelter in place. This program is well thought out, offering intensive oversight and strong exit strategies. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Heather Kimmel

Heather Kimmel

Assistant Executive Director, Housing Authority of the County of Kern

