

November 6, 2018

Pat Zenner  
Department of Planning & Zoning  
City of Columbia  
Columbia, Missouri

Dear Mr. Zenner,

I am writing on behalf of the CMCA Missouri Women's Business Center to address the zoning code for religious organizations' structures located in R-1 zoning. Rock Bridge Christian Church is requesting that their religious structure be permitted to house a commercial kitchen for the purpose of supporting the mission of job training, and we support that.

Rock Bridge Christian Church has a long history of allowing organizations to use their space as a part of their mission. In an effort to maximize building use and to assist community members in need, they began exploring ways to make use of their kitchen space by allowing a member of their church who is unemployed use their kitchen for a catering business. This member is also one of my clients participating in one on one business coaching and taking a LaunchU, business planning course.

I often have clients who want to eventually open a restaurant, but they need to start small first by doing catering, or a food truck. I also have clients who have a food product they need to prepare and package in a commercial kitchen. Finding an affordable commercially certified kitchen space for a small business to work out of is difficult in Columbia.

The lack of commercial kitchen availability is a hinderance to those in the community trying to improve their employment situation. Additionally, the current R-1 zoning code limits religious organizations in the ways they can serve the community.

Ideally, Rock Bridge Christian Church would like to offer their kitchen as a quasi-commercial venture for those unemployed or looking to start a catering or meal

preparation business. We believe this effort would support the City of Columbia's Strategic Priority outcomes of reducing the wage gap between white and minority populations as well as reducing the skills gap.

Sincerely,

Sherry Major  
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