

RISE, Ltd.

**106 Rainbow Dr
Elkader, IA 52043
(563) 245-1868**

June 2, 2020

Subject: Request for Variance

RISE, Ltd. is requesting a variance for the lots at 219 and 223 E. Charles St.

We are currently working towards building a new home to replace our current group home located at 303 N. Frederick Ave. This would be the home to five of our clients who are cared for by one to two staff on site at any given time. In total we currently employ 13 residential staff in Oelwein and are working to add another service area and would anticipate the addition of up to 6 additional staff at that site. Those that live in the home have intellectual and physical disabilities. These lots are attractive for this project in that they are close to the library and other downtown businesses, thus allowing those living in the home to have walking access to the downtown businesses and services.

We initiated the processes of replacing our current group home at 303 N. Frederick Ave because the home is not handicapped accessible. It is an older two story home. While a ramp has been added to the back of the home it is not ideal and a bit challenging to use. The interior of the home has a very small bathroom on the main level and thus is not safe for someone with a walker or arm crutches to use, and is impossible for someone who is wheelchair bound to use. There is only one large bedroom on the main level. The other bedrooms are on the 2nd level which involves stairs that are narrow and steep, again not ideal, if not impossible to navigate for someone with a physical disability. In addition the living area on the first floor does not have walkways that are easy to navigate for someone who uses a walker, arm crutches, or a wheelchair. Also the other two bathrooms upstairs are small and again difficult to use for our clients with disabilities.

These accessibility issues limit our current residents, as well as those who we may consider in the future. Anyone that has a physical limitation is almost always impossible to consider for services in that home, and could also force those currently living in the home to have to move out should they become dependent on a wheelchair for mobility. In time, this could limit our ability to keep this home full and open. Not only does this affect those living in these homes but it could eliminate 5-6 job opportunities.

The new home construction would involve creating a space that is a flush entry into the home, a one level home that is slab on grade with an above ground storm shelter, and fully handicap accessible space. This would be impossible to achieve in our group home located at the 303 N. Frederick home. I have included an initial blueprint that we created with Jesse Dinsdale and his students enrolled in one of his design classes. While this is not the blueprint for the group home we would build at this location, it will give you a good idea of what we are trying to achieve. Our intentions are to work with a local Architect to create a new blueprint once we have removed the zoning barrier we are currently working with you on. I also would like to point out that while RISE, Ltd. has no intentions of this home being a short term venture, should circumstances outside of our control dictate otherwise, the home could easily be converted into a very attractive family home.

This construction will be a collaboration from the Alternative Living Corp Board of Directors and RISE, Ltd. RISE, Ltd. purchased Alternative Living Corp on 9/1/18, and the ALC Board has committed some of their

remaining funds to this project. RISE, Ltd. will be committing their own cash reserves to this project. I share this because I feel it is important that this will be a cash project, and will not involve grants or loans. RISE, Ltd is committed to standing on it's own with the support of the Alternative Living Board to fund this project and make a business presence in the Oelwein area.

The home at 303 N. Frederick once vacated will be listed for sale, thus creating more housing. The house is a 7 bedroom home with 3 bathrooms. The home is in good condition and has some very beautiful characteristics. It would make a great home for a family due to its size.

Finally, I would also like to share a bit of RISE, Ltd's history:

RISE Ltd. is a private, nonprofit, 501c3 Corporation. It receives revenue through the receipt of donations, grants, and fees for services.

RISE Ltd. is governed by an at-large voluntary elected Board of Directors who oversee the operations.

RISE, Ltd. began in 1976 by parents of adults with disabilities. It started in the basement of Scenic Acres, formerly the Clayton County Care Facility, as an activity program. RISE, Ltd. formally incorporated in May 1980. In June 1981 RISE, Ltd. became licensed as a Work Activity Center and offered its first residential services in November 1982.

RISE, Ltd. purchased Alternative Living Corporation on September 1, 2018 which began its expansion of its business into the Oelwein area.

RISE, Ltd.'s primary purpose is to provide an array of services to people with disabilities. The service that RISE, Ltd. provides is provided with the intent of being the least restrictive and integrated as we can make available at any given time. RISE, Ltd. strives to change its services to reflect each individual's respective needs.

We are a private non-profit organization whose purpose is to provide services to adults who are disabled, primarily persons with intellectual disability (mental retardation), mental illness, and other developmental disabilities.

RISE, Ltd. offers a variety of services including residential supports and supervision and day habilitation services.

Today RISE, Ltd. is certified to provide the following services:

- *Hourly and Daily Supported Community Living (SCL)-MR Waiver*
- *Consumer Directed Attendant Care (CDAC)-MR Waiver*
- *Home & Vehicle Modification-MR Waiver*
- *Respite-MR Waiver*
- *Day Habilitation-MR Waiver*
- *Transportation-MR Waiver*
- *Home Based Habilitation*
- *Supported Community Living (SCL)-Chapter 24*
- *Elderly Waiver*

What this means is that we provide services that allow individuals to live in the least restrictive/most independent setting. We want to provide a space that gives them a home environment that they can take

ownership and pride in. It is our hope that those around us do not even know we exist because we blend into the neighborhood just as any homeowner/family would. I understand that the last time we asked for variance there were concerns that we would be disruptive to the neighborhood, however I wonder if we are even noticed in our current locations. I know I personally have mentioned to many individuals that I have met and done business with in Oelwein in the last nearly two years that RISE, Ltd. purchases Alternative Living Corp and the majority of the time they did not know either entity. In my opinion that is a testament to how well our services go unnoticed.

If you should have any further questions or need any further clarification please do not hesitate to contact me by email (jpensel@riseltd.net) or by phone 563-245-1868, ext. 101.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and support of our mission.

Sincerely,

Jessica A. Pensel

Jessica A Pensel
Executive Director
RISE, Ltd.