



# Family Crisis Services

*Working to end domestic abuse in Cumberland and Sagadahoc Counties*  
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January 21, 2016

City of Portland  
Planning & Urban Development Department  
Attn: Tuck O'Brien, Planning Division Director  
389 Congress Street  
Portland, ME 04101

Re: 14 Orchard Street – 061-E-006 – Current use of property

Dear Mr. O'Brien

As you are aware, Family Crisis Services operates an emergency shelter for families fleeing domestic violence at the address named in the above reference. In April of this year, a letter was sent to the City's Planning & Urban Development Director from Mr. Ward Graffam, Attorney at Law, suggesting that the property had been "wrongfully designated" and that the City "issue an immediate cease & desist order."

Family Crisis Services disputes Mr. Graffam's suggestion of wrongful designation and asks the Department to reject the request for a cease and desist order. Family Crisis Services purchased the property in 2009 we understood at that time that the use of the shelter complied with the existing ordinance. There is a record of communication about the use of the facility and its designation in 2009 from Marge Schmuckal, Zoning Administrator. Family Crisis would not have moved forward with its purchase of the property if there were zoning questions or issues.

It will soon be seven years since the property was purchased by Family Crisis Services. The use of the property has not changed and no concerns have been brought to the City until very recently. To question the decisions made in good faith nearly seven years ago would be unjust and detrimental to the victims of abuse and violence who seek shelter in Portland. The City struggles to find safety for many women and children and to further reduce its capacity to do so would be unfortunate and unnecessary. Family Crisis Services has been operating within the parameters of the law on Orchard Street for many years and asks the City to conclude and not pursue this matter in order to continue to provide safety for women and children fleeing domestic violence.

Sincerely,



Rebecca Hobbs  
Executive Director

