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To: [Planning and Zoning](#)
Subject: Old Mill
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Commissioners,

Firstly, please stop the rule of the few who are loud and obnoxious over the many who are reasonable and thoughtful.

We, the undersigned, board members of Soundview Empowerment Alliance, donors, and members of the community, strongly support Text Amendment 846 for the Old Mill Grocery & Deli, a treasured 105-year-old institution. Owned since the spring of 2022 by Soundview Empowerment Alliance, a 501(c)(3) organization, the Old Mill Grocery & Deli operates with a dual charitable mission: preserving this award-winning historic building and maintaining its more than a century of use as a local retail food establishment, while also providing meaningful job training opportunities for people with disabilities. Through this dual mission, the Old Mill Grocery & Deli not only sustains its legacy as a community gathering place, it also serves as an invaluable resource for empowerment and inclusion. Funding for Soundview Empowerment Alliance's charitable mission comes exclusively from donations and rents collected from the commercial tenant to whom the historic property is leased. Those rents cover the substantial costs of maintaining the property, as well as covering the mortgage and insurance expenses. The Romanacci group – a for profit commercial enterprise – works as SEA's partner, paying rent, and maintaining the historic use of the facility in a manner consistent with the 105 year traditions of selling food and beverage items to the community, and providing a platform for SEA to provide job training for people with disabilities. They are diligent and professional, and attuned to the wants and needs of the community they serve. In order to do their part in supporting SEA's mission, they must be profitable, an objective that is aided by their ability sell food and beverage items that their customers desire, a modest offering of alcoholic beverages and gelato among them. As well, the picnic tables - in place for generations - are an essential feature of this local community center. Approving Text Amendment 846 will enable the Old Mill Grocery & Deli to continue its legacy and mission of inclusion and service, as it will the other properties included in the updated regulation. Thank you for your consideration

Gabriela Bockhaus