

21 Mar, 2022

Dear City Council Members,

Peace Keepers, Inc, a veteran-owned Ramsey business, is looking to move its business operations into a larger, more-secure location on the same property. Peace Keepers, Inc operates in accordance with all Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) regulations. The proposed permit I have applied for is in accordance with City of Ramsey code and regulations. As stated in the Planning Commission Meeting on 24 Feb, 2022, retail is legal on residential property and is currently happening at other home-businesses. Furthermore, a Home Occupation Permit allows for operations to be conducted on any portion of the addressed property, not solely restricted to the home or dwelling. The major reason I am here today is to move into a slightly larger space to conduct operations, providing a more suitable area for myself. The permit requires me to receive city approval to conduct operations in a space larger than 10% of my home's square footage; in this case, larger than 240 square feet. The operation I am requesting is under 350 square feet. The permit I am applying for allows up to 8 round-trip visits per day; I am requesting a maximum of 4, with one day every quarter allowing for 6 round trips to conduct the classroom portion of a Minnesota Permit to Carry class. These classes are classroom-only, with all firearms handling being completed at a designated shooting range such as Total Defense. The permit requested allows for exterior evidence of a business; I am not requesting any exterior evidence. I have recently completed a business plan with the Ramsey planning department and have taken many neighbor's concerns into account when writing the plan. These concerns include limiting my hours of operations, limiting my days of operations, limiting the amounts of additional traffic, ensuring all items are cased upon exiting the building, the safety of my neighbors and their children and more. I have taken all of these concerns into great consideration and have shown such in my business plan.

Peace Keepers, Inc is not looking to conduct business to the point of re-zoning the property. I am not requesting open hours of operations; I am requesting by-appointment only. My address is intentionally not listed on my Facebook page, it only shows Ramsey, MN. I do not have signage displayed to indicate there is a business operating on this property. I look to respect the privacy of my neighbors.

Within the city of Ramsey, there are 7 other home-based Federal Firearms Licensees (FFL). I am not requesting to do anything these businesses do not already do. I am in fact requesting to do less than these businesses do. It's simple to see the city has a proven history of allowing such businesses to conduct the activities which I am applying to do. Of these additional home-based FFL's, 4 hold manufacturers of firearms licenses, which allow them to not only sell firearms, but also manufacture them. Additionally, these businesses are allowed to transfer firearms to and from individuals and perform gunsmithing activities.

Peace Keepers, Inc has a history of proven safety. I hold certifications in firearms training from the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) and the United States Army. I have been certified through the state of Minnesota to conduct hunter's safety courses. I have worked and assisted people just old enough to hunt, senior citizens and ages everywhere in between. I further have extensive certifications in ammunition handling and safety. Peace Keepers, Inc has gone above and beyond all legal safe-keeping of firearms, including 24/7 video surveillance of all firearms, automatic-

locks, fire-proof firearms storage and multiple security systems. Peace Keepers, Inc further has received an inspection from the Ramsey Chief of Police and has met or exceeded all requirements.

I realize there are complaints and concerns from neighbors. Many of these concerns are valid and I have made every action to ensure these concerns are taken care of. That includes ensuring there is no visible sign of a business on this property. Multiple levels of security on every firearm. I have never posted the business address to my social media. I have ensured all hours are posted and defined as “by appointment only.” All pictures of my business operations presented to the council have been pulled from videos posted to my social media page, which have only been to show available merchandise. The only complaint I have officially received from the city of Ramsey was that I was operating without a Home Occupation Permit. I made an immediate effort to correct this by providing the city with my Home Occupation Permit and applying for the Level II Home Occupation Permit.

However, many of these concerns are not valid whatsoever. I realize there are pictures being taken of my property constantly, including pictures of my vehicles, my fiancé’s vehicle, friends’ vehicles and even vehicles of city officials. This is in direct violation of Ramsey city ordinance 21-10, section 34-133. One picture that was submitted to city council goes as far as to state I was walking to my building with an unpictured vehicle in my driveway; in the picture you can clearly see it is nothing more than me walking on my property. According to Chief of Police, Jeff Katers, one resident claimed I was selling illicit drugs from my house. Chief Katers assured the resident that was not the case. There have been claims that residents have heard gun shots from my property, but no police report was ever filed. I have never had a weapon discharged on my property. I have read complaints that there are multiple vehicles coming and going 5 days a week. My ATF acquisition and disposition record shows that is far from true. Including many firearms transactions where the firearm was shipped to another FFL, I have seen less than 1 transaction per day. Any shipped firearm transaction does not require any vehicle coming to my property. It was further stated that I have a “grab-bin” of ammunition—I have never had a “grab-bin” of ammunition. I have complaints reaching as far as stating that my fiancé did not actually have a bridal shower. I can provide pictures from the bridal shower to the council upon request, but I would prefer not to make her pictures public. Complaints also state that my fiancé does not have a rental agreement—she is my fiancé. Many of these complaints are not only not valid, but these are borderline harassment. I have even received calls from other Ramsey home-based Federal Firearms Licensees over the past week which state that a complainant has harassed them over their licenses and slandered me. In the past week, I have seen social media posts that are lies and misleading information about me, my business and even Home Occupation Permits. The extent to which I have been lied about and harassed is simply unbelievable.

What I am requesting of the city council is simple—to follow along with established Ramsey practices of allowing a legal business to conduct legal activities in a legal manner.

Thank you,
Derek Trout
President,
Peace Keepers, Inc