

Baker mentioned it was stated they do not allow people with violent crimes in their program, but she spoke with someone who committed a violent crime in September of last year and this facility cannot enforce their own rules. Ms. Baker mentioned this is referred to as ministry, but on their 501(c)(3) listed as non-religious and a halfway house.

Justin Stafford, 118 West Alden Avenue, spoke against the request. Mr. Stafford stated he is a recovering alcoholic. Mr. Stafford stated he sought help from Redeemed Living, to keep him accountable and to have a place to call home. Mr. Stafford stated no accountability took place and addicts seeking recovery came second to those in charge of handling their business first. Mr. Stafford stated Redeemed Living is not structured to keep the recovering addict accountable. The addicts living at the recovery house are also employed by the same person, who owns the house and this seems like exploitation and to expand his lawn care business. Mr. Stafford stated he was arrested due to previous warrants and after being incarcerated for three weeks, he was unable to contact Redeemed Living and he was blocked on social media as well as his items were removed from the house. Mr. Stafford stated if you are looking to receive help for your recovery and addiction, he would not recommend Redeemed Living.

Jed Allen, 2810 Howell Road, spoke against the request. Mr. Allen stated from past experiences in his construction business, he has worked with an employee, who had gone through a program and seemed to be on the road to recovery, but when given the time and additional money he reverted back to his previous ways, breaking the law and he went back to jail. Mr. Allen recounted another time when working with someone who had been in recovery for years and unfortunately went back to drugs and almost killed someone trying to get money.

Brent Moore, 3850 C L Moore Road, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Moore stated he is still friends with Mr. Justin Stafford on social media, he has not been blocked. Mr. Moore stated he was unaware of the two calls mentioned by Ms. Savannah Baker regarding law enforcement being called. Mr. Moore stated it was his friend who informed him of the drug houses on Howell Road, no one in the program and Mr. Moore did not report to the authorities since the addresses were not given. Mr. Moore stated regarding the 501(c)(3) it should be listed as non-profit faith based. Mr. Moore stated this is not a treatment facility, this is a secondary program to help people after completing a program. Mr. Moore stated Mr. Justin Stafford had a bad experience and Mr. Moore did not have a chance to speak with him.

Walter Muller, 2801 Cotton Bay Crossing, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Muller stated he is retired from the United States Air Force with 20 years of service and he is also retired from mental health substance abuse counseling with Penfield Addiction Ministries located in Alapaha with 23 years of service. Mr. Muller stated the same situation arose when trying to open Penfield Addiction Ministries residents were opposed, but the facility was approved. The difference between these two facilities is Redeemed Living participants are further along with more sobriety. Mr. Muller stated he is a recovering alcoholic and addict and celebrated 35 years sobriety and he has counseled addicts and alcoholics. Mr. Muller stated Lowndes County needs a facility like Redeemed Living.

David Barton, 603 West Park Avenue, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Barton stated he is a part of Redeemed Living. He came here three months ago after finishing a nine month treatment program. Mr. Barton stated there is accountability, he attends two church services, two AA meetings and a DAA meeting and a discipleship. Mr. Barton mentioned he came to this program because it is faith based and he would recommend Redeemed Living.

Joseph Lelonek, 603 West Park Avenue, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Lelonek stated he stays at the Redeemed Living house and this has been the best family to show him care and compassion since November 2022. Mr. Lelonek stated there has been no law enforcement at the house and he attends CR meetings on Monday and two church services.