

# Portland City Council Agenda Written Testimony

Document Number 2025-005

LU 24-077225 DM

	First and Last Name	Comments	Attachment	Created
1	Stanley Penkin	<p>Dear Mayor Wilson and Councilors:</p> <p>With 600-800 children diagnosed with cancer every year in Oregon, Ukandu is a nonprofit organization that addresses the multitude of complex challenges that coincide with and follow diagnosis. Ukandu provides a support system to help families navigate through the trauma and loss associated with cancer. Even if a child survives, the consequence of treatment never goes away. I know firsthand because we have a grandchild going through cancer and the trauma is real.</p> <p>The childhood cancer journey truly never ends. Through 40 years of experience and research (partnering with Knight Cancer Institute), Ukandu has identified a void in the current ecosystem and has built a model to address the profound gaps in services.</p> <p>To achieve that model, Ukandu has purchased a property in SW Portland which will serve as a physical space to provide the support services necessary for families all across Oregon on this terrible journey. An integral part of the curriculum is a physical space for caregivers which is one of the most novel and critical components of the programming. This requires the removal of an existing abandoned house on the property.</p> <p>The Historic Landmark Commission has evaluated the Comprehensive Plans of the City, the County and the Neighborhood to determine there is no historic significance of the existing building, and more importantly, that the facilities and programming would bring significant new value to the City, the County, and indeed the State and Country. The Commission voted unanimously to recommend to Council that it approve the permit to remove the existing structure.</p> <p>I strongly urge you to support the Historic Landmark Commission's recommendation. You will be helping hundreds of families who are so much in need of the services Ukandu offers.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p>	No	01/10/25 10:32 AM
2	harold goldstein	<p>Ukandu provides hope, confidence, healthy interactions and a place for families with children diagnosed with cancer to regain a thread of light in their lives.</p> <p>As a Board member of Doernbecher's Children Hospital I'm very aware of the chaos and challenges such a diagnosis incurs. While the Hospital can perform some medical miracles, they are not prepared to offer the counseling, family interactions and uplifting environment that UKANDU can.</p> <p>The more opportunities they have to increase these benefits the better off our whole community will be.</p>	No	01/11/25 7:24 PM
3	Richard Maxwell		Yes	01/13/25 1:03 PM
4	Marcie Walsh	<p>I am a member of Ukandu's Board of Directors and have volunteered with Ukandu for 8 years. I have been a counselor at both Ukandu Camp and Family Camp and can testify to the incredible work, support, love and joy Ukandu brings to families impacted by juvenile cancer. Specifically, the opportunity for parents to receive the support and community they need so intently is incredibly important. I have seen first hand the impact this makes for a family. I ask for and thank you for your consideration in allowing Ukandu to build the space so needed for the Ukandu community.</p>	No	01/14/25 12:07 PM
5	Tim Terich	<p>I cannot think of a more worthy project to support! This project will serve families in need of support and encouragement during one of the most difficult times. This program, along with its proximity to OHSU, will be a game changer for our community and those in need. The unique mission of UKANDU Loft is worthy of the community.</p> <p>I support the removal of the existing structure to accommodate this project.</p>	No	01/14/25 12:14 PM
6	Susan Stark	<p>Enclosed is a tesitmony of why the Loft is so important to the Portland metro area.</p>	Yes	01/14/25 2:28 PM

Richard Maxwell  
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Portland, OR 97229

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January 13, 2025

Portland City Commissioners  
1221 SW 4th Avenue, Room 110  
Portland, OR 97204

Dear Portland City Commissioners,

I am writing to express my strong support for the expansion of UKANDU, a vital resource for families impacted by childhood and adolescent cancer. As you consider approval for the demolition of the structure on the Loft' s property to facilitate this expansion, I urge you to recognize the immense value this project brings to our community.

UKANDU's mission to provide joy, hope, and connection to families facing the unimaginable challenges of childhood cancer is both inspiring and essential. These families are navigating not only the medical struggles of their children but also the emotional and financial toll of cancer treatment, often feeling isolated in their journey. UKANDU provides a rare and much-needed space for parents and caregivers to connect, share experiences, and find respite. The expansion of their facilities will ensure that this vital work continues to thrive and grow, offering a refuge that helps to restore families in need.

I have personally spent time with families served by UKANDU, and I have seen firsthand the extraordinary resources and support the organization provides. The opportunity for families to communicate with others in similar circumstances, to receive care and support, and to have a moment of reprieve from the pressures they face is unparalleled in its impact.

The Loft' s expansion and the proposed demolition of the existing structure will create a larger, more accessible space to meet the growing demand for UKANDU' s services. This expansion will directly benefit families who are enduring the most challenging time of their lives and will foster a community of hope and resilience.

I ask for your full support in approving the demolition and the continued growth of UKANDU' s invaluable work. This project is not just a construction effort—it is a lifeline for families in Portland and beyond. I hope you will consider the far-reaching positive impact this expansion will have, and grant approval to help ensure that UKANDU' s work can continue to touch lives and offer much-needed support.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,  
[Your Name]

To The Portland City Council:

What would be worst then getting a diagnosis of cancer. Having your child diagnosed with cancer. Now where do you go to navigate the dr. appointments, the type of treatment, insurance, financial help, etc? So what if there was a place where you could walk in and say "I need help". And you are immediately connected with professionals that have all these answers for you. Other parents that know and understand your situation. Because they have been where you are, and understand what you are going thru. Without having to explain anything to them. And it's ten minutes from the hospital.

This would be the "*Loft*". My name is Sue Stark and for the last 25 years I have been involved with UKANDU. I have seen the amazing affect UKANDU has had on children going thru cancer. Both patient and siblings. Children that find a community. No a family of love, support and understanding. Each year hundreds of children participate in UKANDU activities. From all over the metro Portland area. Just this last year we had 486 participants, 190 volunteers, 6 programs and over 498 hours of programming. That's just this year. And UKANDU has been around since 1987. That's many lives that have benefited from UKANDU. All at no cost to the family.

It has been very exciting to be involved with UKANDU over the years and watch it grow from a one week camp with 48 campers. To a week long camp for children 8-18. And the addition of a family camp. Where the whole family can attend. Because cancer affects the whole family. To a teen retreat. And Re-connect where families can get together during the year. Because once a year is not enough. The Teen Corps, empowering teens to become leaders. And now the "*Loft*". Where families can connect on a weekly basis. Get counselor and support each other. Simply amazing. This is why the "*Loft*" is so needed.

Susan Stark

Volunteer with UKDANU for 25 years

	First and Last Name	Comments	Attachment	Created
7	Johnna Loreen	<p>(Comments also attached as a PDF for easy-reading).</p> <p>As a current volunteer for Ukandu, I strongly support Ukandu in their request to tear down the old, uninhabitable house on their property in support of constructing a new space to serve a particularly vulnerable part of our community. Ukandu's research in partnership with the Knight Cancer Institute has clearly demonstrated an urgent need for services to families impacted by childhood cancer. Within that demonstrated need, there is further need for a caregiver-only space, where confidentiality can easily be kept and where parents can safely shed the warrior-like exteriors that they've had to develop to fight for their children's lives. It is crucial that a separate space is designated that will be a safe, confidential, supportive space where caregivers can find respite, meet with psychology professionals, and be in community with other caregivers who understand their specific challenges.</p> <p>As you'll hear from expert testimony during the hearing, there is no replacement for a separate and secure space for this type of programming, and the construction of this additional space is absolutely necessary to deliver the type of highly effective programming that Ukandu has planned and that the families they serve have specifically asked for.</p> <p>As a volunteer for Ukandu for the past 3 years, I've had the immense privilege of seeing Ukandu's programs in action. I have seen children with a cancer diagnosis soar beyond their limitations and reclaim their childhoods through dancing, playing, making new friends and making the most of every day. I've seen parents come together and breathe a huge, collective sigh of relief that comes from realizing that they're not alone in their struggles. I've heard countless stories and testimonies from families that assert that Ukandu has done for them what no other program or organization could. The community that Ukandu has created is as unique as it is crucial.</p> <p>And, as a volunteer, I've found new meaning in community in my own life through Ukandu. Ukandu provided the life-changing opportunity for me to be a part of something profound, and it affords that opportunity to all Portlanders with the creation of the Loft and the expansion of their much-needed programs. Ukandu is fast becoming an irreplaceable pillar in the community not just for the families they serve, but for all who wish to be a part of something very special and unique to our great city.</p>	Yes	01/14/25 3:31 PM
8	Kellia Holzworth	<p>Dear City Council Members,</p> <p>I am writing to express my strong support for Ukandu's building proposal. Ukandu is one of the best organizations in the country supporting pediatric cancer families, bringing hope, joy, and connection during their hardest times. Approving this project will provide a vital resource for families receiving treatment at OHSU.</p> <p>During my son's chemotherapy, all four of our cars broke down, making hospital visits very difficult. This proposed location in close proximity would allow Ukandu to support families like mine. Some hospital stays have chemo treatments lasting weeks at a time, some of our warriors have long stays for surgeries and some ICU stays and this space would offer families a much-needed space to rest and recharge during long hospital stays.</p> <p>Portland should be so proud to host Ukandu, as they're one of the best organizations of their kind in the county! Their work strengthens our community by supporting families in need. I urge you to approve this proposal to help them continue their critical mission.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p> <p>Sincerely, Kellia Holzworth, mom to Osteosarcoma Warrior Miles</p>	No	01/14/25 4:11 PM
9	Shannon Pujol	<p>Volunteering at Camp UKANDU was a breath of fresh air. As a nurse in the hospital, I often see the weight of illness overshadowing the joy of connection. But at camp, I witnessed something beautiful: kids laughing, playing, and forming friendships in an environment free from judgment. It was incredible to see them thrive, embracing their true selves while creating cherished memories. The laughter and joy that filled those days reminded me of the resilience of the human spirit and the profound impact of community. Those moments reaffirmed why I became a nurse in the first place, and it's an experience I will carry with me forever.</p>	Yes	01/14/25 4:19 PM
10	Miles Holzworth	<p>Dear Members of the City Council,</p> <p>I am a childhood survivor of osteosarcoma, a type of bone cancer that forced me to get an internal prosthesis. I'm writing to show my support for the proposed teardown and new building for Ukandu, an organization that helps families going through childhood cancer. The Loft will allow them to better serve these families, providing a central office and making the space accessible for people with disabilities.</p> <p>This project is important because it will give Ukandu more room to help, and it will make sure everyone, no matter their abilities, can get the support they need. I'm looking forward to meeting my Ukandu friends at this new loft to plan and organize our community service projects to support other families</p> <p>I believe approving this project will make a big difference in our community.</p> <p>Thank you for considering this important project.</p> <p>Sincerely, Miles Holzworth, age 13</p>	No	01/14/25 4:23 PM

01/14/2025

Johnna Loreen

Written Testimony related to LU 24-077225 DM

As a current volunteer for Ukandu, I strongly support Ukandu in their request to tear down the old, uninhabitable house on their property in support of constructing a new space to serve a particularly vulnerable part of our community. Ukandu's research in partnership with the Knight Cancer Institute has clearly demonstrated an urgent need for services to families impacted by childhood cancer. Within that demonstrated need, there is further need for a caregiver-only space, where confidentiality can easily be kept and where parents can safely shed the warrior-like exteriors that they've had to develop to fight for their children's lives. It is crucial that a separate space is designated that will be a safe, confidential, supportive space where caregivers can find respite, meet with psychology professionals, and be in community with other caregivers who understand their specific challenges.

As you'll hear from expert testimony during the hearing, there is no replacement for a separate and secure space for this type of programming, and the construction of this additional space is absolutely necessary to deliver the type of highly effective programming that Ukandu has planned and that the families they serve have specifically asked for.

As a volunteer for Ukandu for the past 3 years, I've had the immense privilege of seeing Ukandu's programs in action. I have seen children with a cancer diagnosis soar beyond their limitations and reclaim their childhoods through dancing, playing, making new friends and making the most of every day. I've seen parents come together and breathe a huge, collective sigh of relief that comes from realizing that they're not alone in their struggles. I've heard countless stories and testimonies from families that assert that Ukandu has done for them what no other program or organization could. The community that Ukandu has created is as unique as it is crucial.

And, as a volunteer, I've found new meaning in community in my own life through Ukandu. Ukandu provided the life-changing opportunity for me to be a part of something profound, and it affords that opportunity to all Portlanders with the creation of the Loft and the expansion of their much-needed programs. Ukandu is fast becoming an irreplaceable pillar in the community not just for the families they serve, but for all who wish to be a part of something very special and unique to our great city.

Volunteering at Camp UKANDU was a breath of fresh air. As a nurse in the hospital, I often see the weight of illness overshadowing the joy of connection. But at camp, I witnessed something beautiful: kids laughing, playing, and forming friendships in an environment free from judgment. It was incredible to see them thrive, embracing their true selves while creating cherished memories. The laughter and joy that filled those days reminded me of the resilience of the human spirit and the profound impact of community. Those moments reaffirmed why I became a nurse in the first place, and it's an experience I will carry with me forever.

Shannon Pujol

Registered Nurse at Doernbecher Children's Hospital - Hematology/Oncology/BMT

	First and Last Name	Comments	Attachment	Created
11	Laura Ward Collins	I strongly and unequivocally support the Ukandu expansion plans. Please see my attached letter.	Yes	01/14/25 7:11 PM
12	Patrick Ryan	Dear Portland City Council Members, I am writing to express my support for UKANDU, and ask that you approve the proposed Loft construction project that would house the expanded services for patients and families facing the challenges of pediatric cancer.  The impact of the positive experiences of all those involved in the UKANDU programs is immeasurable! I have seen and felt this countless times over the 25 years I have been associated with UKANDU. The development of the Loft site and programs it will house will provide a variety of new support and fellowship opportunities to patients, parents, and program support partners in the ongoing efforts to address cancer and its countless ramifications.  Thank you for your time and consideration of this valuable care and support opportunity.	No	01/15/25 8:59 AM
13	Joanna Abels	The only issue I have with the Ukandu Loft is that I wish it was built sixteen years ago, when my younger sister, Jolene, was diagnosed with Stage 4 Wilms Tumor.  Had it existed then, our family would have been immeasurably supported. The Loft would have been a place where my parents could have found solace and shared their burdens with other parents facing the same unimaginable journey. A sacred space to process Jolene's diagnosis and, ultimately, her end-of-life journey with others who understood the depth of their grief.  My parents, during week-long stays at Doernbecher while Jolene received treatment, needed a respite, a place to find restoration and recharge amidst the constant worry and exhaustion that accompanies a childhood cancer diagnosis. The Ukandu Loft would have offered that sanctuary, a haven where they could connect with other parents and mental health professionals, find support, and perhaps even take some much-needed naps.  As a sibling camper, I first-hand experienced the profound impact of Ukandu's programming. From the moment camp ended, I would eagerly anticipate the next time I got to see my camp friends, yearning for that unique sense of camaraderie and understanding. The Loft will ensure that siblings like me, and everyone else impacted by childhood cancer, no longer have to wait for support; it will be a readily available resource, a beacon of hope and healing six days a week.  The Ukandu Loft will address critical needs within our community, from fostering understanding and cultivating a sense of belonging to providing vital mental health support for guardians. But perhaps most importantly, the Loft will offer a space for joy, a reminder that amidst the pain, hope can still exist.	No	01/15/25 11:35 AM
14	Heidi Bruno	Ukandu has been instrumental in helping me and my family navigate our very difficult childhood cancer journey. My daughter was diagnosed when she was 8. She was able to go to camp with her siblings two times before she died of cancer. Since her death our family has continued to attend camps. This has given us an opportunity to get to know other families who have gone through the same thing as us and to also help other families who are at the beginning of the difficult journey. It will be amazing to have a resource outside of camp where kids and parents can connect. Childhood cancer it too difficult to do alone. It takes a village and ukandu has become our village.	No	01/15/25 1:59 PM
15	Christopher Brooks	I am the secretary and a director of the Clark Foundation, which has supported nonprofits in the Portland area for over 50 years. I write to the City Council to express my support for Ukandu. Ukandu provides a truly unparalleled and unique support system for children with cancer and their families. Over the last few years, I have been privileged to hear first hand from individuals who have directly benefitted from Ukandu's work. The Loft project presents a wonderful opportunity for Ukandu to expand their support to those who need it most. I strongly urge the council to give thoughtful consideration to the needs of Ukandu's Loft project.  Christopher Brooks	No	01/15/25 3:40 PM
16	Kay Yancey	I am a volunteer for UKANDU.	Yes	01/15/25 4:23 PM
17	Beard	Camp UKANDU has served children with cancer and their families for almost 50 years. We've always known that cancer is a family disease and over the past decade we've worked hard to expand our services to better serve all our population. The new building we're trying to create will allow us to continue this arc. I say we as one of the hundreds of people who have freely given their time to further UKANDU's program. Those 20+ years at camp were some of the most meaningful experiences I've ever had. Everyone who is touched by UKANDU would agree. Help camp help kids.	No	01/15/25 7:45 PM

Laura Ward Collins  
15395 SW Emerald St.  
Beaverton, OR 97007

January 14th, 2025

Portland City Council  
1221 SW 4th Avenue  
Room 110  
Portland, OR 97204

Dear Portland City Councilors:

I'm writing to express my unequivocal and strong support for the Ukandu expansion on the site of where the organization's pediatric cancer family resource center is being built. The structure that is under demolition review in today's hearing - if removed - will allow for a new space to be built on this campus completely aligning with the mission and vision for this center, "The Ukandu Loft."

Since August 2023, I have been engaged by Ukandu as their capital campaign consultant for the \$12 million campaign to build this center. As such, I consider myself to be both "in" and "outside" of the organization. Ultimately I'm in a unique role to objectively observe, assess and provide counsel to Ukandu in achieving and even surpassing this campaign goal.

From conducting the initial feasibility study for the campaign, to developing the strategy and execution of the "quiet phase" (the current stage), to forecasting and planning for the eventual "public phase," I've been witness to an organization and its community - staff, board, volunteers, families, supporters/partners, campaign counsel - that has put its heart and soul into creating the most carefully and thoughtfully planned vision of what the The Loft should be, and must be, for these deserving families.

And at the heart of that vision, is a center where every member of the family is cared for and supported during their childhood cancer journey...which, while a lifetime experience for all of them, is different depending on whether they are a patient/survivor, sibling or parent/caregiver.

Specifically, if this existing structure (under review) is demolished, it will allow for a not just "nice to have" separate structure to be built, but for an essential private space for parents to convene and support each other through some of the most brutally honest and difficult conversations that parents possibly could have. This annexed space also will house the



clinical offices for the confidential conversations that mental health clinicians will be having with family members. These therapy sessions at The Loft are free of charge services being provided to families in the Ukandu community.

Critical components of the programming for The Loft clearly necessitate a need for a separate structure. Moreover, though, the Historic Landmark Commission evaluated the Comprehensive Plans of the City, the County and the Neighborhood to determine there is no historic significance of the existing building. Additionally, the building / development of The Loft (and its programming) in the downtown corridor will bring significant new value to the City, and the County, and in fact, the State and Country, by providing services to be shared outside of District 4. The Commission voted unanimously to recommend to Council that it should approve the permit to remove the existing structure.

Thank you, in advance, for supporting the Historic Landmark Commission's recommendation. By doing so, this council's decision will have a profound ripple effect in positively impacting families in the Ukandu pediatric cancer community in limitless and immeasurable ways, both now and in the future.

Sincerely,

Laura Ward Collins

Hello. My name is Kay Yancey.

I have been volunteering with UKANDU for 14 years, and during that time, I have performed many different roles. I am so lucky to be a part of this organization. In addition to the immeasurable reward that comes to me from working with our campers and staff, UKANDU has connected me to a community that I otherwise would not be a part of, as well as connections to an even greater part of the Portland community. I have gained knowledge of and connection to other service organizations, businesses who want to support programs, the hospitals that serve our families. I have become aware of the many ways that businesses and organizations work together to address needs that exist in our community.

My involvement has allowed me to see how effectively the organization achieves its mission and meets the needs of our families. What we do at our camps and other programs is magic, and I'm not sure I can even tell you why. But I have heard firsthand kids say that camp is life-changing—bringing them community and connection, joy, and awareness that cancer does not need to define them. Parents have expressed their joy at seeing the positive changes that happen to their child or children after spending a week at camp.

My experience with Family Camp has shown me definitively that what we offer to families *is unique* and has been needed for a very long time. It is remarkably supportive, therapeutic, joyful and appreciated beyond measure. Camp gives families a chance for a respite, time for fun together without the details of life as a distraction. Parents and kids alike have said that other camps don't do things as well as we do, that the activities, and fun, and silliness and services go beyond what other camps offer.

Last summer at Family Camp, I heard over and over again, as part of conversations about how much they were loving camp, that they couldn't wait for The Loft to be open. They are so excited for the ability to keep their camp connections alive and for the opportunity to tap into our resources all year long. The Loft will offer something to the pediatric cancer community that can't be found elsewhere, and I'm very excited to be a part of it and to watch it unfold.

	First and Last Name	Comments	Attachment	Created
18	Coral Strickland	<p>Dear Mayor and City Council members -</p> <p>I am more than a volunteer for Ukandu - I am a family member. I became aware of Ukandu in fall of 2010 when my 13 year old daughter was diagnosed with cancer. She couldn't wait to be part of Ukandu's camp for children with cancer. She attended her first camp, along with her older brother, in June 2011. Her greatest wish was to ride a horse and Ukandu made it happen even though she was so fragile. Unfortunately, she had to come home on the second day. She attended again in 2012 and 2013. Her last big belly laugh came from when I picked her up from camp in 2013. The next day we were back at the hospital and a couple days later, I was told that there was no other treatment available for her. She lost her battle on August 28, 2013.</p> <p>We have remained active with Ukandu all of these years. Our son returned to camp as volunteer for several years and now that my husband and I are retired, we too, are volunteers. He, at June Camp for the children, and I at Ukandu's Family Camp.</p> <p>What Ukandu has been able to expand and provide to families experiencing pediatric cancer is truly amazing from our first interaction with them. The mission they have set for themselves to provide support to the whole family is groundbreaking and something that was sorely missing as we navigated our daughter's cancer journey. Even now, over 11 years later, the effects of this journey still impacts our lives.</p> <p>The LOFT will be such an amazing opportunity for this segment of our society and will by its very existence provide inspiration across our nation for other cities to develop programs that support entire families during pediatric cancer journeys and beyond - because the journey does not end with remission, cure and certainly not with the outcome no one wants - death.</p> <p>My family isn't the first family to experience pediatric cancer and unfortunately, we won't be the last. I implore you to approve the plan that UKANDU is presenting to expand this vital service.</p> <p>Sincerely, Coral, David &amp; Kyle Strickland in honor of Shannon Strickland</p>	No	01/15/25 10:07 PM
19	Linh Doan	<p>Hello, my name is Linh Doan. My son has been living with brain and spine cancer for over seven years. He doesn't remember life before cancer took away the abilities he was born with. Yet, he embraces each moment, living day by day in the best way he knows how. His resilience and outlook are a powerful reminder of the lessons we adults can learn from children.</p> <p>Still, he faces challenges—loneliness, isolation, sadness, and fear—experiences all too familiar to children and families navigating life with disabilities. For our community, the support of others is not just helpful; it's essential for surviving, thriving, and remaining resilient.</p> <p>This is why Ukandu is so important. It's more than an organization—it's a lifeline for our community, for Portland, for Oregon. It strengthens the bonds that hold us together and amplifies the uniqueness and resilience of our collective community.</p> <p>Please consider the incredible value this space and organization bring. Help us pave the way for visionary spaces that foster connection, support, and hope.</p>	No	01/16/25 2:11 AM
20	CJ McNulty	<p>To whom it may concern.</p> <p>As a volunteer who has been associated with Camp UKANDU/UKANDU since 1988, I have had a front row seat to how UKANDU supports, benefits, comforts and aids children with various forms of cancer, and their families. UKANDU is constantly and diligently searching for new ways to support and assist the children and families that are affected by pediatric cancer. The UKANDU Loft is a gleaming example of another first class resource that can and will directly impact the children, and their families, who we strive to help.</p> <p>I also volunteer for two other fraternal &amp; charitable organizations. The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks (BPOE) and the Loyal Order Of Moose (LOOM). I have a tremendous amount of experience in volunteering with non-profit and not for profit organizations who all have mission statements and dedicated programs that are designed to benefit the communities they serve. UKANDU embodies and defines community service. The UKANDU Loft will provide another first class extension of the services we provide. The UKANDU family is eager and excited to get to work on making this vision a reality and we genuinely ask for your support and approval in this truly worthwhile endeavor that will impact so many lives in a profound and positive way.</p> <p>Sincerely, CJ McNulty</p>	No	01/16/25 2:35 AM
21	Deborah Nicholson	<p>Ukandu provides invaluable support to families navigating a juvenile cancer diagnosis. Please allow them to use the property in South Portland to provide the resources to families struggling with managing such a devastating diagnosis. They provide a one of a kind service to these families.</p>	No	01/16/25 7:00 AM

	First and Last Name	Comments	Attachment	Created
22	Gloria Bissmeyer	<p>Camp UKANDU is one of those rare organizations that not only touches the lives of children who have experienced a life changing illness, but it brings joy, a sense of accomplishment, and hope, perhaps for the first time, to the children and their parents involved.</p> <p>The proposal before you is a small ask compared to what it could mean for kids who do not have a choice of having cancer or not. But you have a choice to make a difference in their lives by becoming a partner for who they are now and who they might become in the future. Your vote to approve this proposal is a vote that will be historical itself and stand the test of time in providing opportunities and services for these kids and their parents to have year round access that they need and couldn't have otherwise.</p> <p>For over 20 years camp UKANDU has been part of my life. It has brought me to my knees to see the courage and positive giving spirit of these children, who in their own special way, are the beacons for us to follow. This proposal is not about whether a building is designated a historical site or not, it is about whether we have the human capacity to embrace and wrap our arms around those who may not have time on their side and need your help</p> <p>For those who have had or have known anyone inflicted with cancer you understand the many challenges that are faced. Your vote of approval will enable these kids and their parents to help level the playing field in facing those challenges; it can literally change lives and in doing so it will change your life. Now is your time to make a historical impact in making a difference. Now is your time to show the same courage and spirit of those who are asking for your help.</p> <p>Blessings, Gloria Bissmeyer</p>	No	01/16/25 8:36 AM
23	Amy Robinson	As a parent of a child who has received tremendous support from Ukandu while undergoing cancer treatment, I am very excited that the community support provided by Ukandu could be made available to more families through the expansion of the Ukandu Loft. This resource is vital and this organization truly supports kids and families with joyful programming and a huge network of volunteers who know exactly what families need. As a parent, it is especially exciting to see that more parents and caregivers will be able to access vital support through this possible expansion. Thank you for considering this proposal.	No	01/16/25 10:13 AM
24	Dr. Jason Glover	I am uploading this statement on behalf of Dr. Jason Glover, per his request.	Yes	01/16/25 10:34 AM
25	Haley Orr	I was camper and now a volunteer with Camp Ukandu for 15+ years. Having a space for campers, parents and caregivers is a very important part. Being able to share stories, experience, thoughts and share the joy with fellow friends and campers makes you feel loved, wanted and know that you are not alone in the cancer world. So please help spread joy and connection. Cornut.	No	01/16/25 11:25 AM
26	Iraida Hermann	I am writing to express my strong support for Ukandu as a board member and resident of Portland to advocate for the demolition of the existing structure. Ukandu's vision for this project goes beyond just development - it represents a transformative investment in one of Portland's most underserved communities. By allowing this project to move forward, you will help provide critical resources that are desperately needed. Thank you for your time and consideration.	No	01/16/25 11:34 AM
27	Jon Fischer	As a parent of a child who endured childhood cancer, and as someone who has both received services from and volunteered with Ukandu, I cannot say enough about the positive impact that Ukandu has had on my child and our family. I am fully supportive of Ukandu's proposal for creating a resource space for parents and families impacted by childhood cancer. In addition to benefitting that community, I believe the new space will also be a benefit to that specific downtown area as a whole. Please approve the Ukandu proposal!	No	01/16/25 11:38 AM

Jason Glover MD  
Randall Children's Hospital  
Cancer and Blood Disorders Program  
jasonglover7@gmail.com  
5037138530

1/16/2025

Dear Members of the Portland City Council,

I am writing to express my strong support for Ukandu, a local nonprofit organization dedicated to providing essential services to children with cancer and their families. As a vital resource for families navigating the emotional, financial, and physical challenges of a cancer diagnosis, Ukandu plays an irreplaceable role in our community. I believe that the City of Portland has an incredible opportunity to help Ukandu expand its reach and impact through its efforts to develop a property/home base for its infrastructure and services to children and families.

Ukandu offers a wide range of programs designed to help children with cancer and their families cope with the diagnosis, treatment, and the overwhelming emotional toll and physical scars cancer leaves. The organization focuses on offering a safe space for children and parents to express themselves, receive therapy, and find community support during one of the most difficult periods of their lives. Their work provides not only practical assistance but also emotional healing for families who are often facing financial and mental health burdens as a result of the disease.

The nonprofit's plan to build and develop a property dedicated to supporting these efforts is essential to expanding the services Ukandu can provide. A dedicated facility will allow Ukandu to serve more families, offer improved resources, and strengthen the community impact that is so desperately needed. It will also provide a safe and welcoming space for children and their families to heal, connect with others who understand their challenges, and receive the necessary care that can make a life-changing difference.

The need for Ukandu's work is not just critical for the families it currently serves, but for the broader community as well. In a city as diverse and compassionate as Portland, supporting organizations that uplift vulnerable populations is paramount. Ukandu's mission embodies the values we all share: care, community, and a deep commitment to making Portland a place where all children and families have access to the help they need.

As a proud member of this community, I ask that you consider supporting Ukandu's endeavor as I do to create a permanent space for their important work. Your support will not only provide a physical foundation for this life-changing organization, but it will also demonstrate the City of Portland's ongoing commitment to improving the lives of children and families facing serious illness.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter. I hope that you will lend your support to Ukandu's efforts as they continue to make a profound difference in the lives of so many.

Sincerely,  
Jason Glover MD

Attending Physician

Pediatric Hematology and Oncology

	First and Last Name	Comments	Attachment	Created
28	Nick Sherbo	<p>For the past 10 years I've been a volunteer with Ukandu, I have never seen an organization make a greater impact on its community.</p> <p>For the first 20 or more years Ukandu meant one weeklong summer camp in June. As a counselor at June camp, I have witnessed the most remarkable resiliency, strength, compassion, and vulnerability that one can imagine, from both the volunteers and especially the campers.</p> <p>I have heard from bereaved parents that this week was the best week of their child's life. I've also heard from parents that cancer robbed their child of the very nature of childhood, they just want to be a kid and cancer and treatments, and the disruptions have robbed them of that, but that it was restored by their time at camp. The kid they picked up from camp was the one they remembered, the goofball, the athlete, the leader. Not just the kid with cancer.</p> <p>In the past few years Ukandu has grown from our weeklong flagship program, to provide more for these families, including a Teen Retreat, Family Camp, and Ukandu Corps, which allows these kids who so often find themselves the recipient of other people's attention, other people's care other people's effort, and gives them the opportunity to be of service themselves, to diagnose a need in their community, set about creating a plan and addressing it.</p> <p>I am Incredibly proud of the growth of this organization. But I was naïve as to what really necessitated this gross, what I learned was that although we were providing something unique and impactful, and in some cases life-changing, it is grossly insufficient. Pediatric cancer has a lifelong effect for almost everyone diagnosed. Treatment can cause severe cognitive impairment and deficits; amputated limbs do not grow back once chemo is complete. Campers who aged out our youth programming often feel adrift, cut off from this community that they have been so close to. Parents, who had finally built up the courage to allow their vulnerable precious child to be away from them for a week so they could finally rest. Finally, try to take care of themselves told us that a week is not enough. They told us that they need a place to go on a regular basis, a place to be with people who understand their experience.</p> <p>The need is there we know it's there because the families have told us and not only is the need there, but Ukandu is the right organization to meet that need, we've been in the community for over 30 years. We have highly skilled, well trained, well vetted, dedicated, energetic, an invested staff, and volunteers many of whom or once campers themselves. I urge you to grant approval of the demolition permit. Thank you.</p>	No	01/16/25 11:41 AM
29	Amber Nelson	Approving this expansion is a vital investment in the well-being of Portland's most vulnerable families. It aligns with our city's values of compassion, equity, and community support. I urge you to vote in favor of UKANDU's proposal, ensuring that this indispensable organization has the resources and space to continue its mission for generations to come. Thank you for your time and consideration of investment in this burgeoning legacy. Please feel free to contact me if I can provide further insight or share more about UKANDU's impact on our community.	Yes	01/16/25 12:37 PM
30	Lisa Achim	UKANDU provides support for families going through the trauma of a pediatric cancer diagnosis that is unmatched in any other form from any other entity. They recognize that it is the whole family that is impacted and have put together incredible programs to support the siblings and caregivers as well as the child diagnosed. UKANDU has been an integral part of our family's pediatric cancer journey for the past 15 years when our son (sibling of diagnosed child) first attended camp. The services and support and safe space that the UKANDU Loft would provide is so vitally important for all families involved with such an isolating experience. Otherwise we would all be facing the journey without a community of others that truly understand. Having the UKANDU Loft to provide a place for that community to connect would be monumental.	No	01/16/25 1:26 PM
31	Dave Achim	<p>Hello. Our son had a very hard time with our daughter Averie Sues cancer battle. Although Averie was too young to attend, Duckman (our son), was removed from the chaos that is childhood cancer and was able to be 100% kid for a whole week, at no charge to us. His excitement to return year after year gave him something to look forward too outside of our daily, chaotic lives. We support this as a family 100% and look forward to seeing a positive progression to help Ukandu grow so more and more families can benefit, as we did. Do the right thing, please.</p> <p>Dave Achim and family</p>	No	01/16/25 1:59 PM



**Dr. Amber Nelson**

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Portland, Oregon 97225  
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541-892-2813  
1/13/25

Portland City Council  
1221 SW 4th Ave  
Portland, OR 97204

Dear Members of the Portland City Council,

My name is Dr. Amber Nelson, and I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for UKANDU's proposal to expand its facilities at 3015 SW 1st Ave and 118 SW Porter St. I'm a licensed pediatric clinical psychologist and an associate level professor of clinical psychology. I first became aware of UKANDU mere months ago while sharing the opportunity to serve with my graduate students. After looking into the organization more, and after talking with my friend and colleague Dr. Schwartz, I knew I too wanted to participate. This past June I volunteered at my first camp of no doubt a lifelong participation, and I can attest firsthand to the meaningful and transformative work they are doing in this organization that deeply impacts families navigating the challenges of childhood and adolescent cancer.

My area of specialization is with children, adolescents and young adults with chronic medical conditions (including oncological diagnoses), and I have had the honor of working in some of the nation's leading medical facilities including Boston Children's Hospital, Harvard Medical school, Kennedy Krieger Institute and Johns Hopkins Hospital. I share that background not to boast about my accomplishments but rather to establish the credibility and baseline caliber of the organizations and leaders I am accustomed to working with. The level of dedication and care that UKANDU provides their families far exceeds any institution or organization I have ever worked with. Jason Hickox has said it best, this organization is relational at its core, which means that the decision making, care and attention they take with each individual is personal.

Even the location of this expansion is tailored, intentional, and personal. It is perfectly situated to provide ease of access to the pediatric cancer treatment facilities, not only providing desperately needed accessibility, but also a bridge between organizations, creating a unique synergistic ecosystem of support. The research is clear that accessibility to support for these families tends to be limited to their hospitalizations, but the need goes far beyond just the most acute crises in their lives.

We also know that the need for mental and social health services, for everyone, is at it's highest in decades. Following a global pandemic that fractured our healthcare system and left our world grieving and isolated, UKANDU is stepping up and seeks to fill in the gaps for these families.

This expansion aims to provide support and connection to these families year round. While the research shows that holistic support tends to be limited to hospitalizations, the research also shows that having consistent and easily accessible mental and social health supports drastically improves the quality of life for individuals and families affected by cancer. In 2024, UKANDU partnered with OHSU's Knight Cancer Institute to identify gaps in services for families affected by childhood cancer. The study revealed that 90% of families reported insufficient mental health support during treatment, and only 12% of parents felt adequately supported in the five years post-treatment. UKANDU works expertly to address this by providing meaningful programs that aim to address these needs by creating spaces for authentic connection, a supportive community and centering joy in the hardest times of life.

As you know, for nearly four decades, UKANDU has been a beacon of hope, joy, and connection for families affected by cancer. Their innovative programming—from Camp UKANDU to family retreats and teen leadership development—addresses the emotional, social, and psychological needs of children, teens, and families. These services are provided at no cost, a testament to the organization's deep commitment to equity and accessibility.

The proposed expansion will allow UKANDU to significantly enhance its ability to serve the community. The new facility, Ukandu Loft, will provide:

- **Inclusive Activity Spaces:** Dedicated areas for play, creative expression, and peer connection for children and teens.
- **Therapy and Counseling Offices:** Spaces for mental health support, addressing the critical gap identified in UKANDU's recent collaboration with OHSU's Knight Cancer Institute.
- **Community Gathering Areas:** A hub for families to build supportive relationships with others facing similar challenges.

While the bungalow at 118 SW Porter St is a contributing structure within the South Portland Historic District, the perhaps greater historical significance lies in the lives UKANDU touches and transforms daily. The Historic Landmarks Commission has rightly emphasized that the benefits of this expansion far outweigh the preservation of this single structure.

I could talk all day about how much I believe in this organization, and how in my short time associated with them, I have seen them go to heroic lengths to support families' needs. I think you can agree that it is clear how much intentionality was put into the research, design, and the deep love and care those involved in this project and leadership are. I believe that their commitment will extend beyond the families they serve and will positively impact the community that surrounds them. I recognize that considering demolition of an historic landmark does not come lightly, but I hope that you hear how this restructured project can become an historic landmark in its own right, while also providing public benefit. The contribution that this facility, paired with the mission and vision of UKANDU, will provide a space that 1) expands the dearth of organizations of care within the city, and state, and 2) will set precedent for gold-standard care and intervention nationally.





Approving this expansion is a vital investment in the well-being of Portland's most vulnerable families. It aligns with our city's values of compassion, equity, and community support. I urge you to vote in favor of UKANDU's proposal, ensuring that this indispensable organization has the resources and space to continue its mission for generations to come. Thank you for your time and consideration of investment in this burgeoning legacy. Please feel free to contact me if I can provide further insight or share more about UKANDU's impact on our community.

Sincerely,

**Amber L. Nelson, PsyD**  
*Aka Sassafrass at Camp UKANDU*  
The Children's Clinic  
Licensed Pediatric Psychologist  
Portland, Oregon

Portland City Council Meeting  
Thursday, January 16, 2025 - 2:00 p.m.  
Verbal Testimony

	Document Number	Name
1	2025-005	Sean McMahon
2	2025-005	Michael Schwartz
3	2025-005	John Russell
4	2025-005	Kay Yancey
5	2025-005	Steven Kassing
6	2025-005	Jean Cripps
7	2025-005	Ian Holzworth
8	2025-005	Kate McMahon
9	2025-005	Abigail Culbreth
10	2025-005	Lisa Kolve
11	2025-005	Bridget Bell
12	2025-005	Monica Loomis
13	2025-005	Nick Sherbo
14	2025-005	Rick Bruno
15	2025-005	Emily Harnden
16	2025-005	Nicholas McCullar
17	2025-005	Sage Palmer
18	2025-005	Kristin Scheible
19	2025-005	Scott Mears