

## **Statement from Dad's Place, Attorneys, and City of Bryan, OH Regarding Ongoing Negotiations**

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**Bryan, OH**—First Liberty Institute and city officials in Bryan, Ohio announced today that the city has agreed to drop all criminal charges against Dad's Place Pastor Chris Avell. Dad's Place has in turn agreed to cease residential operations and to seek proper building certifications, and zoning permits for the operations it plans to pursue together with the installation of any necessary safety measures associated with those permits. Negotiations continue as both sides seek to find a final resolution to the matter.

Dad's Place and city officials expressed appreciation for the steps that have been taken.

Bryan Mayor Carrie Schlade stated, "The city of Bryan appreciates the willingness of Dad's Place to work with the city to resolve the parties' differences amicably and to ensure that the services provided by Dad's Place are delivered in a safe manner. The parties continue to work together in a concerted effort to bring the case to a final resolution."

"I am thankful to God, the city, and for everyone who has been praying for this day to come," said Pastor Chris Avell of Dad's Place. "Bryan is my home. I am eager to continue to serve God, my community, and the people I love."

"We are grateful that the city of Bryan has dropped the criminal charges against Pastor Avell," said Jeremy Dys, Senior Counsel at First Liberty. "Ministries like Dad's Place provide vital public services to their communities. We will continue our conversations with city officials in hopes that we can find a final resolution where Dad's Place can continue to serve those in need in its community."

Stephen Hartman of Spengler Nathanson said, "We are encouraged by this initial step by the City in resolving this matter and look forward to talking with the City about how Pastor Chris and Dad's Place will continue to contribute to the wonderful community of Bryan."

Philip Williamson of Taft Law added, "We appreciate the city for working toward dropping the criminal charges and will do all we can to ensure that Dad's Place can keep its doors open to those it seeks to help."

Marc Fishel, Bryan City Attorney said, "The City has always focused on health and safety and we are grateful that the parties are working towards a solution."

Attorneys for Dad's Place and officials with the City of Bryan met for an extended period in U.S. District Court on February 1, 2024. The purpose of the meeting was to engage in mediation about the disputes between the parties. The parties worked cooperatively and will continue seeking to find common ground in an effort to settle the pending lawsuit.