

PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
FOR MEETING HELD APRIL 28, 2009

MEETING: Shown herein is a summary of action taken at the Pine Bluff Planning Commission Meeting held April 28, 2009 at 4:00 p.m. in the City Hall Chambers.

QUORUM: Those members present included: Lou Taylor, Joe Clement, Frank Hartwick, David Lausten, Evelyn Blunt, Don Scott, Gordon Reese and Jesse Kearny.

OTHERS

PRESENT: Others present include: Jerre George, Regional Planner, Lakishia Hill, Zoning Official, and other concerned citizens.

CALL TO

ORDER: Chairman Taylor called to order the Pine Bluff Board of Zoning Adjustment meeting for April 28, 2009.

**CONSIDERATION
OF MINUTES:**

March 2009 minutes were adopted.

OLD BUSINESS:

Item 1: Use Permit on Review request by Second C.H.A.N.G.E. Recovery Center to operate a homeless drug and alcohol treatment and transitional housing at 2002 W. 27th Avenue and 2003 W. 28th Avenues in a B-1 Neighborhood Business zone.

Mr. Glen Jackson, Director of Second Change Recovery Center located at 2821 S. Catalpa, Ste 2. spoke for this request.

Commission Chair Taylor asked Mr. Jackson why he requested a change in terminology.

Mr. Jackson stated that he changed the words “case manager” to “staff” because the center does not have enough case managers but staff can handle it.

Commission Chair Taylor asked how many members of staff does the center have.

Mr. Jackson stated there are three (3) volunteers.

Commission Chair Taylor asked how does staff supervise the locations.

Mr. Jackson stated that staff monitors the locations on a daily basis and reports are given from the house people that live there to make sure the occupants are doing what they are supposed to.

Commission Chair Taylor asked how long staff is at each location when they are monitoring the location. He asked if they are there for five minutes, ten minutes, half hour, hour or drive by.

Mr. Jackson stated that staff walks through and talks to the people to make sure everything is in line. They have to go in and check because that is the only way to determine if things are going the way they are suppose to and if people are doing what they are suppose to do.

Regional Planner George stated that case managers are supposed to make sure each individual is being provided the services they need to transition from this housing to other housing.

Mr. Jackson stated that responsibility is placed on staff because they are familiar with the process.

Commission Chair Taylor asked how many case managers the center has.

Mr. Jackson stated there is only one (1) case manager.

Commission Chair Taylor asked if the houses are monitored twenty-four (24) hours a day.

Mr. Jackson answered yes. There is a house resident that lives there and monitors the locations.

Commissioner Clement stated that when we talked previously there had not been any problems with police. He asked if that is still the case.

Mr. Jackson stated that is still the case.

Commissioner Clement asked Mr. Jackson if he was aware of the issue of classifying the housing as an emergency shelter.

Mr. Jackson stated that he was not sure he understood what he meant.

Commissioner Clement stated there was some discussion about the houses not being classified as emergency homeless shelters. He asked Mr. Jackson if he was okay with that.

Zoning Official Hill explained that while she and Mr. Jackson discussed changes he would like to make to the Transitional Housing Guide and Responsibilities, Mr. Jackson requested a portion of a sentence that stated "this is not an emergency shelter" be changed to read "as well as an emergency shelter".

Commissioner Clement stated that staff recommended it not be an emergency shelter.

Commission Chair Taylor stated that the term “emergency shelter” could open a floodgate to people outside the recovery center.

Regional Planner George stated that Mr. Jackson is applying for transitional housing for people with substance abuse problems. People with substance abuse problems and an emergency shelter for homeless and disaster victims should not mix together.

Mr. Jackson stated that he classified the housing as a shelter because when clients come in they are homeless and don’t have anywhere else to go.

Commissioner Kearney asked Mr. Jackson why he needed the word “emergency” in the description.

Mr. Jackson stated that emergency shelter is a part of the service.

Commissioner Scott stated that it is an emergency shelter for people with substance abuse problems who might have a need for his service at a moment’s notice.

Regional Planner George stated that, usually, emergency shelter means there has been a disaster and there may be numerous people who have suddenly become homeless. There are already designated sites around the city for those cases. Another emergency shelter incident may be for someone whose house has burned or something similar.

Mr. Jackson stated that the word “emergency” may be throwing the request off and it is really a homeless shelter.

Regional Planner George stated that the application was for transitional housing for homeless and people with substance abuse problems.

Commission Chair Taylor suggested the phrase “emergency shelter” be dropped from the description.

Mr. Jackson agreed.

Commissioner Lausten asked how often the case manager supervises the tenants of the facility.

Mr. Jackson stated that all staff talk to the tenants everyday but the case manager deals with any issues that may arise.

Commission Chair Taylor asked if there were any more speakers for the request. Since there were none, he asked if there were any speakers against the request. Since there were none, he asked for staff recommendation.

Regional Planner George stated that staff leaves the decision up to the commission. Staff suggest if the commission approves the request it should be approved subject to the

adoption and utilization of the of the Rules and Regulations prepared by Ms. Hill and the city staff being able to follow up to see that the plan is being adhered to.

Commissioner Clement started a motion to approve the request subject to staff's recommendations.

Commissioner Blunt seconded the motion.

Commission Chair Taylor asked if there was any discussion of the motion. There was none.

Commissioner Commission Chair Taylor asked all in favor of the motion to signify by saying "Aye". Then all opposed to signify with the same sign. The item was approved unanimously subject to adoption and utilization of the Rules and Regulations.

NEW BUSINESS:

Item 1: Rezoning request by Sizemore Properties to rezone approximately five acres located at 1303 W. 46th Avenue from R-1 Residential to R-PUD Residential Planned Unit Development District.

Mr. Harvey Sizemore spoke for this request.

Mr. Sizemore stated that the reason for the request is for the purpose of building condominiums in addition to single family residences. The lots for the condominiums are on the back side of the property and back up to the medical offices. There will be a lot of common area and green area that will belong to the property owners. The property down 46th and along Mulberry will be gated with wrought iron fencing.

Commission Chair Taylor asked if there were any questions of Mr. Sizemore from the commissioners.

Commissioner Reese asked if the town houses are one story.

Mr. Sizemore stated that they will be 3000 square foot units with enclosed carports. They will have brick and vinyl finish.

Commissioner Reese asked if the condominiums will be spaced out.

Mr. Sizemore stated that the back four lots and the one lot over to the side are the only lots big enough for the condominiums. They are limited to one area.

Commission Chair Taylor asked if this project will be similar to the Courtside on Stevens project.

Mr. Sizemore answered yes. It will be gated. The property will be owner-controlled with specific colors picked out. He stated that he inherited the project on Stevens.

Commissioner Reese asked Mr. Sizemore how many units had James sold when he took control of the project.

Mr. Sizemore answered three (3).

Commission Chair Taylor asked how successful that project has been.

Mr. Sizemore stated it has been good. He said he has people calling everyday about this project. He also stated he lives down the street from the proposed site. He owns the property down the street and wants to do something with it. He wants to do something beneficial for the neighborhood because he lives in a half-million dollar house down the street and does not want to do anything to hurt it.

Commission Chair Taylor asked if there were any further questions of Mr. Sizemore. Since there were none he asked if there were anyone else present to speak for the request.

Mr. Adam Robinson of 1400 W. 46th Avenue spoke for the request.

Mr. Robinson stated that he lives directly across the street from the proposed development. He stated that he believes Mr. Sizemore will build a property we all can be proud of. He believes it will be the best use for the property in the area.

Commission Chair Taylor asked if commissioners had any questions of Mr. Robinson. Since there were none he asked if there were any speakers against the request. Since there was one he asked for staff recommendation.

Regional Planner George stated that staff recommends approval of the request with the condition that prior to obtaining a building permit, the applicant must submit the Property Owner's Association covenants that specify how the common grounds, drives, fences, and gates shall be maintained, the size and type of structures permitted, etc. This will be filed at the courthouse along with the development plan.

Commissioner Clement asked if the zoning needs to be more specific indicating the five condominiums.

Regional Planner George stated that it would be up to the commission.

Mr. Sizemore stated that nine (9) of the lots will not allow anything but single family homes and only five (5) of the lots are big enough to build condominiums.

Commission Chair Taylor stated that the concern may be turning the development into more condominiums than single family homes.

Mr. Sizemore stated that he understands that and he has no problem with the commission rewording the request.

Regional Planner George stated that if the commissioners wanted to limit the number of condominiums, it should be stated that no more than half of the units could be condominiums.

Commissioner Clement stated that if the intent was to build two-family condominiums it would save the discussion down stream of someone wanting to split the property.

Mr. Sizemore stated that when someone buys the property, the by-laws for the property will already be intact and it will limit them to what they can or cannot do.

Commissioner Lausten started a motion to approve the request subject to staff recommendation.

Commissioner Blunt seconded the motion.

Commission Chair Taylor asked if there was any discussion of the motion. There was none.

Commission Chair Taylor asked all in favor of the motion to signify by saying "Aye". Then all opposed to signify with the same sign. The item was approved unanimously subject to staff recommendations.

Item 2: Street Closing request by Betty Tassin and others to close Bryant Street between Webb Street and Smart Street.

Mr. Jason Frazier spoke on behalf of his grandmother, Betty Tassin.

Mr. Frazier stated that developing this area into a paved street would not be practical because there is no connection to the rest of Bryant Street and only two families live beyond Webb Street. In addition the section itself acts as a storm drainage as most of Webb Street and frequently becomes clogged with trash and various matter. Add to that the weeds and garbage that cover the section and you have an eye-sore for the neighborhood. If this request is granted, Mrs. Tassin and Mrs. Coble will happily maintain the drainage ditch, clean the garbage, control the weeds and take additional measures to beautify the small area.

Commission Chair Taylor asked if there were any questions of Mr. Frazier from commissioners. Since there were none he asked if there were more speakers for or against the request. Since there were none he asked for staff recommendation.

Regional Planner George stated that staff recommends approval of the request. The street is not needed and will never be developed. There are no utilities in the right of way. There is no reason not to close it.

Commission Chair Taylor asked if commissioners had any questions of staff. Since there were none he entertained a motion on staff recommendation.

Commissioner Reese started the motion.

Commissioner Scott seconded the motion.

Commission Chair Taylor asked if there was any discussion of the motion. Since there was none, he asked all in favor of staff recommendation to signify by saying "Aye". Then all opposed to signify with the same sign. The motion on staff recommendation was unanimously approved. The request was approved.

Item 3: Use Permit on Review by First Trinity COGIC to utilize a property they own at 2900 West 6th Avenue in a I-1 industrial zone as a site for the Boys and Girls Club of Pine Bluff.

Mr. Kenneth Blackwell of 2815 Kimberly Drive spoke for this request.

Mr. Blackwell stated that the front portion of the building is already being used for church services and he is requesting the back portion of the building be used for recreation and teen youth meetings.

Commissioner Reese asked if the entire building is in use now. He asked if the building is run down.

Mr. Blackwell answered that the building will have bathroom modifications to accommodate the boys and girls. He said the city inspectors have been out to inform them of things that will have to be done.

Commission Chair Taylor asked how this center will function with other Boys and Girls Centers.

Mr. Blackwell stated that their center will be in addition to the other centers.

Commissioner Scott asked if this program will be overseen by Leslie Peters.

Mr. Blackwell stated that First Trinity will have staff to run the facility but they will have oversight by the Boys and Girls Club.

Commission Chair Taylor asked if there was anyone else present to speak for or against the request. Since there were none he asked for staff recommendation.

Regional Planner George stated that staff recommends approval of the request.

Commission Chair Taylor asked if there were any questions of staff. Since there were none he asked for a motion on staff recommendation.

Commissioner Blunt started a motion on staff recommendation.

Commissioner Hartwick seconded the motion.

Commission Chair Taylor asked if there was any discussion of the motion. Since there was none, he asked all in favor of staff recommendation to signify by saying "Aye". Then all opposed to signify with the same sign. The motion on staff recommendation was unanimously approved. The request was approved.

Item 4: Renaming of Maple Street from Martha Mitchell expressway to Reeker Street, changing the name from Maple Street to Henry Wilkins III Drive.

Mrs. Josetta Wilkins spoke for this request.

Mrs. Wilkins stated that she believes all commissioners are aware the years of service and contributions that he made. She spoke of all the contributions he made to the community. She stated that the naming of the street will bring about awareness to some of the people who do not know the history. It will also give credibility to those people who were elected to the general assembly at the time that Henry was elected. They were the first black minorities elected since re-election. That is something all youth both black and white should have privy to. She stated that some legislation being passed today is a result of legislation Mr. Wilkins worked on. The naming of that street will place in the history of that city the legacy of a person who lived and dies. He never retired from the legislature. He died while serving. She asked that the commission looks favorably upon the request.

Commission Chair Taylor asked if there were any questions of Mrs. Wilkins.

Commissioner Blunt asked Mrs. Wilkins what part of the street is to be renamed.

Mrs. Wilkins stated that it is the portion of Maple Street from Martha Mitchell expressway to Reeker Street.

Commissioner Lausten asked Mrs. Wilkins if she plans to put together a memorial to be placed in a museum somewhere.

Mrs. Wilkins answered yes. Senator Wilkins' son has had a compendium of everything done since his election to the legislature to his passing.

Commission Chair Taylor asked if there was anyone else present to speak on behalf of this request.

Senator Hank Wilkins IV, pastor of Saint James United Methodist Church spoke for this request.

Senator Wilkins stated that he is grateful to the Council and the Mayor for supporting this and he appreciates the commission.

Mayor Carl Redus stated that he would like to speak briefly on behalf of the council. He stated that Senator Wilkins was a trail blazer negotiator and visionary through not only this community but the state and this nation. He is a citizen that each and every citizen of Pine Bluff, Jefferson County and the state of Arkansas has expressed a desire to be supportive of the things he has done to make our lives better.

The Council has unanimously consented to the sponsorship of this request. The staff has canvassed the neighborhood and we have heard from citizens and the University, who are in support of this request. He asked for the commissions support for the request.

Commission Chair Taylor asked if there were further speakers for or against the request. Since there were none he asked for staff recommendation.

Regional Planner George stated that we would be hard pressed to find anyone else more deserving of this honor. She stated that from a planning standpoint it would be good to rename a whole section of the street instead of portions. Therefore staff recommends in favor of the street name change.

Commission Chair Taylor asked if there were any questions of staff. Since there were none he asked for a motion on staff recommendation.

Commissioner Blunt started a motion on staff recommendation.

Commissioner Lausten seconded the motion.

Commission Chair Taylor asked if there was any discussion of the motion. Since there was none, he asked all in favor of staff recommendation to signify by saying "Aye". Then all opposed to signify with the same sign. The motion on staff recommendation was unanimously approved. The request was approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

NONE

PLANNING DIRECTORS REPORT:

NONE

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

NONE

OPEN DISCUSSION:

Open discussion was held.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commission Chair Taylor entertained a motion to adjourn.

The motion was made and seconded.

Commission Chair Taylor adjourned the meeting.

THESE MINUTES ARE ADOPTED THIS 26TH DAY OF MAY 2009.

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY