

PINE BLUFF PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
FOR MEETING HELD, APRIL 27, 2010

MEETING: Shown herein is a summary of action taken at the Pine Bluff Planning Commission Meeting held April 27, 2010 at 4:00 p.m. in the City Hall Chambers.

QUORUM: Those members present included: Lou Taylor, Joe Clement, Evelyn Blunt, Frank Hartwick, Edward Long, Gordon Reese and Don Scott.

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 Planning Commission meeting for April 27, 2010.

**CONSIDERATION
OF MINUTES:**

March 2010 minutes were adopted.

OLD BUSINESS:

NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

Item 1: Use Permitted on Review request by Hope Apostolic Faith Ministries to build a new church facility at the north end of Shamrock Drive within an R-1 residential zone

Mrs. Charlene Wright spoke for this request.

Mrs. Wright stated: I would like to speak on behalf of Hope Apostolic Faith Ministries. Our desire is to establish a new church on Shamrock Drive between Davis and Interstate 530 with a two hundred (200) seating capacity. There will be an auditorium, classroom and office spaces. We will have fifty (50) parking spaces on the site.

Commission Chair Taylor asked: Any questions of Mrs. Wright from commissioners?

Commission Chair Taylor asked: Is this the only site that you have looked at for your facility?

Mrs. Wright answered: No. We searched the city for different land that was affordable and this was owned by United Pentecostal Church. They agreed to allow us purchase it contingent upon your approval.

Commission Chair Taylor asked: Do you presently have a facility?

Mrs. Wright answered: We have been worshipping the last fifteen years at 4901 W. Short 3rd Street.

Commission Chair Taylor asked: You've been there how long?

Mrs. Wright answered: Fifteen (15) years.

Commission Chair Taylor asked: Is the reason for the expansion because you have grown?

Mrs. Wright answered: We have grown from our family to twenty (20) plus families.

Commission Chair Taylor asked: How many other sites have you looked at and where?

Mrs. Wright answered: We ran into a lot of stumbling blocks with property because of heir property and owners living out of town.

Commission Chair Taylor asked: Have you worked with a professional to find a location?

Mrs. Wright answered: We are still sort of small and limited financially. We have called realtors. Some of the land listings in the city are out of reach for us financially. We looked at Ridgeway and Hazel.

Commission Chair Taylor asked: Did you look at existing buildings?

Mrs. Wright answered: Yes, we did. We ran into some stumbling blocks with existing churches. We looked at Rev. Wilks church, the one on Apple and different facilities.

Commission Chair Taylor asked: How about the one on Fir.

Mrs. Wright stated: We looked at it. They did not want to work with us on financing.

Commission Chair Taylor asked: Are there any more questions of Mrs. Wright? Are there any further speakers for or against the request?

Mr. Rich Moore stated: I am curious. If the land is for sale why are you asking all those questions? If the Pentecostal Church is going to let them buy it why do you have so many questions?

Commission Chair Taylor stated: I just wanted to know if they have exhausted all that is available to them and what made them arrive at that location?

Regional Planner George stated: This is something that has to come before the Planning Commission. Just because it is for sale does not mean you can put what ever you want on it. It is zoned residential and the Planning Commission has to determine that it is a proper location.

Commission Chair Taylor asked: Is there anyone else to speak for or against this request? If not may we have staff recommendation.

Regional Planner George stated: This area is strictly single family residential. There are two ways in to the subject property, which is Chapel Heights and East Lake Drive. They serve two (2) subdivisions. There are one hundred seventy (170) homes in the area. These have been stable neighborhoods. They have not seen a lot of the deterioration and decline that you have seen in some of the older subdivisions. One of the reasons it has remained stable is because it has been kept single family residential and no new land uses have been introduced there in the past twenty (20) or thirty (30) years that would differentiate the neighborhood identity of a single family residential neighborhood. We feel that allowing the development of a church on the subject site will introduce a new land use that can have adverse effects on the neighborhood and harm its stability.

On impact could be that churches cause an increase in traffic. There are only two (2) streets that serve over seventy (70) homes. That means at least, more than likely, one hundred forty (140) cars already. If a church that seats two hundred (200) people, you can expect to have fifty (50) cars. That is one hundred cars per trip every time there is a church activity. So we could see that there may be some congestion problems. Also, in one of the neighborhoods in the Shamrock area, this is an older area where most of the houses have single family carports and there is a lot of on the street parking. Adding that much additional traffic can pose a safety hazard. This is an area with a lot of young families and there are a lot of young children. The additional cars can pose a safety issue with the children. The increased traffic will cause a change in neighborhood traffic patterns. Many people may have to rearrange their schedule depending on church activities. Roads that are less traveled now may become more traveled because people will be looking for alternative routes to get around traffic. Also, these are local streets that are maintained by the Street Department.

Church activities can be loud and disturbing to nearby residential properties. This can be a particular problem to residential properties adjacent to the subject site. Being located next to an intense and possible noisy use detracts from the attractiveness of adjacent properties as a residential asset.

A church building and parking lot facilities do not aesthetically fit with a single family home development. Once you allow a more intense use in a neighborhood it is harder to stop other people from introducing more intense uses. We feel like more people will

want to introduce more intense uses, particularly in the Chapel Heights area. Therefore, we have recommended against the request.

Commission Chair Taylor asked: Jerre, those streets in the area are less than fifty (50) feet, aren't they?

Regional Planner George stated: I think the right-of-way may be forty (40) feet.

Commissioner Clement stated: We have talked about not wanting churches downtown in the business district. I agree with the traffic problems but there are lots of churches and schools that are smack in the middle of residential neighborhoods. I don't think we want to set a precedence of not allowing churches in residential neighborhoods. This is great exposure and access to the interstate but it's really hard to get to. I think that having a church in the neighborhood is a good thing.

Regional Planner George stated: Churches are a permitted use in the multi-family zone and they are a UPOR in all other zones. We have permitted a number in commercial and residential zones. You just have to look at the areas. You may have residential areas where a church wants to build on a big street verses a local street. There is a big difference. I don't think it would be precedence because we look at them individually.

Commissioner Kearney asked: How many churches are in that area already?

Regional Planner George stated: There is a Baptist church across the street from the school on Sulpher Springs Road.

Commission Chair Taylor stated: That is a state highway.

Commissioner Hartwick stated: I lived on Shamrock just right before you get to this area at one time. At times when everybody gets to moving around traffic can get pretty heavy.

Commission Chair Taylor asked: Are there any questions of staff? Since there are none, may we have a motion?

Commissioner Hartwick started a motion in favor of staff's recommendation.

Commissioner Blunt 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". All opposed signify with the same sign. The request was unanimously denied.

Item 2: Use Permitted on Review request to operate and conduct church services at 2221 S. Olive Street, Suite G in a B-3 Highway Commercial Zone.

Linda Strickland spoke for this request.

Ms. Strickland stated: I am hear today to request to conduct church services out of a commercial building located off of Olive Street. We were currently at the location but in a different suite. We only had the lease for one (1) year because we were a new ministry. When the year was up the owner did not renew the lease because the owner expanded the business next door. This is how we ended up in suit G.

Commission Chair Taylor asked: Is there any further speaker for or against this request? Hearing none, may we have staff recommendation?

Regional Planner George stated: The subject site is not located directly on Olive Street, the location lends itself more to uses where visibility is not a factor and the destination of the user is not spontaneous. It does not appear that the use would have a negative impact on existing businesses in the shop-walk. The times of operation of the church for the most part will be during those times most commercial businesses and offices are closed. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the request for the subject suite and applicant only. There shall be no expansion or change of churches without receiving separate UPOR approval.

Commission Chair Taylor stated: Are there any other questions of staff? If not I will entertain a motion on staff recommendation to approve this subject to staff recommendation.

Commissioner Reese started a motion in favor of the request.

Commissioner Kearney seconded the motion.

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

Item 3: Use Permitted on Review request by Carl & Sons Appliance Repair to operate a small appliance repair shop in an existing commercial building at 6305 Sheridan Road within an R-1 Residential Zone.

Mr. Carl Kennedy spoke for this request.

Mr. Kennedy stated: I am going to be the owner. I have two sons that are going to learn this business and stay in it behind me. I like the location. It's a big building and I need the area for work space. It's got three offices in it. There will be one for me, one for my sons and one for the secretary. I am going to repair appliances, air conditioners and sale used things.

Commissioner Reese asked: Are you buying the property or leasing?

Mr. Kennedy answered: I am leasing it right now. I have an option to buy later if it works out.

Commissioner Long state: I would like to just say that it would improve the area.

Commission Chair Taylor asked: Is there any further speaker for or against this request? Hearing none, may we have staff recommendation?

Regional Planner George stated: We recommend approval of the request subject to repair of the parking area. This shall include filling in the pot holes, cleaning it up, and striping the parking spaces.

Mr. Jack Johnson stated: I own the property there and I just want to make sure I understand.

Commission Chair Taylor stated: What staff has recommended is approval of the request subject to repair of the parking area including filling in the pot holes, cleaning it up and striping.

Mr. Kennedy stated: I can make five (5) or six parking areas.

Mr. Johnson stated: Most of his work is on a call out basis.

Commission Chair Taylor stated: But he might want to sale a few and they might want to pull in and not have to carry them out on their backs. What staff recommendation is that we approve this subject to the repair of the parking lot and striping? The Inspection Department will come out and make sure this is done. I would suggest you get with Lakishia. Who did you say came out.

Mr. Kennedy stated: The gas company came out and dug up around the meter and we get water from Hardin Water.

Mr. Johnson asked: If I understood you right, you said we can get with Ms. Hill.

Commission Chair Taylor answered: Yes, get with her and she can give you some direction.

Commission Chair Taylor stated: I've had staff recommendation on this request. I will entertain a motion.

Commissioner Kearney started a motion in favor of staff recommendation.

Commissioner Clement seconded the motion.

Commission Chair Taylor asked if there any discussion of the motion. Since there was none, he asked all in favor of approving the UPOR request to signify by saying “Aye”. All opposed signify with the same sign. The request was unanimously approved.

COMMITTEE REPORT:

NONE

PLANNING DIRECTORS REPORT:

NONE

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

Commission Chair Taylor stated: We are still waiting on a new commissioner. One of the applicants can’t do it because the Highway Department told her it is a “no” “no”.

OPEN DISCUSSION:

Commission Chair Taylor introduced the request to rename Hazel Street to Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. It will be placed on the May Planning Commission Agenda for public hearing.

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 25TH DAY OF MAY 2010.

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY