

**WILLMAR PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF WILLMAR, MN
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2014**

MINUTES

1. The Willmar Planning Commission met on Wednesday, April 23, 2014, at 7:00 p.m. at the Willmar Municipal Utilities Office (Council Chambers).

**** Members Present:** Mark Klema, Gary Geiger, Scott Thaden, Randy Czarnetzki, Sandy Bebler, and Aaron Larson.

**** Members Absent:** Andy Engan, Bob Poe, and Margaret Fleck.

**** Others Present:** Don & Meg Miller, Elaine Mae, Mark Foss, Mark Aslesen, Roger & Carol Tatge, Cecil Meyer, Denny Baker, Jim Butterfield, Terrie Butterfield, David Peterson, Charles Nelson, Heidi Ahmann, Steve Ahmann, Peter Fostervold, Karna Campolasso, Susan Malecek, Loren & Judy Schultz, Chris Alle, Dave & Becky Benoit, Chuck Wickersham, Mary Wickersham, Bruce D. Peterson- Director Planning and Development Services, Megan DeSchepper- Planner.

2. MINUTES: The minutes of the March 26, 2014 meeting were approved as submitted.

3. LIFE RIGHT OUTREACH TRANSITIONAL HOUSING- CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FILE NO. 14-03: The public hearing opened at 7:05 p.m. Mark Foss, presented a request for a transitional housing facility for a Christian 501c (3) organization on property described as: south 267' of Lot 3 and of west 82' of Lot 4, Block 5, Thorpe & Lien's Addition (500 Russell St. NW). Mr. Foss explained that they operate a similar facility in Alexandria where they provide transitional housing, worship, mentoring, life skills courses, and support groups for recovering alcohol and chemical dependents. Most of the clients will come to the facility after completing teen challenge, a treatment program, local jail, or prison. They don't allow sex offenders, they do back ground checks, have curfews, 24 hour surveillance, random urine tests, and if any violence erupts and they are removed from the facility. Mr. Foss stated he felt the existing parking is adequate as many of the residents don't have cars. They provide education classes and structure throughout the day. There are 32 rooms that they would use for single occupancies. Their facility would be inspected by the state but not the program itself.

Cecil Meyer, 615 Becker Ave. SW, explained that a steering committee was formed in the community last year to work towards bringing this type of facility and program to Willmar as it was seen as a need that was not being met in the area. They talked with MN Adult and Teen Challenge but that organization coming to Willmar would be two to five years out. The steering committee was looking for a Christian driven program and was greatly impressed with the Life Right Outreach Facility in Alexandria, MN.

Dave Benoit, of Pennock, a professional in State run treatment programs stated he supports this type of facility and that there is a real need for this type of facility for people that leave jail or treatment programs and need somewhere to live with structure to continue with recovery and get life skills with Christian guidance.

Mark Aslesen, 404 21st St. SE, explained that his son who worked at a local bank got into the drug world and lost everything. He went through MN Challenge and then went to a half-way house. He wishes this facility had been in Willmar for his son. He said he visited the Alexandria facility and that it's first class and adds value to the neighborhood.

Jim Butterfield, 1004 Willmar Ave. SW, said he does bible study at the Kandiyohi County Jail and that the community needs somewhere with structure for the men to go when they are released from jail. They are released with no money, job etc. from an environment where they were told when to eat and sleep. They end up staying with their buddies, as there is nowhere else to turn, who still use drugs and quickly slip back into their old ways. Life Right Outreach would be somewhere safe for them to go and keep on the path of staying clean.

Heidi Ahmann, 620 19th St. SE, talked about her surviving alcoholism and seeing the Christian program and the spirit of their worship as something this Community needs.

Chris Alle, 532 9th St. NW, spoke about the program curing the problem not just the addiction. The emotional and spiritual reasons people abuse drugs and alcohol. He explained that as the people running the program have been in these men's shoes they can read them and know if they are straying, they have to follow the rules or they are out. They aren't bringing dangerous people to the neighborhood, their normal people that are already in your neighborhood they just need help.

Roger Tatge, 919 Ella Ave. NW, said his son went through some troubles and he thinks it's a great idea and worthwhile for the community.

Don Miller, 600 Russell St. NW, the property owner directly to the north said he doesn't think Life Right Outreach operations will be a problem, as the past uses of the property weren't disruptive to the neighborhood.

Becky Benoit, a mental health professional with Rice Hospital, said when she visited the facility in Alexandria there was a young man there from Willmar and he was excited that the facility would be coming to Willmar and he saw the need for it.

Charlie Nelson, 612 Russell St. NW, spoke on behalf of the some of the concerned residents in the neighborhood that are worried about how property values may be affected by the use. He added that they are concerned that it may be bringing people to the neighborhood that won't be safe for children or the elderly.

With no further testimony from the public, the hearing was closed at 7:58 p.m.

Staff comments were reviewed and discussed (see Attachment A).

The Planning Commission asked Mr. Foss about plans for exterior improvements to the facility.

Mr. Foss stated that the window trim needs paint, gutters need some fixing, trim the hedges etc.

The Commission then discussed parking regulations. As the request is a hybrid use there are no definitive parking requirements that can be based off of the sq. ft. or number of residents. It's a residential use, as well as worship and counseling center.

Staff commented that perhaps 1/3 of the maximum number of residents would be the appropriate amount of off-street parking plus maximum number of employees on a shift. Staff also added that the Commission could put a condition on the approval that the existing off-street parking is appropriate at this time but if in the future it is demonstrated that more is needed the applicant shall submit plans for additional spaces (there is room on site for parking lot expansion).

Mr. Thaden made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bebler, to approve the conditional use permit.

The following affirmative findings of fact per Section 9.E.3.a.1-7. were made for the conditional use permit:

1. That the conditional use, with such conditions as the Commission shall determine and attach, conforms to the purpose and intent of this Ordinance, and is in conformity with the Comprehensive Land Use Plan of the City as it is a residential use on residentially zoned property with no greater intensity than the nursing home.
2. That there was no factual demonstration of a substantial/appreciable negative impact on values to properties in the neighborhood from the proposed conditional use as no value studies were submitted.
3. The conditional use will not result in the destruction, loss, or damage of a natural, scenic, or historic feature of major importance to the community as this is an already existing facility.
4. That the conditional use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding property for uses permitted in the district as zoned as the surrounding neighborhood is fully developed.
5. That adequate utilities, access roads, stormwater management, and other necessary facilities have been, or are being provided as it's an already developed property with existing utilities and accesses.
6. That adequate measures have been, or will be taken to provide ingress and egress in such a manner as to minimize traffic congestion and maximize public safety in the public streets as the drive accesses are already existing functional points of entry/exit.
7. The conditional use will be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained in a manner that is compatible in appearance with the existing or intended character of the surrounding area/neighborhood it will fit in aesthetically as well as it has in the past with the neighborhood.

Mr. Thaden made a motion, seconded by Mr. Larson, to amend the motion to include the following condition:

- A. If increased parking demands are demonstrated in the future, additional off-street parking plans shall be submitted to the City for review and approval.

The motion carried.

Mr. Thaden made a motion, seconded by Mr. Geiger, to amend the motion to include the following conditions:

- B. The applicant shall supply the City their list of 'house rules' for the residents of their facility for the record.
- C. All applicable local, state, and federal rules and regulations shall be met at the facility at all times.

The motion carried.

- 4. TIF DISTRICT RESOLUTION: Staff explained that per that TIF District policy with the City the Planning Commission has to determine if the proposed TIF project with the purpose and intent of the Comprehensive Plan. As the Jennie-O turkey store property and expansion area is zoned industrially and this is the expansion of an existing industrial use it does meet the purpose and intent of the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Czarnetzki made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thaden to approve the resolution stating the Planning Commission verified the proposed TIF District policy is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Willmar.

The motion carried.

- 5. SIGN SECTION OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE DISCUSSION CONTINUED: The Planning Commission postponed the discussion till the next meeting.
- 6. There being no further information to come before the Commission the meeting closed at 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Megan M. DeSchepper, AICP
Planner/Airport Manager