



MEETING: Site Review Committee
SUBJECT: Men's Halfway House
ADDRESS: 1408 – 1412 Chicago Street

LOCATION: City Hall
DATE: March 24, 2009

PRELIMINARY SITE REVIEW

IN ATTENDANCE:

Craig Phillips, Planning Director (219) 462-1161
Matt Kras, Storm Water Engineer (219) 462-1161
Tim Burkman, Engineering Director (219) 462-1161
Jack Johnson, Fire Department (219) 462-8325
Ed Pilarski, Water Reclamation Dept. (219) 464-4973
Chuck McIntire, Water Dept. (219) 462-6174
Vicki Thrasher, Building Commissioner (219) 462-1161
Ed Pilarski, Water Reclamation Dept. (219) 462-4973
Media

PRESENTERS:

Mitch Peters, Attorney
219-983-2662
midcoast@earthlink.net

Email addresses for the above City of Valparaiso Departments can be found at www.valpo.us.
The following is a summary of discussion at this meeting:

The Site Review Committee met to discuss a proposed men's halfway house. Phillips stated that site review is not an approval. Rather, it is a preliminary discussion of the requirements and issues to be considered by the developer or owner. It is possible it will need to come back before site review or to seek other approvals.

Peters explained that he is the chairperson for the not for profit corporation. The submitted plan is a concept of the proposed project. The halfway house is limited to 16 people that will live within the residential treatment program. The project works in conjunction with the county court system. Residents may be referrals of the drug program and will reside at the house for 6 months to 2 years. They will also be required to have a sponsor and attend a 12 step self help program. Reporting is required as well as maintaining employment. Signing in and out of the facility is mandatory. Security cameras are anticipated to be placed along the three hallways and will record everything that happens onto a digital backup. The rear parking lot area will also have a security camera in place as well as along the driveway on the west side. The cook on staff will provide 5 evening meals per week. The facility is modeled after Alice's Halfway House and will be staffed 24 hours per day. It's hopeful to integrate with some of the local facilities in the community for MMPI testing, behavioral counseling, and the prevention of relapse. Anyone with an extensive criminal record will not be a suitable resident. The home is for those with a substance abuse problem. When considering the statistics of those affected in some way with substance abuse, Peters pointed out the significant need for such a facility. The purchase of this property is contingent on the approval of the City as well as funding by the County. The building was built in 1978 and is in excellent shape, although new furnaces and air conditioning are also included in the proposal. The facility has plenty of space in order to provide for the necessary programming. Smoke detectors in each room and emergency hallway lighting are intended. Along with the central exit, there will be exists at the end of each hallway leading out of the building. Peters added that this project is supported by the County and many individuals with significant experience and importance. The property is well situated within a favorable location and would be considered an

improvement to the neighborhood. Extensive remodeling is anticipated with the assistance of several volunteers. The YMCA has offered available passes and free AIDS testing will more than likely remain available. A nutrition and healthy cooking seminar are anticipated. The goal is to get people to become productive members of society. The facilities intention is to provide a safe, compliant, and fully supervised environment. Medical care services will be handled through Hilltop Project, self help meetings, and drug court involvement. Peters commented that they are confident this project is financially feasible. Residents are required to pay \$125.00 per week for rent. The square footage may be between 4,000 and 5,000 square feet. Peters added that the facility will be smoke free. There is also a significant amount of parking for the facility. The placement of a sign is anticipated in the future.

Thrasher strongly advised getting an architect involved since major remodeling will take place. Submitting the plans to the State for plan review is also required. A design professional will provide direction in regards to the proper separations, lighting, etc. Commercial equipment such as a hood system in the kitchen also requires the need for a State Design Release. Thrasher pointed out that there will be some separation issues and ensuring that everything is code compliant is critical.

Johnson said that the Fire Department supports the Building Commissioner's statements recommending a design professional. Johnson also pointed out that the occupancy load is 16 occupants rather than residents. A design professional will be able to clarify the exact square footage. A Knox Box will be required if the smoke detectors are monitored. As long as the use and occupancy does not change, the Fire Department has no other issues. Phillips commented that based on the drawing, the square footage is just under 5,200 square feet.

In reference to the water issue, McIntire stated that there is a number 4 by the water meters as well as on the electric meter in the garage. Peters said there may be 4 water meters since there are 4 units however, the intention is condensing into one electric feed and one water feed. McIntire clarified that the requirements are only 1 meter per 1 service. Currently the building has a 2" water service with a full 1" meter. The size is probably adequate for what is needed although McIntire said the meter size may need to be increased to 1 1/2". The design professionals will be able to determine this. Backflow prevention is also needed.

Pilarski expressed concern as to what will be discharged into the sanitary sewer system. A disposal plan for medications is necessary. In order to determine if a 1,000 gallon unit oil and grease interceptor or a properly sized grease trap is required, an interior plumbing plan is necessary.

Burkman said if the water meter size increases, a sanitary sewer permit will be required for the change in discharge. A proposed parking configuration for the site is needed. Peters clarified to Burkman that the work taking place is interior and there are no proposed changes around the site.

Kras stated that by eliminating some of the pavement and replacing with a grass area or some type of landscaping is beneficial. There are no concerns regarding storm water or erosion control since there isn't any additional pavement or building addition taking place.

Phillips said the project is being reviewed under the previous zoning ordinance. The application for special approval for the project through the BZA was received in process prior to the date of adoption of the UDO. Based on the Cities standard, parking is adequate. Prior conversations had taken place to better understand the project. The required special exception for this project is on the April BZA agenda. In order to ensure that invasive species are not introduced to the site, a landscape plan is needed if any new landscaping is expected. Discussion is necessary if any trees will be removed from the site. A tree replacement plan may then be needed. Signage on the property is limited to low profile or monument style only. Signage for the apartments across the street can be used as an example. Phillips added that this will be a condition of BZA approval as well. A dumpster on the site must be gated and screened using a wood or vinyl fence. If the dumpster faces the roadway, an aesthetically appropriate method of screening is important. Any signage will require a permit.

Peters acknowledges that the project is not likely possible if the County doesn't fund. Peters also clarified to Johnson that programs will be held at the facility for the occupants. It may be a possibility that some other self help meetings may take place at the site. Johnson pointed out that this will then change the use and occupancy to possibly a business class when public is involved. Peters said this issue is clear and his hope is to get the project funded by the County in order to move ahead.

ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED:

Landscaping plan (with Tree Survey)

Interior Plumbing Plan

Knox Box

BZA Approval

Detailed Site Plan

Sanitary/Sewer

Backflow Prevention

Site Improvement Permit

State Design Release

Building Permit

Signage / Fencing Permit

Zoning Clearance