

**CITY OF ELIZABETH CITY
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, June 7, 2016
4:00 PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Ernest Sutton, Chairman
Sonny DiGirolamo
Carlton O'Neal
Suzanne Stallings
Don Witosky

Also present were June Brooks, Planning Director; Cheryl Eggar, Planner; Dawn Harris, Secretary to the Board; and applicants.

Chairman Sutton asked for a motion to approve the agenda as presented for tonight's meeting. Ms. Stallings made a motion to **APPROVE** the agenda as written for the June 7, 2016 meeting. Mr. DiGirolamo seconded the motion. ***ALL IN FAVOR: SUTTON, DIGIROLAMO, O'NEAL, STALLINGS, AND WITOSKY. NONE OPPOSED. MOTION PASSED.***

Chairman Sutton called the meeting to order and stated that there was a quorum. He asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the March 8, 2016 Special Called Meeting. Mr. Witosky made a motion to **APPROVE** the minutes as read from the March 8, 2016 Planning Commission Special Called meeting. Mr. DiGirolamo seconded the motion. ***ALL IN FAVOR: SUTTON, DIGIROLAMO, O'NEAL, STALLINGS, AND WITOSKY. NONE OPPOSED. MOTION PASSED.***

Chairman Sutton asked for Ms. Harris to read the Statement of Disclosure as follows.

Elizabeth City Code of Ethics provides that public officials and employees be independent, impartial and responsible to the public; that governmental decisions and policy be made in proper channels of the governmental structure; that public office not be used for personal gain; and that the public have confidence in the integrity of its government. In recognition of these goals and in keeping with the ethical standards of conduct for city public officials and its employees, disclosure of interest in legislative action must be stated for the public record, as per City of Elizabeth City Code of Ordinances Section 2-113. Any member of the Planning Commission who has an interest, as defined in Section 2-111 of the City of Elizabeth City Code of Ordinances, in any official act or action before the Commission shall publicly disclose on the record of the Commission the nature and extent of such interest, and shall withdraw from any consideration of the matter if excused by the Commission pursuant to G.S. 160A-75.

New business on the agenda was **CASE NO.: SUP-01-16** filed by River City Community Development Corporation (RCCDC) for property located at 317 Culpepper Street. The applicant is requesting to operate a homeless shelter for River City YouthBuild participants in need of emergency shelter.

Ms. Eggar gave the following Staff Report.

STAFF REPORT

The case today is for a Special Use Permit, SUP 01-16, to operate homeless shelter at 317 Culpeper St.

The shelter will be owned and managed by River City Development Corporation. A staff person will be hired to act as an on-site resident manager. There will be a maximum of five occupants at the shelter in addition to a resident manager. At any one time, all of the homeless occupants will be required to be of the same sex. No compensation will be required from the occupants.

The purpose of the shelter is to provide emergency housing for participants of the River City Youth Build program who are 18 to 24 years of age. Youth Build is a program designed to provide economically disadvantaged young adults, ages 16-24, education and employment skills. The program provides construction and rehabilitation experience as well as academic classes, job skills training, leadership development and support services.

The residents will be permitted to stay at the shelter as long as they are active participant in the Youth Build program. It typically takes 9 to 12 months for individuals to complete the program. The 1,158 sf house was built in 1946 with three bedrooms and one bath. According to the applicant, a full bath will be added on the second floor. On the first floor one room will be converted into a bedroom for the resident manager. The living and dining areas will be combined to make one large room.

Based upon the amount of available sleeping area, the shelter will be permitted to have a maximum for five homeless persons sheltered there.

This application was heard by the Technical Review Committee at its regularly scheduled meeting on April 26, 2016. Comments made by Committee members were brief and included the following:

- Building Inspections requires that the windows meet the state building code standards for fire egress. It is recommended that a second means of egress be provided from the second floor. Since the building will have six or less residents it will be treated as a single family residence and will not be required to meet the commercial building code.
- The City manager is concerned with the shelter being sexually comingled and the problems that it creates. The applicant agrees to have all of the homeless residents at any one time to be of the same sex.
- Public works has a concern with on-street parking and the accessibility of emergency vehicles when there are major events and funeral processions from the Mt. Lebanon AME Zion Church located across the street.
- The Fire Department is requiring that a fire alarm system be installed throughout the shelter and that emergency backup lights will be provided on each floor.
- Planning Department requested clarification in regards to the fourth bedroom since only three rooms with closets were shown on the floor plan. It was stated that the left front room will be used as a bedroom for the resident manager. It was verified that there would not be any non-resident volunteers working at the shelter or any vehicles involved with the daily operations.

Staff has determined that this property meets all requirements specified in the Unified Development Ordinance and as such is suitable for the proposed use. This shelter will accommodate a maximum of six persons living at the residence. Staff recommends approval with the following conditions:

1. No more than six persons, including the resident manager, shall be sheltered at the facility at any one time;
2. With the exception of the resident manager, the persons sheltered at the facility shall be of one sex;
3. The windows shall meet the required fire egress requirements;
4. A fire alarm system shall be installed;
5. Backup emergency lighting shall be installed on both floors of the structure.
6. The applicant adhere to the minimum parking standards by providing on-site or off-site (but not on the street) parking for residents, staff, and vehicles for the operation of the shelter;
7. As per the Unified Development Ordinance the applicant is required to renew the special use permit annually. Failure to apply for a renewal within the specified time period shall render the special use permit null and void.

This concluded Staff's report.

Chairman Sutton asked for the applicant to come forward. Ms. Angie Wills came forward to give an overview of the request. Ms. Wills is the Program Manager for River City YouthBuild. Ms. Wills stated that she believes everything has been covered in the initial overview and described very well as it relates to what their objectives are. She stated that River City CDC has operated YouthBuild since 1999. Every year it is a growing concern as it relates to the population of young people served in the program that do not have anywhere to live. Often times that can cause a hardship as it relates to their agency trying to provide them a quality education, job training skills and all the services that are encompassed in Youth Build. Not knowing where their young people have laid their heads the night before creates an opportunity for their agency to have to provide some comprehensive support system for the young people. Ms. Wills stated that they feel this shelter will be able to close the gap on the areas that they are not able to accomplish in their program as it stands today. The homeless shelter will assist them in creating long term success for their young people.

Chairman Sutton asked if there were questions from the Commission. Ms. Stallings asked Ms. Wills if she felt that there is enough funding for them to be able to afford the home, power and food. Ms. Wills stated that their board of directors are now working on a capital campaign in order to raise the additional money that will be needed to operate the house in the long-term. Ms. Wills stated that they have all of the money they need for the construction as it relates to the initial things such as bringing the house up to code, install the bathroom and bringing the house up to code. She stated that they are a non-profit and in the business of fundraising. That is something that their board of directors as aggressively working on. Ms. Stallings asked regarding the person that would be the "house mom;" would this be a paid position or would this be a person in training. Ms. Wills stated that they will contract with someone to stay in the home and manage the property. She stated that they will be a part of their YouthBuild team.

Mr. DiGirolamo stated he is not familiar with YouthBuild and asked if it is strictly Elizabeth City. Ms. Wills stated that they serve six surrounding counties in North Carolina. Mr. DiGirolamo asked if they have a home base. Ms. Wills stated that their home base is on Ehringhaus Street; 303 West Ehringhaus Street. She stated that they provide transportation for the young people that reside in other counties.

Chairman Sutton asked for clarification on a statement in the Staff Analysis; page 6, top paragraph, last sentence: "It was verified that there would not be any non-resident volunteers working at the shelter or any vehicles involved with the daily operations." Ms. Eggar stated that because Public Works would like the on-street parking to be kept at a minimum, she was verifying that there would not be any additional parking needs. Chairman Sutton stated that he doesn't quite understand the "non-resident volunteers" statement. He asked if it means that there will not be any volunteers involved other than the residents or will there be other people involved. Ms. Wills stated that the young people including the manager will maintain and sustain the house. There will be no need for volunteers at the shelter. Any outside workshops or counseling will be handled onsite at the YouthBuild program and not at the house.

Chairman Sutton asked if it was customary that there be an annual renewal. Ms. Brooks stated yes that is part of the UDO requirements and is done through the Board of Adjustment.

Chairman Sutton asked if the participants had to be YouthBuild participants. Ms. Wills stated, absolutely.

Ms. Stallings commented that if there was one female to stay then all the males would not be able to stay at the shelter. Ms. Wills stated that their ultimate goal is to have no one stay at the shelter. They want their young people to have permanent housing; however, they have a partnership with the local female and male shelters.

Mr. DiGirolamo asked if this business had been going on for a while. Ms. Wills stated since 1999. He asked since it has been run back that far is there a success rate. Ms. Wills stated that their program outcomes for YouthBuild are four components: job placement and education placement and that is post-secondary education. Not just placed but retention. As long as young people are in the program at least 75% of the participants upon exiting the program are working full-time jobs and/or in post-secondary education and sometimes both. She stated that they are always looking at numerousy and literacy games because they know if they are going to be able to retain those placements in post-secondary they need to know college math. So, that is another goal. Recidivism--if young people are in the program and have been involved in the court system--Ms. Wills stated that right now have 0% recidivism. Which means, once they go through YouthBuild they are not convicted of a new crime. They are also looking at certificate and degree attainment such as PAT certification and they work with the college on CNA's. Ms. Wills stated that they have successfully exceeded their Department of Labor goals since 2001.

Chairman Sutton asked for a motion. Mr. Witosky made a motion to **APPROVE SUP-01-16** as presented for a homeless shelter for YouthBuild participants. Mr. O'Neal seconded the motion. **ALL IN FAVOR: SUTTON, DIGIROLAMO, O'NEAL, STALLINGS, AND WITOSKY. NONE OPPOSED. MOTION PASSED.**

Chairman Sutton said to Ms. Mackey and Ms. Wills that they have done extraordinary work with the youth over the years. He appreciates that Ms. Walker has donated this home to assist these youth in our community.

Chairman Sutton asked for Staff's Report. Ms. Brooks stated that staff has had some discussion with individuals for businesses going out on the Halstead Corridor. Locations possibly at Thunder Road and Tanglewood and Halstead.

Mr. Witosky stated that it looked like we have a new restaurant at the old train station. Ms. Brooks stated that it did. Mr. Witosky noted that the old sign is still up and all they have is a banner. The restaurant is its About Thyme. Ms. Stallings mentioned that they were at the Taste of the Albemarle and had very good food.

Ms. Brooks stated that the Flour Girls opened this week downtown.

Chairman Sutton stated that Island Breeze is opening their Loft Garden. Ribbon cutting is Thursday. It is to be an event center. He recommended everyone going by to see it.

Chairman Sutton asked for member concerns. Mr. O'Neal made a statement that the shelter they just heard is near his church. He has no problem with the parking. Mr. DiGirolamo stated that looking through the documents he sees that there are vacant lots on either side of the house. Ms. Wills stated that is correct. He asked if they were local owners. She stated yes. He asked if they had approached anyone. Ms. Wills stated yes.

With no further business, Mr. DiGirolamo made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Stallings seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed and meeting was adjourned.
Respectfully submitted by,

Dawn Harris
Secretary to the Board

****Minutes approved at the October 4, 2016 Planning Commission meeting.****