

MINUTES  
City of Alpena Planning Commission  
Regular Meeting  
August 20, 2019  
Alpena, Michigan

CALL TO ORDER:

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Paul Sabourin, Planning Commission Chair.

ROLL CALL: PLANNING COMMISSION

PRESENT: Mitchell, Gilmore, VanWagoner, Boboltz, Sabourin, Austin, Kirschner

ABSENT: Lewis, Wojda (*Wojda arrived at 7:05*)

STAFF: Adam Poll (Director of Planning & Development), Cassie Stone (Recording Secretary).

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Agenda was approved as printed

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

July 30, 2019, minutes approved as printed.

PUBLIC HEARING AND COMMISSION ACTION:

- 1. P.C. Case No. 19-Z-02. Hope Network Affordable Independent Living & Services, 3075 Orchard Vista Dr. SE, Grand Rapids MI 49546 are requesting the property located at 555 S. Fifth Avenue is rezoned from R-2 Single Family Residence District to Planned Unit Development District for the purpose of converting the existing vacant school building to an independent senior living facility. Article 5.24.**

Poll presented the Staff Report and Recommendation to the Commission.

Sheila Campbell, 885 Corey Drive, Delton, MI, stated that they have just recently changed to incorporating historic tax credit into the deal which changes the planned (40) units to (35) units. The plans have changed to keep the gymnasium whole from the previously designed idea to break it into (5) units. Campbell added that she would like to address the Planning Commission's desire to have the exterior materials be brick. Additions are to be differentiated from old resulting in the possibility of it being made to

look a little different so it will not look like it is the original portion of the building. Campbell questioned if this could result in a different brick color or some kind of variation that could be included in the conditions. Poll stated that wording could be added in the conditions to allow for possible variances in coloration. Campbell also explained the housing quality that Hope Network does is really focusing on the future, maintenance, care and quality of life for their tenants. Looking at the environment is also key in designing including LED fixtures and low flow fixtures.

**FAVOR:**

Dr. David D. Dargis, owner of Dargis Properties and the owner of the property being discussed. Dargis explained that he was hoping someone like Hope Network would come in and see this property as having potential and be able to utilize it within our community. Dargis added that he invests all of his money locally and any money acquired from the sale will be turned around and invested back into the community. This sale will also create jobs and be able to house seniors. Dargis is really hoping to see this move forward.

**OPPOSITION:**

Todd Bowen, 514 S. Fifth Street which is right across the street from the school, has lived there since 1994. Bowen is very concerned about the parking that is being proposed. Previously when it was a charter school, he and his wife had a terrible time trying to get out of their driveway. Bowen added with this parking situation it will become a 24 hour 7 day a week issue instead of the prior school schedule where traffic would be cleared by 4:00, no weekends or no summer month issues. Adding all of the extra parking spots will also become chaos during the winter months when the roads will have to be plowed. Bowen also questioned why the addition was not being constructed on the playground rather than where people would park which would block the parking, will it raise our taxes and/or bring our property value down, when will the project begin, would construction happen on the weekends? Why haven't any other places been considered such as the old Alpena Power Company site which already has adequate parking, has walking distance for the elderly including the post office, grocery store and a library. Bowen added that it's not that people are against it rather they just don't want the chaos in the neighborhood, Fifth Street tore up and made into parking where neighbors will be bombarded with vehicles in front of houses, seven days a week. Bowen was told that the building is full of asbestos and questioned if the asbestos will be removed? Bowen also presented the Planning Commission with a copy of twenty five signatures of surrounding residents that have signed a petition to stop the project. The biggest complaint, Bowen stated, was not having Fifth Street and McKinley Avenue disrupted. Bowen closed with if this rezone does happen can it be rezoned to something else further down the line? Poll stated if anything more than a small change is requested the rezone request would have to come back to the Planning Commission for approval

and public notices would be sent out just like they were for this hearing. Austin stated that he also lives on Fifth and asked Bowen what his biggest issue was with this project in which Bowen replied parking.

**OPPOSITION:**

Peter McCormick, 108 McKinley, states his biggest concern is also the proposed parking especially during the winter. McCormick also added that he questions the rezoning of the property and if the project goes south then what could happen. Poll stated that if the rezoning is changed it would have to come back before the Planning Commission and also be approved by Council as well. McCormick said he was out of town this weekend and could not attend the meeting that was instigated by Hope Network and was very disappointed with the short notice of the meeting that was held at the school. Poll explained that the site plan shows 40 off street parking stalls. Right now they are proposing 35 units. There would not be reserved parking available on Fifth Street, Saginaw or McKinley for development. Being its independent living status, Poll doubts that there would be very many staff onsite consuming parking spots. Street parking is open to the public as many other streets in the City are as well and is available to the public right now so no additional changes would be made. Poll also added that any old building will have asbestos and any grant that he has come across that has a residential habitation you are required to survey and abate the asbestos. It is a requirement anytime you are using federal or state money.

Dargis added that he attended the meeting last weekend at the school and there was a lot of people there and a lot of these issues were questioned and addressed and the vast majority (approximately 30 in attendance) was in favor of the development. Dargis also added that he had the building professionally evaluated at a level one for asbestos. There is some asbestos contained underneath the school that is not accessible to anyone and it was in the report that he had provided and was not a threat to anyone in the present state.

*Closed public hearing at 7:23*

**COMMISSIONER'S DISCUSSION AND ACTION:**

Todd Bowen went back up to the podium and wanted clarification that no widening or reserving parking spots would be happening on Fifth Street or McKinley in which Poll stated previously Hope Network requested to do that but Poll stated that staff would not consider that because presently those parking spots are public and available first come, first serve.

Wojda stated that when he looks at the project he sees a substantial proposed economic investment in our community. A residential use within a residential area which will be used by people in this community for a residential purpose and feels it's far better than the current situation as a vacant building. Wojda ended with it's a major step in the right direction. VanWagoner requested some information on storm water. Poll stated that there were some issues proposed from residents by the basketball court where there have been some reported drainage issues running off the basketball court onto the adjoining property. Dargis stated that the building itself will prevent that snow from being plowed up against the fence and melting in there. VanWagoner also questioned the section in the staff report that stated drainage would have to be contained onsite. Poll stated Engineering will have to analyze the drainage plans but right now the design is not at that point. Eventually the plans will have to show that run off water is contained or at least not being pushed onto someone else's property. Gilmore questioned what the actual age allowed in the facility will be. Virgie, from Hope Network, stated that the age category being used for this particular senior living is a minimum of 55 years of age or older. The facility will be 35 units and income restricted meaning it will be limited by the person living there would have to have a limited income. The purpose of this is to help out people that struggle to find independent living. Virgie added that affordable senior housing across the country is a national catastrophe right now. Sabourin questioned what the income sealing was. Virgie stated she believes that Hope Network is targeting 60 percent of AMI (Area Median Income) although her analyst would know the number, she is unsure. Austin questioned what type of facility this was going to be? After looking at Hope Networks Website it looks like it is focused on disabled people. Virgie stated that Hope Network is a 160 million dollar nonprofit organization. The segment of Hope Network that Virgie manages is the segment that this project is currently focused on. This particular property will be just for seniors. Gilmore questioned what is projected for staffing at the facility? Virgie explained that there will be three staff members which would include a property manager that would come to the facility most days. Virgie added that she has a professional management group called KMG Prestige that will travel around to the various places that they manage where they could already have somewhere close to here where they also manage so they could stop maybe three days a week. A service coordinator would be dedicated to this particular property along with a maintenance person. Between the three someone would be staged their everyday onsite. Austin questioned what was to become of the gymnasium. Virgie stated that previously Hope Network wanted to turn the gymnasium into three loft units and two apartments but have decided against it.

**Motion made by Wojda**, to approve the request, to rezone from R-2 to PUD for 35 units, with the recommended conditions, exception of the first condition. Move to amend to read as follows: the new addition is constructed to a style consistent with the

existing building with a flat roof and a masonry exterior. The other conditions will remain as recommended. **Seconded by Boboltz.**

**Ayes:** Gilmore, Boboltz, VanWagoner, Wojda, Mitchell, Austin, Kirschner, Sabourin

**Nayes:** None

**Absent:** Lewis

Motion approved by a vote of 8-0.

For clarification Sabourin stated this will now proceed to Council with Planning Commission's recommendation for the final say. It will be presented at the September 3, 2019, City Council meeting. There will also be two readings for the change as well. The second change reading will occur mid-September.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** No other communications were received other than on the case at hand.

**REPORTS:**

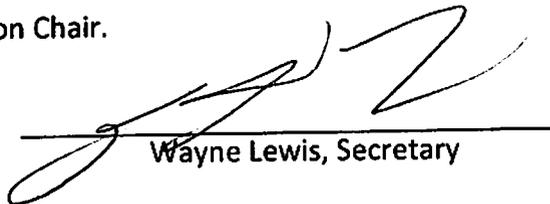
**1. Development Update**

Poll stated several projects around the City are proceeding such as Besser Assisted Living Facility and Northland Credit Union headquarters is still underway and making progress. The road project around City Hall has been completed and Wilson Street is still being constructed to relieve some of the traffic congestion in that area from the school. Work is continuing with the MEDC on a number of grants but nothing has been officially approved yet. Poll will keep the Planning Commission updated.

**CALL TO PUBLIC:** None

**MEMBER'S COMMENTS:** Wojda stated although there was a quiet crowd at the meeting, he is grateful to see such a large amount of public involvement today.

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m. by Sabourin, Planning Commission Chair.



Wayne Lewis, Secretary