

MINUTES OF THE OTTAWA PLAN COMMISSION MEETING January 24, 2022

Chairman Brent Barron called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM in the Ottawa City Council Chambers.

ROLL CALL - Present: Barron, McConville, Stone, Hughes, Ruiz, Burns, Volker, Sesto.
Absent: Mangold. Others: City Planner Doug Carroll of Carroll Planning, LLC

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: Approval of the minutes from the November 22, 2021 meeting. Moved by Stone, seconded by Volker.

Ayes: Barron, McConville, Stone, Hughes, Ruiz, Burns, Volker, Sesto.

Nays: None

Motion Carried.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

1. *Public hearing to consider a request from Illinois Valley PADS for a conditional use for a homeless shelter at 401 E. McKinley Road.*

Barron opened the public hearing and explained the rules for the public hearing. McConville noted for the record she represents Illinois Valley PADS as their real estate broker and will be abstaining from voting. Sesto disclosed he is employed by OSF St. Elizabeth (seller of subject property) but that he has nothing to gain one way or the other.

Carol Alcorn of Illinois Valley PADS spoke on behalf of PADS. She introduced the PADS board and staff. Alcorn shared a PowerPoint presentation (attached). Alcorn noted they do not plan to change much of the existing site other than adding a new building. Alcorn spoke of the challenges of the existing PADS location and of finding a new location. She noted the shelter is in operation from August 15th to May 31st and all residents are screened for being a sex offender and all bags are checked for drugs and weapons before entry. Alcorn expressed she is not aware any conflicts with surrounding property owners. She noted the proposed location is close to some services like child care, grocery, and employment.

Barron clarified about the proposed building and whether it would be single story. Alcorn said it would be single story. Barron asked how many people it could hold. Alcorn stated 55-60 beds. Barron asked how many times police and fire come to the current facility. Alcorn thought the

number was approximately 27 and a majority were for such things as a toaster setting off the fire alarm.

Volker asked if residents have to leave during the day. Alcorn replied they do not.

Hughes asked if there is space to expand the building or reconfigure if necessary. Alcorn said the drawing depicts the pieces they want and an architect will help them design an appropriate space.

Barron asked how many children from Ottawa were serviced. Marissa, program director for Ottawa PADS, said she doesn't have an exact number but the number is higher than the Peru facility. Volker asked about burglaries and trespassing by PADS residents in the surrounding neighborhood of their current facility. Marissa stated police come to them almost weekly with pictures of people who have committed crimes and she can think of maybe one time that a picture was one of their residents.

Barron asked if residents are prescreened prior to entry. Marissa stated they were. Barron asked where do they go if denied and Marissa stated they work with other shelters to try to place them in the bigger shelters. Barron asked where residents that are removed go. Marissa said they try to work with other shelters but sometimes they don't know where they go.

Volker clarified that residents are screened for being child sex offenders. Alcorn stated they are and continued that they cannot allow child sex offenders in their building.

Hughes asked about employment placement. Marissa gave several examples of where residents work in the area.

Chief of Police Brent Roalson, 1105 Sunridge, stated he is supportive of PADS but does not support the requested location. Roalson stated there were 85 public safety calls for the PADS shelter in 2021. He said 20-25 were medical related. Roalson provided some statistics to the Plan Commission (attached). He stated it is a luxury having the current facility close to the police and fire station. He is worried the distance of the proposed location from the police and fire station will add to the time needed for the public safety calls which would also reduce the ability to respond to other calls not related to the PADS shelter.

Volker clarified there were 85 public safety calls. Roalson confirmed and reiterated its more the spread of resources.

Debbie Smith - 400 Jim Thomas Circle - Is concerned with safety of senior citizens and location of schools. McConville asked Alcorn if there is a senior high rise located near their current location. Alcorn stated there is.

Diane Carr - 1000 Lakewood Drive - Stated her son-in-law lives in house immediately east of proposed site. She noted baseball starts in April across the street of the proposed location. She voiced concern with traffic in the area. She is also concerned with house value.

Harry Moore - 426 Jim Thomas Circle - Moore is concerned with neighborhood safety.

Keith Erickson - 423 Jim Thomas Circle - Voiced concern with safety.

Madison Greene - 1529 Seminole Drive - Has concern with safety of police response time, seniors, and children.

Chris Burns - 937 Christie - Works with many in the homeless population. Expressed he is in favor of the location.

Ryan Peterson - 500 Cassidy - Is concerned with property values and increased drug usage in the neighboring area.

Robert Emmanuelson - Seminole Drive - Is concerned with seniors and police response time.

Adam Clark - 714 Arch - Is opposed to the location. Clark provided numbers on how many residential units are near the proposed location.

Catherine Liepold - 937 Christie - Stated she works in child welfare and is frustrated that many of the comments tonight revolve around safety and she asked why some people are feeling that way.

Chris Saar - 1212 Hickory - Saar thanked PADS for the services they provide. Noted there is a need for PADS but said he does not believe this location is the best one.

Laura Plumbs (?) - 1434 Pembroke Lane - Is concerned about where people from the homeless shelter go during the day.

Pat Calvert - 411 Jim Thomas - Is glad we have a PADS but is concerned with safety.

Barron asked Alcorn about ex-convicts coming to the shelter. Alcorn stated they have had 6 ex-felons in the last quarter.

Marissa with PADS explained once in a while they do get a call from the Department of Corrections to take in someone who just got out of jail. She noted 9 times out of 10 they are not able to because they are registered sex offenders.

Barron asked what time the residents have to be in the facility at night. Alcorn stated they need to be in by 4:00 pm.

Hughes asked what is the disadvantage at building at their current site. Alcorn stated the time required to demolish and build a new building is an issue. She noted they would have to relocate residents temporarily.

McConville stated there are deed restrictions that limit the area they could build on. Carroll noted those have been lifted. Discussion ensued about how much space is on the current site.

Alcorn addressed some of the safety concerns and noted the area is safer with the PADS residents within the shelter as opposed to wandering the neighborhoods.

Barron asked Carroll if the PADS built on the proposed site then moved what type of use could go there. Carroll noted it is zoned C-3 so any use in that zoning category. Barron asked what if another homeless shelter wanted to locate there and Carroll stated they would have to apply for a conditional use.

Burns stated her support for the PADS program but voiced concerns with the proposed location.

Barron noted the Plan Commission did receive three letters, one from Susan Jones, 531

Cherokee, in opposition; one from First United Methodist Church in favor; and one from Tiffany R. Green in favor.

Stone voiced his concern with the location and possible strain on the police force.

Volker noted it is great to see the community support for PADS but has concerns with the location.

Barron expressed concern in general with affordable housing and homelessness.

Being no further discussion, Burns made the motion to deny the request from Illinois Valley PADS for a conditional use for a homeless shelter at 401 E. McKinley Road.

Seconded by Volker.

Ayes: Stone, Hughes, Ruiz, Burns, Volker, Sesto

Nays: Barron

McConville abstained.

Motion Carried.

2. Public hearing to consider a request from Steep Hill Illinois (Delta Nine Labs) for a conditional use for an adult use cannabis testing establishment at 130 E. Madison Street.

Barron opened the public hearing. John Tinsley, Delta 9 Labs & Steep Hill Illinois, appeared before the Plan Commission. He stated the subject site is currently office space.

Barron asked about on site destruction of samples. Tinsley said they will either incinerate on site or contract with a licensed waste management. Tinsley said he would likely contract with a licensed waste management company. Barron asked how many samples in a year. Tinsley said approximately 12 samples a day.

Hughes asked if they would occupy entire building. Tinsley stated they would.

Burns asked if there was odor involved with incineration. Tinsley stated there would not be. He also stated if there was an issue they would simply ship the waste product out instead of incinerate.

Stone asked about employee parking. Tinsley stated there is plenty of parking behind the building.

McConville asked if there are any periodic State inspections. Tinsley stated there are numerous inspections.

Being no further discussion, McConville made the motion to recommend approval of the request from Steep Hill Illinois (Delta Nine Labs) for a conditional use for an adult use cannabis testing establishment at 130 E. Madison Street.

Seconded by Hughes.

Ayes: Barron, McConville, Stone, Hughes, Ruiz, Burns, Sesto

Nays: Volker

Motion Carried.

3. *Public hearing to consider a request from CL Real Estate Development for a conditional use to allow dwelling units on the ground floor in the C-5 Secondary Central Business District for property located at 815-817 Columbus Street.*

Barron oped the public hearing. Earl Leckey appeared as the architect for the petitioner and explained the project.

Volker asked if the market is higher end. Leckey stated it was.

Volker asked Carroll to explain the conditional use.

Carroll stated the C-4 and C-5 districts are designed to encourage retail type uses. He noted when the district language was drafted, the City recognized the C-5 district extends out from the central downtown core and there could be some properties where retail on the ground floor doesn't make the best sense. The conditional use allows the City to look at properties on a case by case basis to determine if residential on the ground floor makes sense.

Katie Troccoli, 1911 Champlain St., owner of 811 Columbus Street (neighbor to the north) noted there is a sidewalk between the properties and she believes it is on her property. McConville asked if there was a survey done. Leckey stated there was and he believes it shows the sidewalk is on the petitioner's property. Troccoli stated she is in favor of the project but she just wanted to bring the sidewalk issue to their attention.

Being no further discussion, Stone made a motion to recommend approval of a request from CL Real Estate Development for a conditional use to allow dwelling units on the ground floor in the C-5 Secondary Central Business District for property located at 815-817 Columbus Street. Stone added to the motion that ownership of the sidewalk needs to be addressed.

Seconded by Volker.

Ayes: Barron, McConville, Stone, Hughes, Ruiz, Burns, Sesto, Volker

Nayes: None

Motion Carried.

Being no further business, Stone adjourned the meeting at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Douglas Carroll, AICP
Carroll Planning, LLC