

MINUTES
WOODSTOCK PLAN COMMISSION

January 28, 2016
City Council Chambers

A special meeting of the Woodstock Plan Commission was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairwoman Katherine Parkhurst on Thursday, January 28, 2016 in the Council Chambers at City Hall. She welcomed new Plan Commission member Jacki Speciale. A roll call was taken.

PLAN COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Robert Horrell, Doreen Paluch, Steve Gavers, Darrell Moore, Jack Porter, Jacki Speciale, and Katherine Parkhurst.

PLAN COMMISSION MEMBERS EXCUSED: Erich Thurow.

PLAN COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: Don Fortin.

STAFF PRESENT: Planning and Zoning Administrator James Kastner, City Attorney T.J. Clifton, and Building & Zoning Director Joe Napolitano.

OTHERS PRESENT: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by D. Paluch, seconded by D. Moore, to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2015 Plan Commission meeting as presented. R. Horrell noted that the last sentence in paragraph 4 on page 2 should read "... and not to ...". Ayes: J. Porter, R. Horrell, D. Paluch, S. Gavers, D. Moore, Jacki Speciale, and K. Parkhurst. Nays: none. Absentees: D. Fortin and E. Thurow. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

1. PUBLIC COMMENT - There was no Public Comment.

2. OLD BUSINESS - There was no Old Business.

3. NEW BUSINESS – Public Hearing - Amendment of Woodstock Christian Life Services (dba Hearthstone Communities) special use permit, allowing property at 930 Northampton Street to be redeveloped with a three-unit single family attached residential structure and approving specific variances for said project.

Chairwoman Katherine Parkhurst verified the presence of a quorum, confirmed that applicable public hearing notice requirements had been met, and opened the public hearing.

Beth Burg, Director of Sales for Hearthstone Communities, stated that special use approval was being requested so that a three-plex residential structure for older individuals could be built at 930 Northampton Street. She noted that the property had been acquired several years ago and was currently occupied by a dilapidated single-family home that would be demolished. Ms. Burg pointed out that there is strong demand for the type of residences which Hearthstone is hoping to build. She also discussed the variations which were being requested in order to allow the property to be developed as proposed and pointed out

that the building would be closer to the north line (next to land owned by Hearthstone) of the subject property and further away from the rear lot line than the existing home.

D. Moore inquired as to Hearthstone's long term plans for the area. Ms. Burg indicated that Hearthstone owned adjoining land to the north and across the street to the west, and that the owner of the subject property had approached Hearthstone about buying it.

J. Porter expressed unease with building a three-plex on the property and how it would impact the surrounding one- and two-family neighborhood. He indicated that he would be more comfortable with a duplex on the property and stated that the proposal appeared to involve placing 10 pounds of "stuff" into a 5 pound bag. Given the size of the parcel and area land uses, he did not think the density was acceptable.

R. Horrell opined that he was not opposed to the concept, but was concerned with the number of variances being requested and the lack of hardship which does not exist. He thought that the building was too large for the lot size, and stated that he could not support a three-unit structure.

K. Parkhurst agreed with Commissioner Horrell and thought that the number and extent of the variations was too great.

D. Paluch also agreed with the previous comments from the Commission members and that based on the lot size and neighboring land uses, a duplex would be more appropriate. She added that the number of variations could be greatly reduced if a duplex was proposed.

S. Gavers concurred with previous comments and noted that it would be the first three-plex in a neighborhood that was largely occupied by one- and two-family homes. J. Speciale also agreed with the comments made by the other Commission members and indicated a duplex would be more appropriate especially in regard to its impact on area neighbors.

Charwoman Parkhurst opened the hearing to comments from the public.

Roy Williams, 926 Northampton, expressed concern with the location of the proposed driveway and how the property would drain. He advised the Commission that there were no storm sewers in the area and that drainage could be an issue.

Chris Jensen, 951 Irving Avenue, felt that the Commission should determine whether or not the petitioner was a good neighbor before making any decisions. He informed the Commission that Hearthstone was dumping junk and debris (railroad ties, brush, dirt, concrete, etc.) on property they own at the east end of Crescent Court and immediately west of his property. Mr. Jensen also questioned the impact of this project on neighboring property values; he commented on homes on Marvel Avenue which are for sale and asked if future owners were made aware of the petition.

Victoria Doyle, 927 Marvel Avenue, thought that three-plex was too much for the size of the subject lot and for the density of the surrounding neighborhood. In response to her question, J. Kastner explained the status of a former public alley which had been vacated and formed a portion of Hearthstone's property.

John Widmayer, 925 Northampton, stated that he had concerns similar to those expressed by his neighbors.

Chairwoman Parkhurst observed that the Commission appeared to have major concerns with the number and extent of variances being requested and was more supportive of a duplex on the subject property rather than a three-plex. She advised the Commission members that they could recommend approval or denial of the special use petition as presented, vote to continue the public hearing to a future meeting in order to give the petitioner time to revise the special use petition and respond to Plan Commission and public comments, or recommend approval of the special use, subject to the petitioner constructing a duplex structure instead of a three-plex structure and reduce the number variations.

Beth Berg requested that the public hearing on Hearthstone's request be continued to February 25, 2016 so that the petitioner could have time to respond to comments from the Plan Commission and public.

J. Porter moved, seconded by R. Horrell, to continue the public hearing to the Commission's regularly scheduled meeting at 7:00 p.m. on February 25, 2016 at City Hall, so that the petitioner can respond to comments generated by the Plan Commission members and the public. Ayes: J. Porter, R. Horrell, D. Paluch, S. Gavers, D. Moore, Jacki Speciale, and K. Parkhurst. Nays: none. Absentees: D. Fortin and E. Thurow. Abstentions: none. Motion carried.

4. DISCUSSION – J. Kastner advised the Commission that he was retiring in March and that Building & Zoning Director Joe Napolitano would be providing staff support services to the Commission. He also thanked the members of the Commission for their efforts on behalf of the City and for making his job easier. Several of the Plan Commission members thanked him for his efforts and his dedication to the City.

There was no additional discussion.

ADJOURN

Motion by D. Paluch, second by R. Horrell, to adjourn this meeting of the Woodstock Plan Commission. Ayes: J. Porter, R. Horrell, D. Paluch, S. Gavers, D. Moore, Jacki Speciale, and K. Parkhurst. Nays: none. Absentees: D. Fortin and E. Thurow. Abstentions: none. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50.

Prepared by Jim Kastner, Secretary