

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
December 12, 2016

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Wilson
Mr. Dodson
Mr. Searce
Mr. Garrison
Mrs. Evans
Mr. Jones
Mr. Bolton

MEMBERS ABSENT

STAFF

Ken Gillie
Anna Levi
Clark Whitfield
Renee Burton

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Searce at 3:00 p.m.

I. ITEMS FOR PUBLIC HEARING

1. *Rezoning application PLRZ20160000294, filed by Michelle O. Johnson, on behalf of the City of Danville, requesting to rezone from OT-R, Old Town Residential District to TO-C, Transitional Office Commercial, Parcel ID #'s 24215, 22163, 22162, 21399, and 23760 otherwise known as Grid 2713, Block 018, Parcels 000006-000008 and 000011; and Grid 2717, Block 013, Parcel 000001, respectively, of the City of Danville, Virginia Zoning District Map. The applicant is proposing to rezone the parcels so that they may be consolidated with 603 Colquhoun Street which is the site of W W Moore Detention Center.*

Ms. Levi read the staff report. Thirty-eight (38) notices were sent to surrounding property owners within 300 feet of the subject property. Two (2) responses were opposed and eight (8) were not opposed. One (1) response was neither opposed nor unopposed.

Mr. Searce opened the Public Hearing.

Present on behalf of this request was the applicant, Michelle Johnson. Ms. Johnson stated I'm the director of Juvenile Detention and I really don't have anything to add to this but I want to make myself available for any questions that you all may have.

Mr. Jones stated I'm of the understanding that you are going to add on to W.W Moore?

Ms. Johnson stated well actually we're expanding our parking area. There's a very small parking lot and we have a lot of teachers and staff and visitors and they end up parking on the street and blocking the view and the street as well. So we're planning to expand the parking area.

Mr. Bolton stated you're not going to use all the land incorporated here right?

Ms. Johnson stated it would be whatever is pertaining to the design that was outlined by the engineering department.

Mr. Bolton stated but the parking lot won't take up these whole seven parcels that you're combining?

Mr. Gillie stated the parking lot won't take up all the parcels that they're proposing to combine. They acquired these properties. They submitted a plat to consolidate. The parking lot is shown on the screen which would be at the tables in front of you. It's a small area just to the west of the facility. But no it won't take all the parcels up. It's just for consolidation purposes they all have to show the same zoning classifications.

Mr. Bolton stated will there be a lot of land left?

Mr. Gillie stated yes there will be additional land available.

Mr. Wilson stated is that the plan to keep that greenspace on the other side of that parking lot?

Ms. Johnson stated I assume so per the design that was planned out by the engineering department.

Mr. Wilson stated well right there on that photograph you have a lot of trees and then you have the alley north of that. My only question is if this is a plan to keep that green space there between the edge of the parking lot and that alley?

Ms. Johnson stated yes we have no other plans for anything additionally. The parking lots would be connected with a row of stairs that go from one area to the other parking lot area.

Mr. Carter stated good evening, my name is Haywood Carter and I live at 618 Shelton St. I've been living there for the last 42 years. The only thing that I'm concerned about is that we were told that you could build out there no more. I put on a deck that I rebuilt and the City tried to charge me \$2500. They told me that I wasn't supposed to build it but I already had the deck. They just didn't want me to build it. I had built it so my wheelchair could go out on the deck. What I'm concerned with is when she's talking about putting a parking lot, there's a manhole back there on my lot that is owned by the City. Every year they used to come over there and clean up around it. Now it's not too far from where she talking about putting a parking lot. All I'm concerned about is that you are going to let her build a parking lot. When are you going to come over there and clean up around that manhole? The last time that the City cleaned this manhole, or not manhole but sewer hole, is when I called into the City and it had run over and it ran into the ramp and that ramp runs up onto Monument Street up to that new fire station to Craghead St to the river. All I'm concerned about is you will let her do this right here, why can't you clean up around that sewer hole? That's the only thing I'm concerned about.

Mr. Scarce stated ok Sir, let me just explain, we don't have anything to do with that sewer hole. All we're doing is rezoning the lot for a parking lot. And if you have an issue then who, Mr. Gillie, should he talk to?

Mr. Gillie stated he can talk to me. That's fine.

Mr. Scarce stated you can see Mr. Gillie after the meeting and he can try to address that.

Mr. Carter stated wasn't that area rezoned sometime before? Don't any of you remember that? They had a parking lot down there and they had rezoned I think from residential to light commercial. I'm going to agree if she wants to do this but I wanted you to see where I come from. They told us that we couldn't build over there no more. If my house burned down right now, I couldn't rebuild. That's what I'm concerned about.

Mr. Scarce closed the Public Hearing.

Mr. Bolton made a motion to approve *PLRZ20160000294* as submitted. Mrs. Evans seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 7-0 vote.

2. *Special Use Permit application PLSUP20160000295, filed by Keith Walden, requesting a Special Use Permit for a duplex in accordance with Article 3:E, Section C, Item 2 of the Code of the City of Danville, Virginia 1986, as amended at 112 Primrose Place, otherwise known as Grid 1714, Block 005, Parcel 000008 of the City of Danville, Virginia Zoning District Map. The applicant is proposing to build a duplex on the property.*

Ms. Levi read the staff report. Thirty (30) notices were sent to surrounding property owners within 300 feet of the subject property. Fourteen (14) responses were opposed and four (4) were not opposed.

Present on behalf of this request was the applicant, Keith Walden. Mr. Walden stated I'm Keith Walden and I'm the builder. I'm here to answer any questions that anybody may have about the building.

Mr. Wilson stated I have a question. Do you have an elevation?

Mr. Walden stated I do not right now.

Mr. Wilson stated but do you have an elevation for us now?

Mr. Bolton stated the structure that they're saying is 44 by 67, that's about 3,000 sq. ft. for a duplex. Is that heated living space? That would make each side 1,500 sq. ft. that's pretty large. Three bedrooms? Or is there a garage on each end?

Mr. Walden stated that's a garage on each end. They'd be two bedrooms.

Mr. Bolton stated so its two bedrooms but that square footage includes a garage for each side. And you would have a driveway going in?

Mr. Walden stated yes.

Mr. Bolton stated so you wouldn't have a parking lot?

Mr. Walden stated no it's a duplex. There'd be a driveway and maybe a turnoff to park an extra car or something like that. It's not like it's an apartment building. It's a duplex. We're just trying to keep two units on the lot. We just built one right behind it. It was 1,400 sq. ft. and it's a nice house. You know, we actually spent too much money on it. We couldn't sell it because the properties around town sell a whole lot cheaper than what it costs to build this particular house that we built.

Mr. Bolton stated I just thought that was pretty large for a duplex. 1,500 for each side. So I had assumed maybe there was a garage included in that total square footage.

Mr. Walden stated one thing that I was going to bring up is that I have got a map of the street and when you come down the street you have three dorms on Mountain View which comes down and feeds into Primrose. There's an apartment building about halfway down between the dorms and this lot. If you go on down to the bottom where it meets Memorial Drive, I could be wrong, but I think both of those buildings right there are both duplexes or some type of apartment building and across the street there's a big white house that I believe is multifamily living too. I spent 6 months over there building a house so I saw all this but to address some of the responses on the negative feedback here. You know one thing first of all is the City did a housing study for about 80-100,000 dollars trying to figure out what Danville needed and that's what I was trying to do on Stewart Street was meet some of those needs and that kind of turned out to where the cost of redoing the road and utilities made it so that you couldn't do it. It cost too much. This meets some of the housing needs in this study. If you have not read the study, this is dead on what they say we need. It's not Section 8. It's not all this about traffic problems. That's most of the concerns here. It definitely not going to be Section 8. I don't have the elevation of the property. If we want to table this, I'll come back with an elevation and a floor plan and the whole 9 yards and we'll go from there. I really do think it's a need that the City has.

Mr. Hungarland stated hi my name is David Hungarland and the back of my house butts up to Primrose at the corner and I'd like to address a couple of comments. He doesn't think there will be a parking issue but driving back there is a nightmare already just listening at night when a car comes flying around that corner. You can see on the picture people tend to, especially on weekends, kind of get a lot of speed right along there so I have a hard time envisioning two families living and parking on that small of a lot. The other concern I have is why a duplex now at this spot? He just made a mention that he built the one right behind it so why not make that a duplex that empties into a street that has less traffic and less speed? Why cram a family duplex on this small of a spot? He also mentioned that this is dead onto what the requirements for the City was for affordable housing but I did some simple research by pulling up Wilkins Realty and there's thirty-four houses for sale in the \$100,000-125,000 range, especially there are a few houses for sale on that street so it seems to me that there's not a housing shortage to be filled by this duplex at this time on such a small little lot.

Mr. Montgomery stated I'm Tim Montgomery and I live at 131 Primrose Pl and have lived there for 40 years. My concern speaking in opposition grows out of having made this trek several times a day, up Primrose to Mountain View. As Primrose meets Mountain View, there is a curve and if a vehicle is parked on Primrose at that curve then it becomes problematic for traffic coming from Mountain View. To clear the car they have to pull the car into the other lane into the traffic coming from Memorial Drive. A former resident, the last house on Mountain View before Primrose did park their vehicle there and it was hit and we saw time after time vehicles having to veer into or out of their lane into oncoming traffic to avoid hitting that car. Finally the gentleman parked his car in the field of the proposed site. So my concern is a safety concern for traffic at that curve. I also have grave concern why it needs to be a duplex. Single family dwelling may reduce the amount of parking. If it is a duplex then there are probably going to be 4 cars. If you're not going to allow parking on the street either side, where will adequate parking be? Thank you.

Mr. Scarce stated just so we don't keep repeating ourselves, I think there is going to be garages and off-street parking. Anyone else wish to come speak?

Mr. Reynolds stated my name is James Reynolds and I live at 244 Mountain View Ave. which is slightly outside the notice window that the property owners received, but I have lived on Mountain View Ave. now for 22.5 years and I have also been victim of the excessive traffic. Some years ago a gentleman was driving at excessive speed down the street and I yelled at him to slow down. He slammed on brakes, almost backed over me, and then got out and physically assaulted me. I have been trying to get the City to do something about the speed on this street. It is terrible on both Mountain View and Primrose. A friend of mine who used to live in the apartments that Averett now has taken back as a dormitory, he was hit head-on on Mountain View not far from the intersection of Primrose Place because people are frequently coming up from Primrose and they cut the corner onto Mountain View so there is just insufficient traffic enforcement in that particular area to allow for the safety of the citizens and the traffic flow that exists now. To add vehicles pulling in and out at that location where the sight lines are poor to say the least from anything coming around the corner from Mountain View is really only to exacerbate the problem. I know that the police department has written a number of tickets on that street with the help of the City, we actually got the flashing speed limit signs. I'd be really interested to know the traffic count and how many of those vehicles come through at more than 10 over. I suspect that can probably be ascertained from the speed limit signs themselves because I think they do record that. But it is in my opinion inappropriate to have a duplex there. Again, as Mr. Montgomery noted if it is a single family residence, its zoned single family, then there's not really anything that anyone can do about it but I do think it also affects the character of the neighborhood. I'm opposed to it for that reason. Thank you.

Ms. Sampson stated hello I'm Wendy Sampson. 420 Maple Lane. I'm opposed to changing the current ordinance. I think single family is the neighborhood that we bought into and single family is where we would like it to stay. Do you plan on renting out these duplexes? Will you be the landlord or are you selling the duplex?

Mr. Walden stated either/or. We tried to sell the other house. Probably rental property.

Ms. Sampson stated you see I feel that that's the main issue that if you can't even sell a single family home, then selling a duplex creates a whole another issue. We don't need another landlord in that neighborhood. There are apartments in there but Averett owns most of them. Also, I'd like to point out that a majority of the homes in the neighborhood are brick. They're lovely. It's a wonderful street to drive down. It's an asset to the Averett community and to our own neighborhood and I would be fine with a single family home built but certainly not a duplex. We're opposed to it and don't want it to be changed. We prefer not to have it delayed any longer than we need to wrap it up. Thank you.

Mr. Walden stated one more thing. We're not trying to ruin the neighborhood. We basically came with the idea that there are dorms, apartment buildings, and other duplexes in the area. We're not trying to fight a battle to ruin the neighborhood. We just thought it would fit into the neighborhood just because of what all is around it. We would submit the elevation and good drawings to show that it's not going to be bad housing. You're right, there are a lot of houses for sale right now around Danville. It's hard selling a new house because there are older, cheaper houses around it. There are people in this housing study that come to Danville, some of these newer housing attracts doctors and young professionals. Not everyone wants the old housing where you've got to fix up the kitchen and do those sorts of

things. It's really intended to be a good thing. Not a bad thing. Believe me, you don't get rich doing these houses around there. So yeah, we're not trying to ruin the neighborhood. It's your decision. It's for the City to create new housing. It is what it is. We'll do whatever we're told to.

Mr. Scarce stated let me ask you a question. Staff has recommended tabling for another month to give you an opportunity to talk with folks rather than just vote on it today. Would you be open to that?

Mr. Walden stated yes. You know, one more thing. I agree with these guys. The speed through there is crazy. That's a bad little turn there. We've had the speed radar machines on there for a long time now. I go to some other cities and they've got these wide speed bumps that the first time you hit it you remember and the next time you'll slow down. Maybe that's an option we should look at in that area because it is an issue.

Mr. Bolton stated do you have a floor plan that shows the exterior?

Mr. Walden stated yeah I've got all that and I should have it on me. This is just to show that it fits on the lot. I should have had all that.

Mr. Bolton stated like one of the speakers just said, there's a lot of brick homes there. If you did a villa type duplex that had brick and a nice garage and driveway that might be helpful. Just saying it's a duplex doesn't mean anything. It might be vinyl with a carport.

Mr. Walden stated yeah we don't want it to be a sore thumb in the middle of all these houses. We want it to fit into the neighborhood. So we'll get all that together for you for the next meeting.

Mr. Scarce stated do any of the commissioners have any questions for the applicant?

Mr. Wilson stated well this is kind of an ongoing thing with me. You obviously have a single family neighborhood. You have the apartments related to Averett. There's some other types of housing around there but with this level of neighbor concern, there is a desire to keep the integrity of the neighborhood so there's just no way that I can go forward on this in any way without elevations, conversations with the neighbors. The kind of thing we went through before. So it's going to be very difficult for me to do that and the neighbors really need to have an opportunity to weigh in on this. This is kind of a unique neighborhood of Danville. Part of our job I think is to maintain the integrity of neighborhoods and serve by making larger scale decisions too. Personally, I don't think this is ready to really be dealt with yet and I guess my question is whether it is "no" or "tabled." That's it.

Mr. Walden stated I used to live in the neighborhood and I've got two sons that live in the neighborhood so I'm very familiar with the neighborhood.

Mr. Wilson stated but that's over deep into Forest Hills. These homes really are on a thoroughfare area that leads down to Memorial Drive. I think it's critical that we watch these developments. This just doesn't seem ready to me.

Mr. Walden stated tabling is great for me.

Mr. Torrence stated I'm John Torrence and I live at 285 Mountain View and I am in opposition to this. I want the Planning Commission to maintain the zoning as it is. I ascribe no malicious intent to Mr. Walden building these housing except that the intent and the results are not necessarily the same thing. You mentioned that the house that you build was in the \$80,000 range. I know that my house, and we're certainly not wealthy people, is worth more than \$80,000 and I don't think that having any rental properties will do anything to enhance it. I really don't think I would raise any opposition to a single family dwelling. I think you can do anything you want with it within the confines of the zoning code as it is. As I say, I've been there for 66 years and I think it could be said that I am the oldest lived resident of that area. I think there's just one person in the Forest Hills area that has been there longer than I have so I have a vested interest in this. You don't need to create a problem where none exists. Does anyone have questions for me?

Mr. Scarce closed the Public Hearing.

Mr. Scarce stated again just to clarify, this is not a rezoning. The zoning will stay OT-R. This is just a Special Use Permit that does allow for duplexes in that particular zoning but it does have to come before the panel for a Special Use Permit. So that being said, any other discussion?

Mr. Wilson stated yeah I have some questions. So if we were to offer this Special Use Permit on this particular corner, does that set some sort of precedent for us now that we're bound by? Others may want to do a very similar thing. I know that each one would come back but practically speaking, would it make it more difficult to deny someone, say, 5 houses up the street?

Mr. Gillie stated no it would not make it difficult. That's why there is a Special Use Permit process. Each case is looked at individually. It's not a by-right issue that would just come in without coming to you. The Special Use Permit process notes that there are practicalities with the property that have to be looked at. So just because you approve it on this doesn't meant that you have to approve it on another. So if you're worried about setting a precedent, no. that's the whole reason for this, is that you look at each one and each one stands on its own merits.

Mr. Bolton stated if it were going to be rezoned, to say, multifamily, and it was coming here for a zoning change to a fourplex, would you see that as spot zoning? I know from time to time, but are there enough duplexes there that it would not be spot zoning?

Mr. Gillie stated no it would be spot zoning. The reason being is that you can have a duplex in a single family district by Special Use Permit. The single family district is predominantly single family but allow in special cases for the additional unit if they go through this process. If they're trying to rezone for a multifamily, it would change the density of the property. That is when the parking would come in. You would have more traffic than what's usually a single family so we would look at that as for sure spot zoning. In this case it is not because it is permitted within the underlying zoning district but it does have to go through that Special Use Permit process.

Mr. Bolton stated even though there are other duplexes?

Mr. Gillie stated those other duplexes are there, have been there. The old zoning code, probably three codes ago used to allow for a mix. We have gotten away from that and in the

last zoning code, the most current zoning code we brought it back because we felt it reflected more the development that had occurred in the past. But we still wanted it to go through the Special Use Permit process just for this reason, to get the neighbors involved and to give everyone a chance to talk it out and do what's best for the community.

Mr. Jones in the time that you're staff has been doing this, have they ever had a situation where they had this many oppositions write in?

Mr. Gillie stated yes.

Mr. Wilson stated if we deny the Special Use Permit, in other words, for this particular case we've got it right now but we don't have any elevations, there are things that I would want to see before there's any chance I would go forward with it. So let's just say we deny it today. What position does that put Mr. Walden in if he wants to resubmit? What does that do? I know our choices are going to be more or less, table or to deny or to approve. I'm questioning what happens if we deny? What options does he have?

Mr. Gillie stated if you recommend denial it still goes to City Council. City Council has the option on January 3rd of recommending approval, recommending denial. They could table it. They could also send it back here for reconsideration so just because you've recommended denial does not stop the process. That's one reason why Staff recommended to table it is because we feel that if the neighbors and Mr. Walden sit down they may be able to come to an agreement similar to what we came to on Stewart Street. Stewart Street took a little while to get everybody involved but we got everybody involved and got to a point where everyone was in agreement, went to Planning Commission and City Council and it was approved. We think that can happen here and that's why we're offering that. But if you recommend denial, it still proceeds on just like any case would.

Mr. Wilson stated ok so let's assume that we recommend denial and City Council recommends denial, they follow our recommendation. Then what position is he in?

Mr. Gillie stated he could come back and build a single family house on the property, he could wait nine months because of the time frame and come back and ask for the Special Use Permit to have the duplex again. Maybe provide additional information. That would give him additional time to maybe meet with the neighbors. He could do something else on that property that complies with the underlying zoning.

Mr. Garrison made a motion to postpone *PLSUP20160000295* as submitted. Mr. Dodson seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 7-0 vote.

II. MINUTES

The November 7, 2016 minutes were approved by a unanimous vote.

III. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Gillie stated as some of you are aware, I've been promoted to Director of Community Development for the City of Danville. In the meantime, I'll still serve as both the Director of Planning until such time that as replacement is hired. So you're not quite losing me. Probably in a few months. Then I'll drift away. But staff will be able to handle it, quite capably, in my absence. Next month we'll do our election of officers so that's the meeting

you do not want to miss because if you miss you may end up being something you do not want to be. You do have a case being carried forward so you know you have to be here. That's all Staff has. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year everybody.

Mrs. Evans stated do we have any applications next month?

Mr. Gillie stated at this point no.

Mrs. Evans stated dang we should have dealt with that.

Mr. Whitfield stated well his postponement was for an indefinite period. He did not postpone it to the next meeting.

Mr. Wilson stated did we have cases that went before City Council that we have a report on?

Mr. Gillie stated yeah. The two that you had both were approved.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:41 p.m.

APPROVED