

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
GREAT FALLS PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD/ZONING COMMISSION
November 24, 2015**

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Great Falls Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission was called to order by Chair Nate Weisenburger at 3:01 p.m. in the Commission Chambers of the Civic Center.

ROLL CALL & ATTENDANCE

Planning Board Members present:

Nate Weisenburger, Chair
Scot Davis, Vice Chair
Peter Fontana
Anthony Houtz
Keith Nelson
Sophia Sparklin
Michael Wedekind

Planning Board Members absent:

Mark Striepe
Cheryl Patton

Planning Staff Members present:

Craig Raymond, Director P&CD
Galen Steffens, Planner II
Gregory Gordos, Planner I
Connie Rosas, Sr. Administrative Assistant

Other Staff present:

Sara Sexe, City Attorney

Mr. Raymond affirmed a quorum of the Board was present.

MINUTES

Action Minutes of the Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission. Please refer to the audio/video recording of this meeting for additional detail.

Chair Weisenburger asked if there were any comments or corrections to the minutes of the regular meeting held on November 10, 2015. Seeing none, the minutes were approved as submitted.

BOARD ACTIONS REQUIRING PUBLIC HEARING

Grace Home- Conditional Use Permit 2211 5th Avenue North

Gregory Gordos, Planner I, presented the staff report for the Grace Home Conditional Use Permit. The applicant, St. Vincent de Paul, is requesting a Conditional Use Permit in order to establish a community residential facility, type II, on an existing two story structure. The proposed project will be a transitional facility for homeless veteran men with ten beds on the second floor, and communal spaces and offices on the main floor. Room and board will be provided in exchange for community service.

The proposed development is within the R-3 Single-family high density residential zoning district, and there are no anticipated physical alterations to the exterior of the existing building. Current access to the building would remain with rear access from the alley, and on-street parking provided on both sides of 5th Avenue North. The property is also located in Neighborhood Council 8, and the Council voted unanimously to support the project.

The proposed project is consistent with the 2013 Growth Policy Update by expanding the transitional housing with supportive services benefitting the homeless and special needs population in the City, and encouraging the redevelopment or adaptive reuse of vacant or underutilized properties, thus maximizing the City's existing infrastructure.

Some of the conditions of approval include the lot aggregation of the two lots the structure currently sits on, which can be done administratively in the City's Planning Division, and a written agreement must be filed in order to continue the use of the driveway that crosses multiple parcels. Staff recommends approval with conditions.

PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no public questions from the public.

PETITIONER'S PRESENTATION

Deborah Kottel, 6470 Heaven's View Lane, said Montana is one of the highest areas of enlistment into the military; however, Great Falls is the only major city in Montana without transitional housing for veterans. Currently, there are over 63 homeless veterans waiting for housing in Great Falls. The intent of St. Vincent de Paul is help these men and women get job training, mental health supportive services, and the ability to find permanent housing. Ms. Kottel said the building was originally built for the purpose of a transitional housing unit, being built as a monastery and then becoming a housing unit for women in recovery and their children, so the proposed project fits well with the building's previous uses.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Christopher Wiegenstein, 1211 7th Avenue South, spoke as a representative for St. Vincent de Paul as well as an employee of Gateway Community Services, stating that on behalf of both agencies, they are fully supportive and hope to see the project move forward and help the homeless veteran population.

Jolene Bach, 300 Central Avenue #406, with the Great Falls Development Authority, said GFDA is very supportive of this project. They are excited for this project due to the location, as it has served in this capacity since being founded. This not only helps our community be more attractive while recruiting businesses, but also makes our community better as a whole for serving those in need.

PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD DISCUSSION AND ACTION

MOTION: **Recommendation I:** That the Zoning Commission recommends the City Commission approve the Community residential facility, type II Conditional Use Permit for Lot 12 and East 1/2 Lot 13, Block 169, Fourth Addition, Section 6, Township 20 North, Range 4 East, P.M. M.T., Great Falls, Cascade County, Montana, the Findings of Fact, and Conditions of Approval located in the staff report.

Made by: Mr. Davis
Second: Mr. Fontana

VOTE: All being in favor, the motion passed.

Chair Weisenburger asked Mr. Gordos to remind the Board of the next steps. Mr. Gordos said the Zoning Commission recommendation will be presented to City Commission, who will then approve or deny the application. If approved, the applicant will then submit all documents for review.

Phoenix Townhomes Conditional Use Permit 114 2nd Street Northwest

Mr. Gordos provided the staff report for applicant Dana Hennen dba Phoenix Group, requesting a Conditional Use Permit to allow for construction on a currently vacant parcel creating two 1,400 square foot townhomes. The townhomes would be two story units, including an unfinished basement with two bedrooms and two bathrooms on the main floor. Each unit would have a front loaded garage facing 2nd Street Northwest, and side entrances with a connecting sidewalk. There would also be significant curb, gutter, and sidewalk improvements on either side of the lots, as the lots currently have none.

The subject property is located in Neighborhood Council #3, and the Council voted to support the project. Mr. Gordos noted that two citizen comments in objection of the project were received by mail, and copies of those comments were provided to Board.

The project is consistent with the 2013 Growth Policy Update both socially and physically. Socially, the project encourages a variety of housing types so that residents can choose by price, location, and place of work, as well as protecting the character of the neighborhood as it has the appearance of a single family home. Physically, the proposed project fosters the development of safe, walkable neighborhoods, and encourages the redevelopment of vacant properties.

Mr. Gordos reviewed the seven criteria for the basis of decision as listed in the Land Development Code, and he also reviewed a few of the conditions of approval as listed in the staff report. He said staff recommends approval with conditions.

Mr. Nelson inquired about the definition of ownership for the townhouses, and Mr. Gordos said each unit would be individually owned and the property line would run through the center of the building. Ms. Steffens added that one of the requirements for the townhomes is that there be an established maintenance agreement between the two owners for shared spaces such as the center wall and the roof.

Ms. Sparklin asked if there were any other detailed concerns from the public, other than the two public comments that were handed out during the meeting regarding the parking concerns. Mr. Gordos said no, these were the only two. Mr. Davis confirmed that there are four parking spaces per unit, thus addressing the parking concerns.

Mr. Weisenburger asked if the sidewalks would be developed on the subject lot only, leaving adjacent lots not required to have sidewalk. Mr. Gordos said yes, there would be a gap with curb, gutter and sidewalk from the adjacent lots not under the same ownership as the subject property.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no public questions.

PETITIONER'S PRESENTATION

Dana Hennen, 722 2nd Street South, of the Phoenix Group, thanked the Board and staff for getting this project put together. He said the townhouses will be facing 2nd Street Northwest, and they are aesthetically pleasing. He said the plan is to price them in the \$180,000 range, keeping them priced in the same range as the rest of the neighborhood.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kim Martin, 35 TriView Lane, Dahlquist Realtors, said that workforce housing is one of the areas the realtors are focusing on, and this project works well in that capacity. The financing for townhomes is much more feasible to obtain as opposed to a condominium, which is why she encouraged Mr. Hennen to develop these as such. She said the owners will have the option to either have laundry hookups on the main level, or in the basement.

Jolene Bach, 300 Central Avenue #406, with the Great Falls Development Authority, said Kim did a great job explaining all the reasons why the GFDA definitely supports this project. She described the need for Great Falls to infill lots in town, and the fact that not every family needs or wants a large yard, so these townhomes address both issues. She said the price point that Mr. Hennen gave for this project is right in line with the need for homes in that price range in Great Falls, and she thanked the Board for considering this project.

There was discussion on the sidewalk and curb on Colorado Avenue, and this project possibly giving the City the opportunity to add curb and gutter for the residents who currently have none.

Mr. Nelson asked if this was the only vacant lot in this area, and Mr. Gordos said yes, this is the only vacant lot in the middle of the neighborhood.

Mr. Raymond stated that this application was technically for a Conditional Use Permit and a Minor Subdivision, however, the Basis of Decision for the minor subdivision was not properly addressed in the staff report, so the motion will be only for the Conditional Use Permit.

PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD DISCUSSION AND ACTION

MOTION: Recommendation I: That the Zoning Commission recommends the City Commission approve the Residential, townhouse Conditional Use Permit for Lot 6A, Block 2, Viles and Robinson acre tracts, Section 35, Township 21 North, Range 03 East, P.M.MT., City of Great Falls, Cascade County, Montana, the Findings of Fact, and Conditions of Approval listed in the staff report.

Made by: Mr. Fontana
Second: Mr. Davis

VOTE: All being in favor, the motion passed.

Chair Weisenburger asked Mr. Gordos to remind the Board of the next steps. Mr. Gordos said the Zoning Commission recommendation will be presented to City Commission, who will then approve or deny the application. If approved, the applicant will then submit all documents for review. Ms. Steffens said there will be a subsequent application and staff report for the Minor Subdivision, which will be presented to the Planning Advisory Board; the Minor Subdivision and the Conditional Use Permit will then be presented at the same time to City Commission.

COMMUNICATIONS

Next Meeting Agenda – Tuesday, December 8, 2015

- Park and Recreation Master Plan Consultant

Project Status:

- None

Petitions & Applications Received:

- None

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Weisenburger adjourned the meeting at 3:44 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY