

PLAN COMMISSION

Time and Date: The Plan Commission met on Tuesday, December 1, 2020, at 4:30 p.m. in the Common Council Chambers of Wausau City Hall.

Members Present: Mayor Katie Rosenberg, Patrick Peckham, Tom Neal, Bruce Bohlken, Andrew Brueggeman, Mic'Kayla Ross

Others Present: Brad Lenz, Brad Sippel, William Hebert, Matt Barnes, Michael Loy, Ben Bliven

In compliance with Chapter 19, Wisconsin Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and transmitted to the *Wausau Daily Herald* in the proper manner.

Mayor Rosenberg called the meeting to order at approximately 4:30 p.m. noting that a quorum was present.

PUBLIC HEARING: Discussion and possible action on approving a conditional use at 620 McClellan Street to allow for an institutional residential use, in a TF-10, Two Flat Residential-10 Zoning District.

Matt Barnes, Wausau Police Department, said that the homeless issue is a top priority and something needs to be done now with winter approaching. The police department and North Central Health Care have partnered up to allocate a staff member and professional case worker to build relationships with the homeless community that have mental health and substance abuse issues. This will include building trust, providing immediate services to those that are willing to accept them and a place where this can be done. Staff members have been out on a daily basis building relationships with the individuals. It is not an immediate process. Issues are being addressed on an individual basis and there have already been success stories. They are starting to talk about the future. The next phase is to house the individuals in a place that staff can support them. A building has been found, but a conditional use needs to be approved. Staff from the police department and North Central Health Care will be at the property. Some other partners of the initiative include Greenheck, Verlo, and St. Vincent de Paul.

Michael Loy, North Central Health Care, said that this will help with homelessness and towards independence for a specific group of people. This is a case management approach and is based on a model that is used nationally. Staff will work together to make sure that all needs are met to ensure that necessary treatment is given. Stable, affordable and clean housing does help with the recovery needs.

Sippel went over the conditional use process with the committee. The public hearing is to be completed at this meeting and the decision will be completed at the next meeting. A conditional use will be tied to the property and not to the property owner.

Mayor Rosenberg closed the public hearing.

Neal motioned to approve a conditional use at 620 McClellan Street to allow for an institutional residential use, in a TF-10, Two Flat Residential-10 Zoning District. Bohlken seconded.

Neal said that this sounds great and asked if it would be co-ed in nature. Barnes said that it would start out for men only and will need to be flexible for other housing.

Peckham said that this sounds terrific and confirmed that the occupancy is 8 people. Peckham asked if it will always be 8 people and if there will always be the need. Barnes said that at this time they are not sure. The property has 4 bedrooms and evidence shows 8 people would work. Barnes said that there is hope that they will need more and need to expand. It is also a short-term experiment and will be re-evaluated in February or March. Barnes said that it is hoped to treat and move people to a different environment. This is not a permanent residence. Peckham asked if they will need to stay at the facility in order to get services. Barnes said the services can be provided to anyone that is willing to take them. Peckham asked if they can drink while they are at the facility. Barnes said that the rules are not established, but it will be similar to Catholic Charities Warming Center. It is a home, but more restrictive

for progression and for the neighborhood. Peckham commended the Police Department and North Central Health Care for stepping up.

Ross said that she has seen an increase in the homeless population and said that it is good to see the collaboration. Ross also said that it is good to see that someone would be allowed into the facility if they have been drinking. That could be a large deterrent. Ross asked if anyone has spoken to the neighbors in the area and asked if a privacy hedge would be placed on the other side of the property that is open. Barnes said that he is not sure if the neighbors were notified. This is a test and they will address the issues as they arise. The success will go down if the neighbors are upset. Hebert added that notices were sent to the neighbors within 100' and said that he did receive a call, but it was just questioning the plan. Mayor Rosenberg said that this so important and there have been some successes already.

Ben Bliven, Wausau Police Chief, said that the conditional use will help this move along. The project is moving forward and is helping people and they are hopeful that the housing could be used at this location.

Neal said that he would welcome a special meeting to speed up the process.

The motion carried unanimously 6-0 by roll call vote.

Adjournment.

Bohlken motioned to adjourn, seconded by Peckham. The motion carried unanimously 6-0 and the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

The Plan Commission is next scheduled to meet at 5:00 p.m. on December 15, 2020.