

**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 18, 2004**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 p.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

**Present:** F. Davis, G. Clark, F. Enneking, R. Johnson, C. Knapp  
N. Fosket, M. Brandt, J. Goulet

**Absent:** J. Adams (excused)

**Staff:** N. Voght, City Planner  
N. Schuette, Secretary

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 21, 2004**

Commissioner Goulet moved to approve the minutes of January 21, 2004 (Support: C.Knapp) and the motion carried unanimously.

**IV. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

None

A motion was made by Commissioner Clark to change the agenda moving the item Cross Street Zoning Implementation public hearing of New Business to first on the agenda (Support: J. Goulet) and the motion carried unanimously.

Chairperson Davis stated that the Cross Street Rezoning has been ongoing for over a year. We have had neighborhood sessions, made publications, it has been discussed at Planning Commission Meetings on several occasions and this is a culmination of that effort. It is the responsibility of Planning Commission to look at the appropriateness of rezoning opportunities within the city and recommend to City Council for their approval of the zoning changes. A public

hearing is designed to allow anyone to comment on the proposed changes. He laid out the format of the meeting asking that because of the large number of attendees that comments be limited to three minutes.

## **V. NEW BUSINESS**

### 1. Cross Street Area Zoning Amendments – Public Hearing

Staff presentation was made by City Planner, N. Voght, who stated that this is a public hearing for proposed zoning amendments within a large area of the city. The study area was chosen in part based on the Cross Street Neighborhood Improvement Plan that was completed in 2002 but the area was expanded to include a larger area when it was realized that there was a larger area in need of study. The study area is bounded by EMU Campus and Forest on the north, N. Huron on the east, the downtown area to the south, Summit Street to the west as well as a small area that extends past the Water Tower along Washtenaw and Cross. There were some plans put in place that precipitated this hearing and provide a basis for some of the changes that are proposed. Additional study and analysis of the area has been done by the Planning Commission over the past year including an existing land use analysis, lot area analysis, and transitional land use analysis. The stated city goals that support these changes is the 1998 Master Plan by the Planning Commission which identified some of the issues that we have studied, primarily fringe neighborhoods of campus and their relationship to other neighborhoods in the city. The Master Plan identified some issues with rental housing vs owner occupied housing and the conflicts involved.

The 2002 Cross Street Improvement Plan was the other plan that further identified and focused on some of the land use issues that we are faced with, i.e. transportation, parking, some land use recommendations to reduce density which would address lack of off-street parking, congestion, litter, blight. All of these things together including transportation and parking were a summary of all the issues that the neighborhood faces. The current proposal is to implement some of the land use recommendations.

The third basis for the proposed changes is City Council Goals. City Council has been fairly consistent over the past 4-5 years recognizing the strengths and importance of owner-occupied single family homes and also recognizing our rental rate is unhealthy for any city. They have identified the need to encourage home ownership.

Voght stated that after about a year of study, including reviewing existing land uses and lot sizes within the study area, the Planning Commission amended the 1998 Master Plan. The next stage is zoning implementation. He reviewed all of the areas involved and the proposed zoning for each. Voght emphasized that any zoning changes that occur, do NOT require any owner to make any changes to their property. If a property becomes non-conforming, it can be sold as non-conforming and does not require any changes. If a person has a legally established land use, it can be continued. It is important to note, that non-conforming uses cannot be expanded and there are some other non-conforming restrictions that owners should be aware of.

He has been contacted by approximately 35 owners since the notices were mailed and our other planner has talked to about 20 owners, all of whom asking what these changes mean. The majority of the property owners were not affected, or had no concerns about the effects. A few had some concerns but overwhelmingly the ones who have contacted us have been either accepting or supportive.

Commissioner Brandt moved to open the public hearing (Support: C. Knapp) and the motion carried unanimously.

**Cheryl Farmer, Mayor of the City of Ypsilanti, 214 N. Huron** – stated that she is excited that this item is finally on the agenda. She gave some background information on some of the reasons that this issue arose. A few years ago EMU was buying up properties on West Cross Street and tearing down the buildings. She had been assured by them that they did not have plans to do this, however, within a few months they were demolished. She contacted them and was informed they changed their mind. A few months later, the old Credit Union was on the market and she was re-assured that there was no current plan by EMU to obtain the property. However, within a few months, it was purchased by EMU. Each time property is taken off the tax rolls, it is very difficult for the City of Ypsilanti because 35% of the properties already off the tax rolls means that the remaining 65% have to pay the taxes to support services for fire and police for everyone.

She called a meeting and had some pretty heated discussions informing them that their decision to buy up property hurts the host community. We cannot have a thriving university if we have a dying city. It was not long after this that she noticed a property on Cross Street that they had bought and were preparing to demolish it. She contacted the President of EMU stating that they need to work together to attain the same goals. At

that time, he agreed to sell that property back to a private owner, Mr. Bob Barnes, who has fixed it up and is now back on the tax rolls.

The upshot of this meeting was that both the City and EMU agreed to contribute \$20,000 each to hire a consultant to study the Cross Street triangle that is bordered by Washtenaw and Cross and goes from the Water Tower to Huron Street. We asked them how this area can be made more attractive and more liveable since it is the entry way to EMU and an important neighborhood. This study was completed, presented publicly, revised and presented again. Many residents attended these meetings and recommendations came out of these for design standards to be written and implemented, down zoning to be done since we are discussing an area that was built when there were no cars and single family homes where there are now multi-family presenting problems with parking.

We have an opportunity to make some changes that are going to have a positive long-term impact on the city and improve our partnership with EMU realizing how important it is to have a thriving community. She appreciates the hard work that has gone into this project by the City Planner, Planning Commission and those involved in the study.

**Joe Lawrence, 212 S. Huron** – owns two properties in the area affected by the plan. One is a five unit on Emmet/Perrin which will be down zoned and he has no objection to that. He does want to discuss the proposed change north of Washtenaw on N. Huron from R4 to RO. It is his understanding that this is not part of the original plan and was added at the latter part of the study. He does not feel it serves any useful purpose and may be a detriment to both him and his partner, John Harrington, who own a home at 209 N. Huron which is currently zoned R4. He presented a letter from The Bank of Ann Arbor which cites authorities from the Mortgage Guarantee Insurance Corporation and another from his partner expressing reservations. The problem is that there are currently no offices in place or planned north of Washtenaw on the west side of N. Huron Street. It can present difficulties in financing and making this change will affect saleability and getting a mortgage for the purpose of improvements or selling the property.

One of the council's goals is to prevent the further multiplicity of dwellings on lots that are too small and he does not see that changing from R4, which allows four units, to RO where the number of units increases to 12 units by Special Use, will further this goal.

His comments are limited merely to the RO change north of Washtenaw, on the west side of N. Huron and does not think anything should be done

that would affect the rights of property owners and saleability of their property.

**Gerry Diepenhorst, 1177 Honey Run, Ann Arbor, owner of 209 N. Summit** – owns nine properties on Summit Street. He has invested a lot of money in these properties and is concerned about mortgages since it is his understanding that the banks will not lend money if the properties are not correctly zoned. He is concerned about the ability to sell at a later date or if his properties were to burn, he has an existing mortgage and could not replace the building and re-finance it. He believes that if more than 51% of the building is damaged, he would not be able to return it to its original state.

**Bob Fields, 1302 Grant** – is representing a client at 712 N. River because he was previously her mortgage broker. He stated that his client was denied because the City Planner could not answer the following in the affirmative: 1) the property located at the address referenced above could be 100% rebuilt with no restrictions to its current use, current size, residential use and density if applicable in the event of partial or full destruction. There are two problems that the mortgage company faces – 1) the property if damaged will the owner walk away or 2) if rebuilt as single family after a fire, the house would be worth less than the mortgage. While he understands the reason this was done was to reduce density and to preserve the value of the property, however, he feels it does the opposite. He is not in support of this plan.

**Barb Hale, 310 N. Hamilton** – came here 55 years ago. Knows the area and has seen many things come and go. The City has embarked on many projects. In the late 60's, the city said they were going to help the businesses downtown. All of the businesses left. Now we have a lot of vacant stores, vacant houses, vacant apartments, we have lost Cleary College, lost manufacturing jobs in Ypsilanti and enrollment at EMU is down. She feels that the problem is enforcement and not penalizing property owners.

**Joe Boblas, Associate Broker – REMAXX** – owns one property in the area. Agrees with previous comments – changing the zoning on some of these properties will eventually taint them. If he saw a property that was "grandfathered", he would advise the buyer to think very carefully about purchasing it. He recommends that if we are going to change the zoning, it should be done on a smaller scale to see how it goes rather than do a "sweeping governmental change" to private citizens.

**Tony Vanderworp, 1207 Pearl** – he is a certified planner, certified economic developer and ex-city manager. He summarized some of the key points stated in his letter sent to the board members. He is in support of making these changes since it is his belief that this is part of a comprehensive package for revitalizing the city. As stated by the Mayor, over 30% of the city is tax-exempt and without the ability to annex property, along with revenue cuts, the city is in dire straits to provide services. The only way to continue services is to have private investment on the properties we do have with limited annexation authority. Private investment and renovating structures is paramount to maintaining the services that the city has.

Investors want to feel secure that their properties will add value. This rezoning proposal is a broader part of a revitalization strategy that includes several steps all of which need to be in place to have a successful revitalization program.

1. Revitalizing the DDA
2. Making the city an attractive place to locate business – this includes code enforcement, landscaping codes, facades, etc.
3. Improving city's deteriorating infrastructure
4. Provide safe place to residents, businesses, employees – we have ten fewer officers today than 1997
5. Provide recreational facilities
6. Attracting investment
7. Continued investment in commercial properties in the Cross Street Area and in particular, residential properties. Of the 642 properties under consideration, this proposal would affect 57 properties. As a single family homeowner, if he were interested in moving to a neighborhood, he would have to know that the surrounding properties are compatible before he would consider investment.

Mr. Vanderworp urged the Planning Commission to move forward with this proposal and recommend it to City Council.

**Rick Phillips, 10101 Huron River Drive, Belleville** – Owner of three properties in the city. He questions how this proposal will help tax revenue. By reducing his rental availability and since his value is based on rental, his taxes would be reduced. By reducing R3 to R2, he questioned how this would stop EMU from obtaining his property. It is his understanding that this is why this issue came about. The two main issues are the taxes and EMU. If the property is down zoned, the city loses tax revenue. He also questioned how the zoning was decided since it does not follow the streets. He does not see where this would be beneficial for taxes.

**Roger Pritzel** – does not live in the city but owns ten properties. Like other attendees, he purchased these properties for income potential – this is his retirement program. He feels that this proposal would make his properties un-saleable. Owner occupied properties would bring in less tax revenue to the city. Vacancy rates in the city are the highest in 20 years.

**Rachel Murray, 114 N. Normal** – bought her home next door to a fraternity and has no problems. The reason she lives in Ypsilanti is because she was interested in being around young people. If the city is interested in revitalizing the area, with this plan it is pushing people away. By down zoning, it is her opinion that young people could not afford large homes with 8-9 rooms. She moved here from Westland where there was no sense of community and no downtown. She realizes there are problems with “slumlords” which are probably no more than 5% of the landlords. By making these changes, it affects all the other landlords in the city who do maintain their properties. She is not supportive of this proposal.

**Ken Hayes, office located at 209 Pearl** - recently went through a non-conforming use with a fire at 306 N. Adams was damaged to about extent of 40% (according to both him and his insurance company) but the city stated he was only allowed to use one half SEV to determine cost of restoration so instead of costing \$450,000 to repair, it cost him \$1.2 million and went from a ten unit to a six unit. He had sufficient parking for ten units and sufficient land and the building was up to code before the fire. He was fortunate he had a blanket policy from his insurance company otherwise his insurance company would have only given \$180,000 based on market value. He had to add 1,000 sq. ft to make it a six unit and now he is being told the city is changing the zoning to make this only a four unit. He does not feel this is fair to do everything required by the city, i.e. meet codes, meeting building inspections and go through all the hassle to do business in this community and have the value taken away. He is not supportive of this issue.

**Rodney Nanney, 40 S. Summit** – moved into the area in 2001 and is the type of family the city wants – single family, one income with the ability to be able to walk downtown, close to parks, walk to campus, etc. He supports the Master Plan Amendment that proposed to down zone and the intent of it in the long-term. Rental vacancies are high and this will continue to happen. However, while he supports the amendment and its long-term vision, he has a problem with the S. Summit neighborhood. When he purchased his home, it was four units and they moved in to three of the units, however, he rents out the other unit which helps with

the cost of remodeling his home. Fifty-four percent of the homes on his block will become non-conforming. He would encourage the city to allow for some transition by doing the down zoning one step at a time so that it does not adversely affect property owners.

**Shoeb Sharrief, 124 Pearl, Suite 607** – owns Centennial Building and other properties within the city. He agrees with many concerns of other attendees, however, he has a concern which has not been brought up. By reducing density, you reduce potential business. Businesses will suffer for lack of population.

**Leslie Chase, 807 N. Congress** – stated that she is a property owner of this address. While she appreciates the investment landlords have in their properties and their concerns, when her family moved here 1-1/2 years ago, they met with a realtor and informed them they wanted to invest in the community, and were immediately pointed towards rental property. They let the realtor know that this was not the kind of investment they had in mind and that there are many ways to invest in a community. They have chosen to buy a home and live in it and her husband has decided to open a coffee shop in downtown Ypsilanti. It took them three months to find a home since many of the beautiful older homes they were interested in had been bought by landlords and cut up into apartments. They moved here because of the “down home” feel of the city and also the diversity. It is important to have all kinds of people, home owners, renters, young people, older people and that’s what she has in the neighborhood she lives in. While it is important to have renters, it is less important by many of these people to have an investment in the city. Her family has problems with fraternity homes and it is her opinion that people who own their homes have more of an investment and are less troublesome. She supports the recommended changes and agrees that it may be a good idea to phase it in slowly and improve the quality of life.

**Diane Hayes** – has been selling income property for 26 years and by reducing density, the city would be reducing their tax revenue. She feels that the board is working against people not with them. She is not supportive of this action.

**Paul Schreiber, 922 Pleasant** – is not affected in the area being zoned but feels that long-term view of the plan is good, but is especially concerned about the structures on Normal/Summit. If there is some way that the landlords could be happy and yet help them to rehabilitate their structures and keep them up, it would be good.

**Chris Mueller, 314 W. Cross – owner/occupant** – supports comments on businesses. Although he left the city, he came back because it has potential as an urban center. He feels that the proposed changes on Cross, while minor, presents some limitations as to what a business owner could do with these properties in terms of the types of business they could operate. He lives in the Historic District and there is not much he could do with the property but if changes came about, the setbacks would change dramatically and height limit would also change. This is a primary urban corridor and the proposed changes limit size and character of a building. He feels that density is essential – the more people on the streets, the safer people feel. He urges the board to consider all aspects of changes before adoption.

**Bob Barnes, Sr. – property owner** – owns a number of buildings in the proposed rezoning areas. He has doubled the value of every property that he has bought and they are all good looking and well taken care of. He wants to see the city prosper. He is on the DDA Board and the City Planner presented this to them and they did not vote on it, but were not in favor of it. He has cut down the density on the properties on Cross Street which means less people to visit the shops. He works hard to try to live up to the laws of the city. He referred to articles in a couple of newspapers advertising rental properties for students in homes that have more rooms than allowed by zoning. Blight and trash is a big problem, zoning enforcement is a bigger problem and the city should be spending more time on that than zoning.

**Reza Rejabi, 110 N. Summit** – purchased a home in 1987 that was owned by two people who rented to 20 people. He lived downstairs and rented out the upper floor as a rooming house with two rooms. For the past 17 years he has rented it to six people. Recently, he received a letter from the Building Department informing him they would be performing an inspection, after which, he was informed that he could not rent it out as a rooming house. He feels he is being treated differently than others.

**Bob Barnes, Jr., 215 N. River** – reiterated that the DDA is not supporting this. Also, EMU is not continuing to buy up property as stated by the Mayor. Barnes & Barnes own 175 units in this community and have only one vacancy and the reason for this is that they are well maintained. He agrees that the lack of enforcement is the biggest problem and asked if the city has a plan to bring on more people to enforce the new rules. His father referred to advertisements in the paper for rental properties that have more rooms than allowed. With this information, the city should be checking on them and enforcing the rules. Barnes & Barnes is running a reputable company and the city is forcing

them to compete against disreputable companies that could force them to be devious and this is not the kind of business they want to run.

**Phil Panzica** – is a landlord in the city and stated that he is against the proposed changes and feels it is a bad plan. It will lower the tax base and could cause lawsuits against the city. The city is being unfair in that Water Street is high density.

**Michael Gelletly, Sheridan Street** – owns a five unit on Cross Street. Recently, he and his wife tried to figure out how to make this old house a two family house, according to the proposed new zoning on this property. They were able to restructure it into two nice three bedroom apartments that could accommodate six people. Although it would take a lot of effort, it is possible. Density, if this is the issue, might not be solved in all cases when a fire occurs and the house has to be rebuilt with fewer units. But the fact that in this example, it would be possible to comply with lower density requirements yet have the same number of bedrooms, is something that property owners should consider.

Commissioner Davis complimented attendees for their discipline and also having respect for each other's views.

Commissioner Clark moved to close the public portion of the hearing (Support: M. Brandt) and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Davis informed the public that the next step is discussion by the board and if a recommendation was made, it would go forward to City Council. He continued by stating that he was impressed by the presentations made by the public and the information that was brought forward for the board to consider. There are a number of people who will be affected by what the board proposes to do. The statistics that came out of our research from one of our earlier meetings is that 17% of the currently conforming properties would be changed to non-conforming. It is important that we listen to the large number of constituents that are in attendance to consider the impact of significant dollars that could be imposed on their future. One citizen stated that there may be other alternatives for improving our non-conforming regulations to help us in that regard. We had already submitted that recommendation to City Council who has not yet approved it.

Commissioner Davis did some research with regard to insurance status and got less than a good response from the way insurance companies approach what happens in the event of a fire and what happens to a landlord if they cannot re-build and how they would come out whole.

Commissioner Goulet asked if R1 allows accessory apartments and Nathan Voght responded that it does not. Goulet suggested that we could consider further study of how we can approve certain higher density properties as Special Land Uses vs Permitted Land Uses so that landlords do not lose all their rights. If a significant fire occurs, an owner could apply for a Special Land Use to preserve the higher number of units. Commissioner Davis stated that while he agrees that there may be a way we can help in that process, at the same time, we also have people who are not as financially secure. Any zoning changes would apply to the whole community and there are some areas that we would as soon not see re-built but we can't be discriminatory in the process.

Commissioner Fosket referred to a specific property that was zoned manufacturing and because of the zoning, could not get a mortgage if the house burned down.

Commissioner Davis stated that this is an extremely small city and to pass zoning that will work throughout is very difficult since there are many exceptions. We try to do the best for everyone however, if in the process, we create something that is devastating on a large population, we are remiss in not spending more time in doing it better. Commissioner Clark supports Davis' comments but feels that anything we may consider should include enforcement. By changing the zoning, we are creating more zoning enforcement issues than we can already handle.

Commissioner Goulet asked if a petitioner whose property has burned down has the ability to appeal to Zoning Board and if we have had any cases in the past. Voght responded that an applicant has the ability to appeal and he referred to 306 N. Adams. Mr. Hayes did appeal and Voght made a determination based on the extent of his damage and cost of restoration. Mr. Hayes went before Zoning Board of Appeals who denied the request and he went to Circuit Court. In the meantime, Voght worked with him and informed him that if he reduced it to six larger units, it would be a permitted use and all that would be required was to go through Site Plan Review, which he did, and the product is much nicer than was previously there.

Goulet continued that his take on this situation is more the intent to stabilize neighborhoods rather than down zone to prevent additional conversion of single family residences to multiple family residences. The difficulty is how to make this work effectively to reach the goals of the plan. Voght added that one of the difficulties of zoning is trying to apply the same standards to every use within a zoning district.

Commissioner Goulet asked if it would make sense to look at the text of the ordinance before we consider recommending this to City Council. Commissioner Enneking wonders if it would be possible to do only part – concentrate on a pilot area keeping the bigger picture in mind. Commissioner Brandt feels we are caught between rezoning and enforcement and wonders if there was enforcement, would there be a need to rezone and would this create more rules. Voght responded that enforcement is a separate issue and he does not agree that by this rezoning it will create more rules. Commissioner Clark disagreed with Voght on this. Commissioner Goulet added that people have the perception this will create more rules but all it does is change the number of non-conforming properties with the same zoning rules and building codes in place. We send a big message by rezoning stating that to stabilize the neighborhood and get rid of these congestion problems, parking problems, etc., these will ultimately go back to how they used to be, however, it will take a number of years to accomplish this. Commissioner Johnson stated that the main issue is not enforcement since regardless of what the Planning Commission does enforcement will always be an issue. He feels the main issue is the 17% increase in non-conformity and we should focus on that.

Commissioner Clark asked if there is an area that we can all live with and only do part of it and Commissioner Davis responded that dividing up the plan could take a number of years to implement and his opinion would be to spend more time up front now to adopt the whole plan to get it moving forward since it will take 40 years to make any impact.

After much more discussion by board members, Commissioner Goulet moved to table for further study (Support: M. Brandt) Commissioner Knapp stated that both sides of the argument use the tax revenue impact in terms of what this will do to revenues for the city and wondered if a case study had been done to show what this rezoning would change over time. Commissioner Davis responded that we have discussed this conceptually that if you make changes, the whole community benefits but indicated that Commissioner Goulet did have some specifics that he felt we should include in the motion:

- Evaluate the Zoning Ordinance
- Study how to add additional language in non-conforming section to address non-conforming
- Two specific areas of concern, North Summit and
- Create another zoning category? Transitional?

The motion carried unanimously.

## **VI. OLD BUSINESS**

### 1. LeForge Station Student Housing – Public Hearing for Master Plan Amendment

Commissioner Davis stated that at the last meeting we made a PUD recommendation and sent it forward to City Council.

Commissioner Goulet moved to open the public portion of the hearing (Support: M. Brandt) and the motion carried unanimously.

**Rick Kirk, Edward Communities** – stated that he had made a presentation to City Council the previous evening to discuss the progress that had been made and was now in attendance for approval of the Master Plan Updates.

City Planner, Nathan Voght, stated that this is adoption of the Master Plan Amendment including a change of two different parcels, 1000 Huron River Drive and 910-916 Railroad from heavy industrial and mixed commercial industrial to high density residential.

Commissioner Goulet moved to close the public portion of the hearing (Support: G. Clark) and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Goulet moved to approve the proposed Master Plan Amendment taking the proposed properties from heavy industrial and mixed commercial industrial to high density residential – 1000 Huron River Drive and 910-916 Railroad (Support: R. Johnson). A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

### 2. 406-408 S. Washington – Discussion on Proposed Special Use-New Jerusalem Baptist Church

N. Voght, City Planner, presented his staff report stating that this is a request to construct a forty space off-street parking lot adjacent and behind their facility which faces Adams. The existing lots are vacant and face S. Washington, north of a multi-family unit. The neighborhood is Historic South Side with a mix of older homes. There are also a number of non-residential uses in this area. In Voght's staff presentation in December, he had concerns about the construction of this lot that was proposed within the neighborhood. He had concerns about continued non-residential expansion in this neighborhood and the potential impact of

non-residential uses and their growth adding that it is detrimental to single family residential in that area.

He has discussed the above issues with Dr. Aplin and the importance of trying to get the non-residential users together to better share facilities. He knows that they already do this and it makes sense but with the expansion of Lucille's Funeral Home, who is building a 30-35 car parking lot which was approved and they also got a variance for non-overlapping hours to share some parking directly behind New Jerusalem.

In discussion with Dr. Aplin, there are some times when there would be some conflict and overlapping of activities. Voght's question is, have all the non-residential users in this area really explored shared facilities and even "tweaking" schedules to make sure services do not occur at the same time. There are some site plan issues to be resolved but they wanted to have the benefit of comments by the Planning Commission before they moved forward with that.

Commissioner Brandt moved to remove this item from the table (Support: R. Johnson) and the motion carried unanimously

**Dr. Aplin** – stated that the reason they want to do this is because they want to bring the church up to city code by providing adequate parking. They want to eliminate street parking and traffic congestion as well as beautifying the area and make it inviting. They also want to reduce unsafe issues by having adequate parking closer for their parishioners. Some of the homes do not have driveways because they are older homes, and this causes a parking problem. He reviewed the plan of the church. Currently they can only get two cars in front of their church.

**Mrs. Aplin** – referred to Mr. Voght's comment about "tweaking" of hours. Unfortunately, Lucille's are basically a 24/7 operation. Also, next door and across the street are different denominations. The Seventh Day Adventist Church across the street already shares their parking with Second Baptist. Brown Chapel Church shares the street since they don't have adequate parking in the back of their facility. Second Baptist on Buffalo/Adams also shares with the Masonic Hall. We are already congested with the churches that currently share so this is not a consideration. Ms. Aplin continued that in order to find parking on the street, their members have to park quite a distance away which is a safety issue, especially when they have services in the evening. She feels that by adding shrubs and fencing in the area in question, it would beautify it.

Commissioner Davis asked who owns the vacant lot and Dr. Aplin responded that their church owns the property. Commissioner Johnson asked who owns the vacant lot north of Buffalo and Voght responded. He has spoken with the property owner who did not seem to be interested in building a home even although it is zoned for that purpose.

Mrs. Aplin stated that she had spoken with a neighbor about installing lighting to make the area safer from loitering or break-ins. Commissioner Goulet stated that a resident had attended a previous meeting and had some objections about cars being parked there because of the noise but he also was concerned about the constant lights when people park in front of their homes.

Commissioner Goulet has a concern about the exit on to Washington Street and asked if this could be eliminated so all the access could be only on Adams and Dr. Aplin agreed that this could be a viable solution.

Commissioner Brandt had a concern about several churches buying up property and converting to parking lots and feels that she will be surrounded by parking lots and no homes. She does not want to set a precedent that it is acceptable to buying property and turn it into a parking lot.

Some discussion was held with regard to overlapping parking which Lucille's had agreed to when they came before the Zoning Board of Appeals and got a variance.

Commissioner Goulet moved to approve the Special Land Use with the condition that they have no access on Washington Street and that the 25 ft deep frontage in front of the closed access be landscaped according to the ordinance and pedestrian access be provided from the sidewalk on S. Washington to the proposed lot. The approval would include Lucille's Funeral Home to use the parking as shared parking (Support: R. Johnson). A roll call vote was taken with a vote of 7:1 and the motion carried. Commissioner Brandt voted against the motion.

### 3. Special Meeting

Voght informed the board that there will be a Special Planning Commission Meeting on Wednesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:30 to discuss Metropolitan memorial Baptist Church to review Special Use and Site Plan applications.

## **V. ADJOURNMENT**

Since there was no further business, Commissioner Johnson moved to adjourn the meeting (Support: M. Brandt) and the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 10:35 p.m.