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**PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 16, 2005**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 p.m.

Chairman Davis welcomed a new member, David Sisson, to the board. Mr. Sisson is an architect who works out of Ann Arbor.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: F. Davis, R. Johnson, G. Clark, M. Brandt, N. Fosket
S. Schulze, C. McPherson, D. Sisson

Absent: N. Fosket (excused) G. Clark, M. Margaret Brandt,

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

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 19, 2005

Commissioner McPherson moved to approve the minutes of January 19, 2005 (Support: S. Schulze) and the motion carried unanimously.

IV. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

1. Presentation by St. John's Missionary Baptist Church – 866 Monroe St

N. Voght, City Planner, stated that he had met with people from the church about one year ago to discuss a planned expansion. He has been working with their engineer on preliminary site plans and at this time, they wanted an opportunity to present some preliminary plans to the Planning Commission. This is a Special Land Use in a residential district on the south side of the city and is therefore, discretionary.

Don Stansell, Architectural Church Consultant – who has been working with the church for some time was in attendance to represent the applicant. He referred to a letter from the Pastor who stated that

the church has been in this community for over 55 years. Over this period of time, the membership has steadily grown and they have now outgrown this facility. The problem they are now faced with is that if they build a new facility on the current location, which is what they would like to do, they would require relief on parking and setbacks. They are in the process of trying to acquire a piece of property so they can have additional parking. Currently, they are 72 spaces short of what is required by the ordinance for a church of this size. Also, the setback on the back of the new building would require approximately a 17' setback variance.

They have between 250-300 people attending services every week and as a rule, when planning an expansion, it should be between 2-3 times what the average attendance is. If it is impossible, they would like to know that rather than expend the time and money that the church cannot afford.

Commissioner Johnson asked if they currently have an overflow of attendees at this time and Mr. Stansell responded that it is to the point where people are being turned away.

Pastor Jameson – stated that they need a new facility and would like it to be as much on one level as possible because of the elderly. They bus a lot of people in but would like to reach more. They currently pick up members from Ann Arbor, Canton Township, Sr. Housing on Hamilton and Chidester, as well as a number of EMU students.

Commissioner Davis asked about the footprint of the current building and Mr. Stansell referred to the preliminary site plan. Commissioner Sisson asked if the old section would be used as a school and Pastor Jameson responded that its use would be a Sunday School Educational Center. Commissioner McPherson asked what the maximum attendance is at each service and Pastor Jameson responded that they have 250-300 each week but on holidays, it can be twice as many. They need 132 spaces but are short 72 spaces. Commissioner Schulze asked what is currently on the vacant lot that they are interested in purchasing and Pastor Jameson responded that it is an older house. Mr. Stansell stated that they would be able to pick up approximately 40 spaces if they acquired the property

Commissioner Sisson asked about the height of the building and the steeple and Voght responded that height would not be an issue here and steeples can go a little higher. After looking at the Zoning Ordinance, it was noted that steeples cannot be more than 10' more than the district allows, therefore, they may require a variance.

Commissioner Johnson noted that they are very short of parking and does not feel that this is a precedent we would want to get involved in. Commissioner Davis agreed that acquiring the lot was imperative to even considering the project. He also added that counting on off-street parking was not good planning and counter to the Zoning Ordinance. Voght stated that any deviation from parking requirements would have to go to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Commissioner Schulze was concerned that this would mean taking another piece of property off the tax rolls. Commissioner Sisson feels that they should meet setbacks to which Mr. Stansell responded that he was not sure if this could be done in order to have the building the size it needs to be.

Voght stated that the preliminary plan has not changed since he first saw it and it appears that setbacks and parking are the two biggest issues although the steeple height may be another concern. These are issues that would have to be addressed by the Zoning Board of Appeals. The Planning Commission will

concentrate on the discretionary Special Use standards and there is about six or seven of them. Whether or not a building or use complies with all of the non-discretionary standards, like setbacks, also weighs into the evaluation of the discretionary standards.

Commissioner Davis stated that there are two separate bodies whose criteria have to be met. It may be possible if the lot is acquired that this could be workable, however, there are no guarantees, but without acquisition of the lot, it does not make sense to go any further. Commissioner Johnson added that they would still have to demonstrate how having less parking would not violate the thrust of the zoning.

2. Presentation of Ozone House – 102 N. Hamilton

N. Voght gave an update on the drop-in center on N. Huron. Ozone House was never able to acquire the property so they abandoned the plans for supportive housing at 30 N. Huron, but are now considering relocating the drop-in center to another location at 102 N. Hamilton. This new location would only be a drop-in center and not housing. Mary Jo Callen is in attendance to discuss the idea.

Mary Jo Callen, Director, Ozone House – distributed copies of the property in question. They intend to purchase this property, which is currently owned by the County. It is currently off the tax rolls and she understands that this is a concern of the City and a valid one. They do not have a site plan at this time since this is only an informal opportunity for her to update the board on their prospective plan and get some feedback. They want to purchase this building, it is zoned Residential/Office so they would require a Special Use Permit to operate a drop-in center. If it is their intent to apply, she wonders what kind of features would the Planning Commission like to see in the development of a site plan. The building has been vacant for some time. They are committed to staying in Ypsilanti. They are continuing to lease their current location on N. Huron but feel that this would be a better alternative since it is out of the downtown business district.

Commissioner Johnson asked if this would be a continuation of the same as they currently have on N. Huron. Ms. Callen responded that they would not have any housing since it is strictly a drop-in center with the same hours. They would not be leasing the building on N. Huron. Commissioner Schulze asked the differences between their operation on N. Huron and the proposed location at 102 N. Hamilton and Ms. Callen responded that the location on N. Huron was more of a social services type agency with counseling and job training whereas the proposed location would be more geared toward a youth drop-in center.

Commissioner McPherson asked about the surrounding properties on N. Hamilton to which Ms. Callen responded in detail. Commissioner Johnson stated that since it is a central location, the proposed location seemed to serve their purpose provided there is no conflict. Commissioner Sisson stated that there is some concern on the part of the neighbors on parking and asked that she comment on that. He understands that given this is a youth center, probably most of the clients would be walk-ins however, there would be staff involved. Ms. Callen responded that the driveway could accommodate three cars. They will have two or three staff on duty at all times but they could explore parking availability with the University on obtaining a couple of spots in the parking structure if necessary. Commissioner Sisson added that when this issue was first discussed a few months ago, the neighbors were universally enthusiastic but wonders if there was anything else that was discussed at that time that would be applicable for her to relate to the Planning Commission. Ms. Callen responded that parking was

definitely an issue and the other concern was statistics on crime which she discussed with Chief Basar to see if drop-in centers like this correlate in any way to crime. He stated that there had been no increase in crime on N. Huron where the current Ozone House is located.

Voght added that screening would be required at the proposed location because of the neighbors. Parking and foundation landscaping is something staff would have to look at. Voght asked if they had a purchase agreement with the County and Ms. Callen responded that they are still working out the details. The County is very interested in selling.

Commissioner McPherson asked if they had held a meeting with the neighbors to give them an opportunity to address their concerns and Ms. Callen responded that they did have a meeting with about 15 neighbors in attendance. They seemed to feel assured about the project and Ozone House is very interested in working with the neighbors.

V. OLD BUSINESS

None

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Planning Commissioner Training

N. Voght reviewed the training publication with board members with specific reference to the relationship between comprehensive plan and the zoning ordinance, zoning decisions and planning commission recommendations to city council. He recommended that the board read this basic training information and that they should become familiar with the zoning ordinance since this has all of the information necessary to assist them in making decisions.

2. Resignation

Chairman Davis informed the board and staff that he plans to retire after the May meeting.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Since there was no further business, Commissioner Johnson moved to adjourn the meeting (Support C. McPherson) and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.