

Subject: To: Ann Arbor City Planning Commission

To: Ann Arbor City Planning Commission

Re: Application for Special Exception Use, 1919 Wayne St. Ann Arbor

Date: May 29, 2014

We live at 1838 Vinewood Blvd., which abuts the north property line of 1919 Wayne Street, our small back yard is next to their even smaller back yard, and our houses are only about 65' apart. We want to express our strong objection to the requested special exception use by granting Functional Family status to the Society of Jesuits.

Approving this request for a special exception would be inconsistent with the general objectives of the City's Master Plan for the following four reasons:

1) The city's definition of a functional family is as follows, "functional family does not include any society, (which the applicant is), club, fraternity, sorority, association, lodge, organization or group of students or other individuals where the common living arrangement or basis for the establishment of the housekeeping unit is temporary."

2) The applicants state that assignments to this location would be indefinite, and that any of the individuals could be reassigned to a different location, and then be replaced by another person, therefore the housekeeping unit is temporary because their members are transient by nature. Their vows, as stated in the application, are to the order of Jesuits, which is the global Jesuit society with 18,000 members, and their bond would not be to the other members of this household, as would be the case with a real family, whose bond is to the community they have chosen to live in. The Petitioner is located in Chicago, has no ties to this neighborhood, and like any employer, will transfer their people around as needed.

3) The city's guidelines state that the Planning Commission shall consider whether the proposed use "Will not be detrimental to the use, peaceful enjoyment, economic value or development of neighboring property, or the neighborhood area in general.

(Chapter 55, Article V, 5.26.6, D. 1. d)

Recent studies have shown that the reduction in single family residential property values can be as much as 24% in similar circumstances. While the value of all of the houses in the neighborhood will be negatively affected, those of us who are closest will see the biggest impact.

Potential alterations to the house to make it a more suitable dormitory for six adults may make it less likely to ever revert back to single family residence, thus changing the character of the neighborhood.

4) The application requesting six occupants exceeds the guidelines under Residential Occupancy, Limits on Occupancy of a Dwelling Unit, which allows, "a maximum of six persons living as a single Housing unit in multiple family and mixed use districts only." (Chapter 55, Article V, 5.16.1, A, 2.e)

To summarize, we urge you to deny the request since the applicant does not meet the city's guidelines for a special exception because they are a society, because the occupants are transient and not permanent, because this use will cause a loss of equity for the residents in the neighborhood, and because they would exceed the limits on occupancy of a dwelling unit.

1919 Wayne street is also next door to a small, wooded city park that many young children visit. The Jesuits as a group, and the applicant, the Midwest Society in particular, have a decades long history of covering up the sexual abuse of children perpetrated by their priests. The courts have consistently ruled in favor of the victims, and the Midwest Society of Jesuits has paid millions in settlements and their members have been convicted and are serving prison sentences. If they were genuine in their desire to rebuild their reputation, they would not locate next door to a park where young children play.

Sincerely,
Michael & Sheri Clark
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