

**To: City of Ann Arbor Planning Commission**

**From:** Daniel Reim, S.J., petitioner for special exception use at 1919 Wayne Street

**RE: *Points to Consider***

Thank you again for reconsidering our application for a special exception use. If it is permitted and not inappropriate, may I offer some points to consider as you continue to deliberate this issue?

**Will the Jesuits make good neighbors if living at 1919 Wayne Street?**

During the June 3<sup>rd</sup> Planning Commission meeting, I was pleased, and humbled, to hear that both neighbors of the 1919 Wayne Street home objecting to our application and various members of the Commission believe us to likely be good neighbors. In this regard, it may be helpful to point out that the Ferdon residence (the current residence of the Jesuits wishing to move to 1919 Wayne Street) is one-half mile away from the Wayne Street address. In all the ten years that the Jesuits have been permanently residing at Ferdon, there have not been any complaints or concerns from neighbors. As we stated in our application, we live relatively quiet lives. During that time, we have had three, sometimes four, living in the house. Does increasing the size of our Jesuit community from four to six and living one-half mile away make it likely that we will be less good neighbors there? Isn't the point of zoning laws to protect the neighborhood from individuals or groups that would be a detriment to the community, but not preclude those who would be compatible? *Is anyone* (besides the few who would seem likely to reject any Catholic priests from living in the neighborhood) *arguing that we Jesuits would be bad for the neighborhood?*

**What is better for the 1919 Wayne Street neighborhood?**

Let's say that the special exception use application is ultimately denied and we Jesuits decide to go through with the purchase of the Wayne Street residence for four of our number and the other two continue to live on Ferdon. Is this better for the neighborhood than six Jesuits living in one house? In the former case, Jesuits would be running back and forth between the houses, parking their cars as guests at the other house, coming in and out of the respective houses, and so on and so on. Under this scenario, there would be no parking restrictions placed on the four residents living at 1919 Wayne.

**Are the Jesuits making a contribution to the Ann Arbor community?**

For the past ten years, we have been serving the Catholic community and the broader Ann Arbor population through our ministry at St Mary Student Parish. Our ministry to students serves to form future leaders in our Church and in civil society, leaders committed to improving life for all people. Our ministry to resident parishioners supports residents of Ann Arbor in both material and spiritual needs. This past winter, the parish opened its doors to the homeless for six weeks to help relieve the congestion of homeless staying at the Delonis Center or at the Public Library. Throughout the year, our parish sponsors many service opportunities to agencies in the Ann Arbor area: CROP Walk, IHN Alpha House, Delonis Community Kitchen, Salvation Army, and Catholic Social Services. We are now in the enviable position of having more Jesuits coming to provide further services to the Ann Arbor community through ministry at St Mary Student Parish. But we need a residence. The church building does not have the capacity to meet our residence needs (because it was originally built to accommodate only two priests).

### **Precedents for Jesuits living in single family homes**

Jesuit priests have been serving in the US since before the foundation of this country. Jesuits are most well known for our work in education. Georgetown University, Boston College, University of Detroit Mercy are some of the Catholic universities founded by Jesuits. And Jesuit communities of six or more have been peacefully living together in communities around the country for many years, while providing many services to their civil communities. The Woodlawn Jesuit Residence in Hyde Park, Chicago, has six Jesuit members living in the house in the neighborhood near the University of Chicago campus. The Oak Park residence in Oak Park, IL has five Jesuits living in the house in the neighborhood. Six Jesuits reside in a house in a neighborhood in Lexington, Kentucky. Six Jesuits live in a neighborhood in South Bend, IN studying and working at the University of Notre Dame. Shell House in the University Heights neighborhood of Cleveland is a large house in the neighborhood with more than six Jesuits living there. Six Jesuits live in a house in a neighborhood in Cincinnati and work at St. Xavier High School. These are examples from our Jesuit Province. You can multiply those examples in other areas of the US.

### **Where are the Jesuits to go, if the special exception use is not approved?**

Some of those opposed to the granting of this special exception use have argued that we should find appropriate housing in R4-zoned areas. After consulting with our Realtor Ann Marie Kotre of the Charles Reinhart Co., we learned it is unlikely we will find a home that not only has seven bedrooms (six for full time Jesuits and one guestroom) but also has living spaces that would accommodate our religious community lifestyle. Her response to my question was:

“Properties in AA’s R4-zoned neighborhoods are mostly large student rental homes. While they may offer the number of bedrooms you desire, they are typically divided into separate apartments with private kitchens & baths, which would not satisfy your community’s vowed lifestyle any more than they would fit a “traditional” family’s lifestyle.”

**Thank you for your careful consideration of all the factors involved in this decision.**