



City of Ann Arbor
Formal Minutes - Draft
City Planning Commission

301 E. Huron St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
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Thursday, February 21, 2013

7:00 PM

City Hall, 301 E. Huron Street, 2nd Flr.

10-a 13-0164

Theta Delta Chi Site Plan for City Council Approval and Special Exception Use for Planning Commission Approval - A request to construct a 2,366 sq ft addition to the existing fraternity building and add bike storage, dumpster screening and patio area to the site. No change in the current occupancy of 33 residents is proposed at this 0.40 acre site located at 700 South State Street. [Ward 4] Staff Recommendation: Approval

Thacher presented the staff report.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Arthur Salsbury, Director for Corporation that owns the property, introduced Eugene Hopkins and Dave Rockland, Hopkinsburns Design Studio, 4709 N Delhi Road, Architects, and said the corporation is managed for the Living Alumni Fraternity. He explained that they were originally founded in 1889, and view the house as a platform for their continued educational mission. He said they operated the house up until the Chapter became inactive in 1997, when they subleased to another fraternity. He said those moves turned out to be grievous mistakes; however, a few years ago, students recolonized their fraternity at the University and their Board was reconstituted in 2008 and they regained control of the house in May 2012. He said they began their first phase of renovations in the spring of 2012. He said they currently have 49 undergraduates that have been living in the house since September 2012. Salsbury reviewed the first three priorities - life safety, health and security. He said they will be doing the work in phases and as they do that they are installing fire protection equipment, new emergency egress, and new ventilation for health and cleanliness, as well as increased security for residents and guests of the premises. He said that part of their site plan process is to address those security issues since they are located on the corner of two highly traveled streets. He said since the house was originally moved from across the street, the neighborhood has changed quite a bit.

Salsbury added since the house is a historic structure and since their alumni have a great emotional attachment to the structure, they are very interested in the historic preservation aspect of the building, and have therefore retained Hopkinsburns to handle the design work. He said they

view their addition to the building as a context sensitive adaption to current needs while respecting the historically nature of the building. He said they look forward to restoring 700 South State Street to its former glory. He said they are also interested in the sustainability of their facility and organization which will be handled through a capital fund in years to come. He said they have also engaged a professional management company to handle property maintenance as well as help them enforce rules of the fraternity. He reviewed their new energy efficiency measures, adding that they plan on installing a geo-thermal system in the future.

Noting no further speakers, the Chair declared the public hearing closed.

Moved by Mahler, seconded by Bona, that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission, after hearing all interested persons and reviewing all relevant information, finds the petition to substantially meet the standards in Chapter 55 (Zoning Ordinance), Section 5:104 (Special Exceptions), and, therefore approves the Theta Delta Chi Special Exception Use for a fraternity use with a building occupancy of no more than 33 persons, including the required resident manager.

and

Moved by Mahler, seconded by Bona, that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the Theta Delta Chi Site Plan, subject to approval of necessary variances by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION:

Bona asked about bicycle parking provided. She asked where the Class A and Class B spaces are and how many current spaces exist.

Dave Rockland said the Class B parking is in the south west corner of the site in a covered shed, and that the Class A parking (9 spaces) is in a storage area under the stairs that lead down to the basement. He said there are currently three bike spaces.

Bona said this looks great and the variances seem like things the City Planning Commission would like to see, such as less impervious surfaces. She said the height issue seemed like it was a relative issue and wouldn't be an issue. She said she supports the petition.

Westphal said that it is good to hear that they had a conversation with the neighbors, and asked if the fence issue had been discussed.

Arthur Salsbury said it seemed better for both of them not to have a large fence, from the standpoint of keeping the graffiti off as well as security and visibility. He said that both building now have cameras that can remotely monitor, what goes on outside of the building, which has shown helpful on various occasions.

Derezinski complemented them on renovating a building, that while it has a bit of age to it, they are able to preserve it and make it better. He said he used to live in the Law Quad, which was a wonderful neighborhood, and he hates to see anything torn down in the area, if at all possible.

Westphal thanks them for investing in the added amenity of bay-windows. He said the request meets all Special Exception Use standards and he supports the request.

On a roll call, the vote was as follows, with the Chair declaring the motions carried.

Yeas: 7 - Bonnie Bona, Eric A. Mahler, Kirk Westphal, Diane Giannola, Eleanore Adenekan, Tony Derezinski, and Sabra Briere

Nays: 0

Absent: 2 - Wendy Woods, and Kenneth Clein