

CITY OF OSWEGO

PLANNING BOARD

June 2, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cory Moshier, Brit Hallenbeck, Daniel Breitweg, Matthew Bacon, Kim McPherson, and Chairman Freeman.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jeffrey Hinderliter and James Scanlon.

Chairman Freeman called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., Tuesday June 2, 2020. Roll call was duly noted.

A motion to approve the minutes of the May 2020 meeting was made by Brit Hallenbeck and seconded by Chairman Freeman; minutes unanimously approved.

Matthew Bacon made a motion that all actions taken tonight are excluded, exempt or Type II actions for the purpose of the State Environmental Quality Review Law unless otherwise stated. Motion seconded by Daniel Breitweg, unanimous approval.

Mr. Caraccioli said Kim McPherson is a voting member tonight.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Site Plan Review & Approval – 264 West Second Street, Case 20-77; to allow proposed group residence, Sections 280-48 thru 280-51.

DISCUSSION: Jonathan Evans, pastor of Elim Grace Church, was present for the discussion. Jonathan Evans said they purchased the property across the street from them about a year and a half ago. He said they purchased it with the vision of converting it into a home for women looking for a way out of addiction. He said in addition to being the pastor of Elim Grace Church, he is also chairman of the Desens House. He said they would like to exist with the intent to set generations free from addiction by offering a family of support for women seeking a way out of addiction. He said they are using the word generations deliberately. He said his father was a drug addict in the 60s and his life changed and as a result his own life and that of his sister's is different. He said their belief is if they can change one life they can change subsequent generations. He said the objective is to provide at this property a home for up to four women and those four women would be referred to them by their partners which would be specifically Farnham and Harbor Lights. He said each of those women when referred to them would need to be 30 days clean. He said they are not going to be taking anyone in off of the street. He said they are not a treatment facility. He said they are a home and a family. He said it would be their desire to use the property to provide a place for these women. He said the objective would be for them to stay with them for 12 to 18 months. He said they believe that is how long it takes for many of those addictions to be undone and for portions of the brain to be literally re-wired in order for them to exist again and come back into society. He said they would be providing a daily strict schedule that would include wake up and bedtimes, teaching or re-teaching basic hygiene, and taking care of themselves, their room, and their belongings. He said they would learn or relearn self-discipline and personal responsibility. He said they would learn to care for others and put others first. He said they would learn to care for the home itself and serve one another. He said the objective would be for them to build interpersonal skills and friendships. He said they would help provide them with employment in the community and mentoring opportunities through Elim Grace Church and other organizations. He said the objective is to help them develop life skills and character. He said in addition to employment and mentoring opportunities every day they would provide daily physical exercise and nutrition training. He said that would be in partnership with Amnesty CrossFit which is right around the corner from the home. He said they would also provide the opportunity for them to grow in their faith. He said as a Board they believe for any of these women to succeed they will need a strong mind, body, heart, and spirit. He said in addition to partnering with local businesses for employment, the big idea would be to one day establish Desens House businesses in the city that would fill a need. He said he wouldn't want them competing with existing businesses but they would be unique, fill a need, help employ the women, and in turn fund the Desens House. He said that is a big picture addition to what they are starting with. He said there would be one house mom who would always be on site during the day as well as a site mom during the night. He said both of those volunteer positions are both members of Elim Grace Church. He said they have on-site parking for eight. He said all of the expenses are funded fully by Elim Grace. He said in addition to funding by the church there would be donations by individuals as well as seeking grants

through foundations. He said the goal would be to eventually see the Desen House completely self-funded. Mr. Caraccioli said they had a similar project approved a few months ago so they are familiar with the group concept home. He asked how many of the parking spaces would be for live-in staff or staff that will come on a day-to-day basis and how many are anticipated for residents. He also asked about security concerns. He asked if it will be a 24/7 supervisory situation. Jonathan Evans said the two women from the church both have vehicles so he would assume at the most two parking spaces taken up by them if they are both there at the same time. He said he doesn't know if the women would have vehicles. He said if they did then that would be four vehicles so he thinks they are looking at a max of six vehicles if everyone was present for the day. He said that would leave two parking spaces for visitors or just two extra spaces. He said he understands what it means when working with addicts in terms of needing constant supervision. He said while they are there they would be under the mentorship and oversight of the house mom. He said they would be working out transportation to employment internally. He said they have talked about installing some sort of security camera system at the house as well as at the church. He said the objective would be to never have any of the women alone. He said it would be to their benefit to work either in pairs or all together so that would be one of the things they would be hoping to achieve in looking for employment. He said there is additional security by virtue of the fact that the church is right across the street as well. He said their windows in their offices are facing that way and they would have a relationship with the women as well. Jeff McGann said they had a similar case go through recently in which they required them as part of the permitting process to have security. He said they just mentioned that they are looking at doing that. He said he would recommend that they stay constant and have that as a requirement. Mr. Caraccioli said he is a big fan of consistency and he doesn't think they can go wrong with a security plan whether it is 24/7 supervision or a combination of that and security cameras. He mentioned a policy with respect to visitors. He said these were all concerns that were raised in a prior hearing primarily from neighbors. He said he doesn't know if there are any neighbors on this call. He said with respect to parking there is a provision within the city zoning code that also allows for available parking within 500' of the structure. He said the church is right across the street with a lot of parking so parking is not an issue. He said it makes sense to make it a requirement to submit a security plan to assure the safety and security of both residents of the house and residents of the neighborhood. Jeff McGann said this is not only to have security for the people inside the house but some of these people are coming from a bad place and have connections with a bad place or they may have someone who has been abusive that could show up there. He said security cameras could show those that aren't living in the house and show up there with bad intentions. He said it also provides their residents with protection as well. Jonathan Evans said he fully agrees and they can commit to security cameras as well as they were considering door alarms for all times of the day. Chairman Freeman asked if they have been in any discussion with the fire department or police department to let them know of their plans. Jonathan Evans said no. He said he has been in touch as a neighbor and introduced himself to Mr. Vashaw Jr. He said he is happy to speak to the police department and fire department. Chairman Freeman said this was one of the things that they suggested to the other house that they have a good, working relationship with the fire department and police department. He asked if they will be requiring the women to sign any kind of a contract stating rules on how they are going to live and whether they can

have boyfriends over. Jonathan Evans said he and Eric Bresee are in the process of working out that application. He said Mr. Bresee is on the board of Kristina's House of Hope and they have an application already established so they will be working together to have one in place before they are operational. Chairman Freeman asked if they are working with Kristina's House of Hope. Jonathan Evans said as a church they are supporting them with purchasing of supplies that they need. He said Shelly used to come to their church so he has been aware for a couple of years of her intent and her plan. He said they are working with them in the sense that they are mutually supporting one another in the endeavor. Mr. Caraccioli said they are not directly affiliated. He said they are doing the same type of work but separate and distinct from each other. Jonathan Evans said that is correct. He said their intent is for the women to have a longer stay of 12-18 months. He said it is his understanding that Kristina's House of Hope is a shorter time duration than that. He said Victory Transformation has a couple of homes and their timeframe for a stay is even shorter. He said they are different at the very least in the sense of the duration of time they are looking for the women to stay. Eric Bresee said they are completely separate organizations. He said they are simply collaborating and sharing best practices. Chairman Freeman asked if they will completely renovate the interior of the home. Jonathan Evans said they need to make some renovations on the second floor. Bill King said they will be doing some serious renovations to it. He said they will be doing new ceilings, new wiring, simplifying the complex plumbing system, putting in some full bathrooms rather than half bathrooms, an outdoor ramp, and potential fire escape depending on the requirements. Chairman Freeman said that is why he recommended they contact the fire department to find out what they need. He asked if they have any plans to do landscaping. Jonathan Evans said he is certain they will do that. He said they believe they take good care of the lawns at Elim Grace so the Desens House will be an extension of that. Mr. Caraccioli said there will be no expansion of the outside footprint. Bill King said there will be some outdoor renovating in terms of the shrubbery but they aren't planning any building expansion. He said it is quite a large facility and more than adequate for what they are planning. Mr. Caraccioli the nature of what is before the Planning Board tonight is site plan approval, approval of off-street parking plan, and advisory to the Zoning Board for a special permit to allow the group residence. Jeff McGann said yes. Mr. Caraccioli said as long as there isn't an expansion of the exterior beyond landscaping and cleaning up what is already in existence, the site plan is what it was reported to be. He said the parking seems more than adequate and with respect to the connection to the church across the street there is more than enough parking. He said ultimately it is just considering the advisory to the ZBA for the group residence which is clearly allowed under zoning. Jeff McGann said there is plenty of parking. He said as far as the site plan goes it pretty much is what it is. He said that building has been well-maintained over the years and with the church across the street that has been always well-maintained also. He said there is nothing to indicate it would be any different with this property. Chairman Freeman asked if there were any questions from the public and no one responded.

DECISION: Brit Hallenbeck made a motion for site plan approval. Motion seconded by Daniel Breitweg, unanimous approval.

2. Off-Street Parking Plan Review & Approval – 264 West Second Street, Case 20-78; to allow parking for proposed group residence, Section 280-52(B).

DISCUSSION: Chairman Freeman asked if there were any questions from the public and no one responded.

DECISION: Daniel Breitweg made a motion for off-street parking plan approval. Motion seconded by Brit Hallenbeck, unanimous approval.

3. Advisory to the ZBA – Special Permit Use – 264 West Second Street, Case 20-79; to allow proposed group residence, Section 280-13(B).

DISCUSSION: Chairman Freeman asked if there were any questions from the public and no one responded.

DECISION: Matthew Bacon made a motion for a favorable advisory to the ZBA. Motion seconded by Daniel Breitweg, unanimous approval.

Brit Hallenbeck made a motion to adjourn at 7:06 p.m. Motion seconded by Chairman Freeman, unanimous approval.

Approved: _____

Richard Freeman

Planning Board Chairperson

Jeff McGann

Planning Board Secretary