

**Mt. Pleasant Planning Commission
Work Session Minutes
September 6, 2012**

Vice-Chairman Smith called the work session to order at 8:30 p.m.

Present: Hoenig, Holtgreive, Kostrzewa, Lux, Quast, Shellady, Smith (Vice-Chair).

Absent: Brockman, Orlik.

Staff: Gray, Murphy.

Staff provided a recap of the previous work session on the M-2 Redevelopment Standards and when two additional tenants might be considered. Staff noted that based on the discussion, it seemed that such projects should meet certain parameters such as:

1. Reduction or elimination of noticeable nonconformities
2. Improvement in the buildings in both durability and distinctiveness
3. Reduction in code enforcement issues

Staff provided a revised policy, which eliminates the phrase "rare occasion" and has attempted to add some clarity but still allow some discretion for the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Staff reported that he and the Building Official conducted a walk-through of the student neighborhoods and identified some of the more notable non-conformities, such as parcels that have converted outbuildings into living quarters (rear dwelling units); parcels that are narrower or smaller than others in the area, and properties that have a significant number of nonconformities when compared to others on the same street.

Staff stated that when looking at the historic character of the neighborhoods, it was noted that on many of the older homes, the building "massing" was mostly vertical, whereas the newer designs have been mostly horizontal. We may want to encourage developers to change up their floor plans/roof pitch etc. to keep the historical look to the neighborhood. Staff also noted that the Commissions and staff have focused mainly on brick as a durable building material. It was noted that many of the older homes do not have brick and suggested looking at other durable materials such as fiber cement siding, etc. In speaking with Mr. Olivieri, he noted that if they aren't required to put so much brick on the homes, they may be able to incorporate more architectural features. Staff indicated that although Mr. Olivieri has no plans to change the footprint of the building under review at 1003 Douglas, he is working on the design features to try and get it more in character with the neighborhood.

Staff noted that another thing for the Commission to consider is whether they are confident a landlord will handle code enforcement issues.

Vice-Chairman Smith asked for clarification on whether the intent was that if the developer met the first set of criteria they would be considered for one, but to be considered for two they would

need to meet all of the parameters outlined in the document. Staff stated that was the intent and noted he could make that more clear if it was confusing.

Vice-Chairman Smith referred to the code enforcement language, noting that he doesn't feel that we should focus on the number of code enforcement calls, but rather on how the landlords handle the issues. Staff agreed that is the intent - to get the landlords to step up and help with code enforcement issues. Commissioner Holtgreive suggested making that point clearer in the document to help future commissioners understand the intent.

Commissioner Shellady commented that there seems to be more issues with out-of-town landlords. Commissioner Holtgreive commented that he feels the Ordinance should be blind to that and no matter what, hold everyone to the same standards.

Commissioner Kostrzewa reported on the monetary difference one extra tenant makes and noted that he spoke with one of the landlords who indicated that if we approve two tenants in some instances, that will become the norm for them to always ask for two. He suggested we may get into some sticky situations if some are approved for two and some denied. Commissioner Holtgreive commented that it should be less arbitrary than before because we will have a guideline. Commissioner Holtgreive further commented that density should not be a dirty word - if a property can support the requested density and we can give a developer incentives to improve the properties, he feels that is a good thing.

Staff commented that even if the request is denied through the ZBA or the PC, the property owner still has a right to use their property and they would still have the right to redevelop within the standards of the Zoning Ordinance. Staff further asked if the developers all meet the standards in the redevelopment procedures would the Commission be okay with that.

Commissioner Lux commented that she feels we are heading in the right direction and the Commission has to make judgment calls on every case. Commissioner Hoenig agreed, noting that you just need to be able to justify what your decisions are based on.

Commissioner Quast commented that although the outside of the redevelopments are durable materials and look good, she has some concerns with the interiors. Commissioner Holtgreive stated that because they are rental units, they have to meet the safety standards for the Housing Licensing program.

Commissioner Quast stated her concerns are more about public perception and wondered if the developers would be open to having the homes included in the Tour of Homes. Staff noted that Mr. Olivieri has been very open to showing his homes. He also noted that he could get some information from the Building Official in regards to the types of materials being used on the interiors.

Staff questioned what the next step should be, noting that at some point the document needs to get back to the ZBA. Discussion took place on whether to try and schedule a joint meeting. Commissioner Kostrzewa suggested staff make the adjustments discussed and then forward it to

the ZBA. Commissioner Shellady agreed, suggesting that it be sent to them as a "draft" document for their review and comments.

Commissioner Lux stated that Planning Commissioners who were interested could attend the ZBA meeting when it was on their agenda. Staff reported that he would be in attendance at the ZBA meeting for that discussion as well.

Motion by Kostrzewa, support by Lux to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.