

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Monday, December 21, 2015

MEMBERS PRESENT: Brian Bendily MEMBERS ABSENT: Ben Westerburg
Jo Ann Thomas Vernon Guy
Judy Poole

OTHERS PRESENT: Ann Cottrell, Zoning Assistant Dina Staggs Jeff King
Brenda Fletcher, Zoning Asst. Becky Loftin
Bennie Evans, Jr. Terry Dumas

The Monday, December 21, 2015, Planning Commission Meeting was called to order by Brian Bendily. The Commission approved the minutes of the November 16, 2015, Planning Commission meeting. The FIRST application for review was:

APPLICATION NO: ZC-15-45000009
APPLICANT: Dina C. Anding Staggs, Rebecca L. Anding Loftin, & Sarah Plaia Davidson
ADDRESS: 101 Fairfield St.
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Lot One (1) of Square 31, of Unit #7 of H. M. McGuire's Highland Park Subdivision in Section 37, Township 18 North, Range 3 East, as per plat in Plat Book 8, Page 8 of the records of Ouachita Parish, Louisiana, having a municipal address of 101 Fairfield, West Monroe, Louisiana 71291
REQUEST: Zone Change from R-1 (One Family Residence) to B-1 (Transitional Business District).

Dina Staggs stated that she and her sisters were requesting a zone change at 101 Fairfield Street in order to sell the property to Bennie Evans, Jr., as they have a lease-purchase agreement with Mr. Evans based on the outcome of this Zone Change request. Dina Staggs stated that the property at 101 Fairfield Street is currently vacant. Mr. Evans owns the property on the corner of North 7th Street & Arkansas Road (2710 North 7th Street – BJET LLC et al). Mr. Evans plans to develop the property at 101 Fairfield Street as a parking lot for the adjacent convenience store which will become a Daily Press (restaurant & gas sales). There are three Daily Press' in the surrounding cities. He is making a change from the traditional convenience store model. He will need additional parking to accommodate increased business. Brian Bendily addressed issues from various city departments (a list was provided to Mr. Evans prior to the meeting). The Planning & Zoning Director, Bruce Fleming, had noted that an 8 foot wooden fence is required along the north property line (abutting a residential district) and that the Commission needed to discuss the type of buffer protection that would be required along Fairfield Street (Ex: fence, screen planting, or both). The assistant Public Works Director, Ronnie Turner, wanted the Commission and the applicant to know that there is an existing 10 foot easement between the two lots. The water and sewer runs north and south between the two lots and over to the south side of Arkansas Road. Mr. Turner also asked that this easement remain clear. Code Enforcement Officer, Randy Duke, noted that a litter receptacle is required for the lot per Sec 8:2032. It was also noted that they need to discuss how patrons will get from the parking lot to the restaurant as foot traffic along Arkansas Road is not advised. Bennie Evans, Jr. told the Commission that he would put the wooden fence along the north property line. The Commission discussed the preference of screen planting along Fairfield Street. Mr. Evans stated that he would have several litter receptacles on the property. Bennie Evans told the Commission that he would have stairs between the (2) two properties (there is an elevation change). It was suggested that Mr. Evans meet with the Public Works Asst. Director, Ronnie Turner, and the Street Department Superintendent, Nathan Moore, to discuss the existing easement and planned access to the restaurant prior to the City Council Meeting on 01-12-2016. Mr. Evans also wanted to discuss an additional access point for the parking lot onto Fairfield Street. Brian Bendily asked if the zone change did not pass would he still build in West Monroe and Bennie Evans, Jr. told him that he would look elsewhere but would still build somewhere in West Monroe. If the Zone Change did not pass, it would kill the plan at this location as the extra parking is needed. Brian Bendily said that he did not think that it would be a positive for the residential neighborhood. Brian then called for comments from the audience. Terry Dumas took the podium at which time he told the Commission that he lived at 104 Fairfield Street and he felt that this parking lot would lower property values in the neighborhood and that the traffic flow would increase. Mr. Dumas stated that he is not opposed to progress but he feels this Zone Change would not benefit the neighborhood. Ann Cottrell told the Commission that letters were sent to property owners within 300 feet of the proposed parking lot notifying them of this meeting. JoAnn Thomas made the motion to send to the City Council with a FAVORABLE recommendation to allow the Zone Change to B-1 (Transitional Business) with the following RESTRICTIONS: an 8 foot wooden fence is required along the north property line, screen planting along the Fairfield Street side, a litter receptacle be placed per Sec 8:2032 of the West Monroe Code of Ordinances, a walkway will be provided (no pedestrian walking along Arkansas Road), meeting with the Public Works Asst. Director and any other city official required to discuss easement and proposed walkway and/or steps prior to the City Council meeting on 01-12-2016, and meeting with Street Department to discuss possibility of access onto Fairfield Street prior to the City Council meeting on 01-12-2016. (NOTE: The meeting with Ronnie Turner and Nathan Moore is scheduled for 12-29-2015 @ 9am). Judy Poole seconded. Brian Bendily voted against the motion. By a vote of 2 to 1, the Commission sends this application to the City Council with a FAVORABLE recommendation to allow the Zone Change to B-1 (Transitional Business) with RESTRICTIONS as noted above. The City Council will hear this case on January 12, 2016.

As there was no further business to be discussed, the meeting was adjourned.