

# TOWN OF GEORGETOWN - PLANNING COMMISSION

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## Meeting Minutes December 21, 2011

### ATTENDANCE

#### Commissioners

Rob Robinson  
David Pedersen  
Brett McCrea - absent  
Rodney Marvel  
Miles Potter

#### Staff

Jocelyn Godwin, Planning  
Tim Willard, Solicitor  
Jamie Craddock, Planning

1. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**  
Commissioner Robinson called the meeting to order in the Town Hall at 6:00 p.m.
2. **APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 16, 2011 MEETING MINUTES**  
Commissioner Potter moved, seconded by Commissioner Pedersen, to approve the November 16, 2011 regular meeting minutes as presented. **APPROVED**  
(UNANIMOUS)
3. **CASE #2011-02:                      CONDITIONAL USE: SUSSEX CRISIS HOUSING**

*An application by Sussex Community Crisis Housing Service and MHDC for a conditional use to allow an expansion by constructing two new buildings. The application was tabled at the February 16, 2011 Planning Commission meeting. The property is identified as Sussex County Tax District 135 Map 14.20 Parcel 266.00 zoned Urban Residential (UR1).*

Ken Christenbury, of Axiom Engineering, presented the application. The last meeting included questions regarding the density of the project and of the surrounding properties. A letter, photographs and a spreadsheet were presented and discussed. The estimated density of the project is 13.1 units per acre. Properties along New Street and Kimmey Street have small homes and have the same density. For the properties to the north, the density is 14.1 and properties to the west have a density of 12.9.

The building currently on the block has been there since at least 1992 and the block used to be seven separate parcels as shown on the 2000 Sussex County Tax Map. The onsite building has an office and five units with a density of 13.4 units per acre.

Based on what is currently in the neighborhood, the applicant feels the project is compatible with the character of the neighborhood.

Phase One is the southwest corner of the property and will be an eight bedroom homeless shelter with stays up to 30 days. The Railroad Avenue facility would be shut down.

Phase Two will be a six unit apartment building.

Chairman Robinson reminded the Commissioners of the criteria to be considered for a Conditional Use.

Commissioner Potter questioned how many people are currently being turned away from the shelter.

Marie Morole, Executive Director of Sussex Community Housing, provided information regarding the current shelter. The Crisis House on Railroad Avenue is managed tightly and the only police contact is for required background checks. Staff is onsite 24 hours a day. The building is old, very energy inefficient and needs repairs. The shell of a new building has been offered as a donation. The shelter is part of a process. Two residents have attended the shelter, moved on to transitional housing and have recently gotten houses through Habitat for Humanity.

On an average day they receive 15 -- 20 calls looking for space. With the holidays, up to 50 calls a day. For the transitional housing, there are calls every day. The apartments are always full and the tenants usually stay the full two years until they are able to transition into fair market rentals. Mothers with children have the greatest need. The apartments are not free and require learning to get their lives in order. The house is for a single family needing assistance.

A play yard is at the current location and will be put in at the new location.

The Megan House, a long term recovery house across the street from the proposed project, has just been taken over by the applicant for management (retained by the owner). The negative impacts of that facility have been reduced.

The Town Solicitor notified the Commission that their recommendation goes to Council and the site plan receives an administrative review. EDU's are determined at the time of the building permit and is based on the number of fixtures.

The site plan was reviewed by Ken Christenbury. For phase one the parking lot will be put in and sidewalk will be added. The storm water management will consist of a bioretention facility with an under drain to tie into the street. Sourcewater Protection is being addressed. Grass pavers are proposed to be used. Fencing will be put around the play area to limit trespassing.

Marie Morole stated that public transportation is critical and will be just two blocks away. Monthly inspections are conducted on all of the apartments.

The mission of the Crisis House is essentially to provide emergency and transitional housing and self sufficiency services to homeless individuals.

Potential conditions were discussed including:

- Inclusion of a play area & maintenance
- Managed by a non-profit
- Staff member on hand 24 hours a day
- Preliminary site plan approval by the Commission
- Operation in accordance to Mission Statement
- Stringent acceptance criteria of tenants (no offenders)

**Commissioner Pedersen moved, seconded by Commissioner Marvel, to TABLE the application until the next scheduled Planning Commission meeting.  
APPROVED (UNANIMOUS)**

**Town Council public hearing will be on January 11, 2012. Planning Commission will finalize recommendation and conditions on January 18, 2012.**

**Town Solicitor will provide proposed ordinance with conditions to Planning Commission prior to the next meeting.**

#### **4. PLANNING DEPARTMENT REPORT**

Two new proposed modifications to the ordinances were presented and will be addressed by Town Council at a public hearing on January 11, 2012:

**Add a new section to off-street parking requirements to allow more flexibility**

##### **§ 230-148.1. Modification of parking requirements.**

The Planning Commission may reduce the required number of spaces by up to 20% if for the reasons of topography, mixes of uses, ride share programs, availability of transit, limited customer stays, or other conditions specific to the site, provided the reduction in the required number of parking spaces satisfies the intent of this Article.

**Also, addition of a modification to the UBI Urban Business District**

##### **§ 230-76. Permitted uses.**

- A. Buildings may be erected, altered and used or land may be used for any of the following purposes and none other:

- (31) Stores or shops for the conduct of retail business, including sale of accessories, antiques, apparel, appliances, beverages, **but not including the sale of alcoholic beverages for consumption off the premises**, books, carpets, drugs, fabrics, food, furniture, general merchandise, hardware, garden supplies, hobby supplies, jewelry, office supplies, paint, pharmaceutical products, sporting goods, stationery and similar stores and shops.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Pedersen moved, seconded by Commissioner Potter, to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m. APPROVED (UNANIMOUS)

APPROVED:

  
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Rob Robinson, Chairperson

ATTEST:

  
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Joelynn Godwin, Planning