

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD
PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES**

January 6, 2014

Members present: Doug Read, Mike Murphy, Jason Durgin, Wayne Crowley and Glen Brown.
Members absent: Kevin Waldron and Kim Robichaud.

Minutes: Mike Murphy moved, seconded by Jason Durgin to accept the minutes of December 2, 2013 as read. Motion passed with one abstention.

Paul B. Lavallee: Application for a Minor Site Plan Review to change the use from a Female Recovery Residence to a Male Recovery Residence at 23 Elm Street (Tax Map U7 Lot 79) in the R2 zone. Atty. Patrick Wood, representing the applicant stated that the only change from the original approved site plan is that the residents are men instead of women. All other statements and conditions as approved by the Planning Board in May, 2012 are still in place. The building has been leased to Phoenix House which provides the same type of service which is peer support. There are no clinical services at this site. The residents seek voluntary admission and pay for the housing and peer support. The residents stay for varying lengths of time while they transition back to society. Residents have vehicles and work outside the home.

Atty. Wood questioned the authority of the Planning Board hearing this case since there has been no change of use on the property. It is a zoning issue at best. Wayne Crowley responded that he consulted with two attorneys who suggested that changing from female to male residents could be considered a change of use therefore he made the decision to do so. Atty Wood stated that the Planning Board does not have jurisdiction for this case. The use of the property is not something the Planning Board has jurisdiction of, but rather it would be the Zoning Board. Wayne Crowley responded that the Planning Board does in fact review a change in a site plan. Atty Wood wanted it clear that he does not believe that changing the gender of the residents constitutes a change of use and therefore this hearing is not necessary.

Paul Lavallee asked if they would need to apply again if they decided to have women only again. Wayne Crowley responded that if approved, it would be for "single gender" rather than specify which. It would not be for both genders as that would create issues with bathrooms, etc.

Mike Murphy moved, seconded by Jason Durgin to accept the application as complete as submitted. Motion passed. Public hearing opened. Atty Wood asked that his prior statements be included in the public hearing. Public hearing closed.

Wayne Crowley asked if there is any data on violent behavior differences between male and female residents in this type of facility as he is concerned that there could be issues. Mr. Lavallee had no data, but pointed out that all applicants are screened before being accepted. Sex offenders, arsonists and those with a violent history are not accepted. They must have completed a residential treatment or recovery program and are continuing with counseling. Residents are all involved with the 12 steps of recovery and have a sponsor. They are tested for drugs weekly

and are asked to leave if necessary. Peter Delpra of Phoenix House stated that there are no clinical services on site and that the residents are there for voluntary recovery help. When residents are accepted they must have a “plan B” in place so that if they have a relapse they can be discharged to a specific place and not on the street.

Mike Murphy moved, seconded by Glen Brown to approve the application for a Minor Site Plan Review to change the use from a Female Recovery Residence to a Single Gender Recovery Residence at 23 Elm Street (Tax Map U7 Lot 79) in the R2 zone with the same conditions previously approved by the PB and ZBA and with statements made at this meeting. Motion passed.

Review Articles 8-12 of the Zoning Ordinance – Special Exceptions, Variances, Mobile Home Parks, Apartment conversions and signs. Members reviewed Articles 8-12 of the Zoning Ordinance and had some questions relative to wording, but did not recommend any changes.

Master Plan update: Postponed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Eliza Conde, Secretary

Minutes approved 02-03-2014