

JACKSONVILLE PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2024
JACKSONVILLE CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
315 S. RAGSDALE
12:00 PM

Meeting Items

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. McDonald called the meeting to order at 12:00 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Franklin made a motion to approve the minutes from May 21, 2024 as written. Mr. Calcote seconded the motion. Ms. McDonald called for a vote. All members voted to approve the minutes.

PUBLIC HEARING: REVIEW AND CONSIDER APPROVAL OF A ZONE CHANGE FROM B (ONE AND TWO FAMILY) TO G (COMMERCIAL) WITH A SPECIAL USE PERMIT TO ALLOW FOR A RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT FACILITY FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE AT PROPERTY LOCATED NORTH AT THE INTERSECTION OF BENSON MEMORIAL AND E PINE, ADJACENT TO BENSON MEMORIAL CHURCH, DESCRIBED AS LOT 4B BLK 4 ELLIS HTS - CITY OF JACKSONVILLE, PROPERTY ID # 224783000

Mr. Silvey explained to the board in detail the item on the agenda. Ms. McDonald opened the meeting up to the applicant or to those in favor.

Mr. Troy Dorman, the applicant, was present. Mr. Dorman provided the board with a site plan and a Homebase Treatment Master Plan. Mr. Dorman explained he started the company and the primary focus is to provide mental health and substance abuse treatment to war veterans challenged with PTSD and that he has been in business for 23 years. Mr. Dorman stated he wants to be able to provide sports, a faith-based program and trades/certifications for when they complete the program. Mr. Dorman stated he has spoken to UT Health and TJC about partnering with them for staff/trade schools. Mr. Dorman stated they will have security and staff present. Mr. Dorman stated they have a 72-hour assessment process, and they cannot let anyone that is aggressive, or a danger be admitted. Mr. Dorman stated the initial plan was to keep the tree barrier, but if staff wanted a fence around it, that could be arranged.

Angie Rich, a behavior intervention specialist, who is speaking in favor, stated with Homebase Treatment that the veterans who come asking for help will undergo a full assessment and be screened for weapons, drugs, and observed. She stated anyone coming to buy that property to build a house does not have to undergo that process. Ms. Rich stated it would be a good opportunity to be safe, productive, and to stop the cycle of trauma that goes on every day. Ms. Rich stated the employment opportunities would be a good investment in the community.

Brent Wallace, the Dean of TJC West Campus was present and, in favor, Mr. Wallace stated he felt like there was an opportunity to connect a number of stabilizing groups, including faith-based. Mr. Wallace stated they are ready as a major community college in east Texas to stand behind and provide training, whether it be on the west campus or providing training on site.

Blake Bailey, a retired personal injury lawyer, was present and, in favor, Mr. Bailey stated he has practiced law for over 50 years and, in his opinion, believes it would be a good opportunity.

Allison Gentry, a Business Operations manager, was present and in favor, Ms. Gentry stated she works/has worked with individuals who have struggled with substance abuse and veterans in academia. Ms. Gentry wanted to reiterate that 24 hour security would be provided, along with 24 hour medical professionals on staff. She asked that the board consider placing the facility there. She stated they could help flourish and grow the community and overcome any obstacles and help give back to the community.

Jacob Helmeczi, stated he is a friend of Mr. Dorman, who has been in recovery for over 15 years, holds a graduate degree in Psychology and is a Pastor. Mr. Helmeczi stated that if he had the opportunity as a township and had the ability to work towards the redemption of restoration, he would want to pursue that.

Ms. McDonald closed that portion of the meeting. Ms. McDonald opened the meeting up to those in opposition.

Dr. Kenya Etim, a Physician for UT Health was present and in opposition of the zone change. Ms. Etim stated District 1 has three things they look for to help make the community better when considering things coming into the district. Safer, Smarter, Healthier. If one superseded the other, then they do not want it. Ms. Etim stated they have worked to make the community a safer place, and they want to change

people's mentality when looking at the district. She stated it is a community of indigent people, and it is no longer looked at as a drug-infested, unsafe neighborhood. Ms. Etim asked that they keep the area between Health and Human Services down to the school as residential. Ms. Etim stated she and Dr. Hackney sit on the Anderson and Cherokee County opioid response team, and they are at Access every month teaching classes. They have not heard of anything related to Mr. Dormans project. Ms. Etim stated the programs are needed and that they do work but just not for the area they are trying to put in.

Dr. Richard Hackney was present and in opposition of the zone change. Mr. Hackney stated there was a difference between rural and urban areas, and he believes the treatment center is more fit for the urban areas. He was concerned because the church and the community were not involved.

Reverend Tommy Starks, the pastor of Benson Memorial, was present and in opposition. Mr. Starks stated he has been in the church service industry for 53 years and the current pastor of Benson Memorial for 4 years. Mr. Starks stated he was not informed and could have helped with insight into the community. Mr. Starks states he is concerned about it being located next to the church, and about safety issues. Mr. Starks stated if something was to happen he could not lock his church down as it is a safe haven. Mr. Starks asked that the board consider not changing the zoning and to have them look for a different location, so that we as a city can all assist them with what needs to be done to help them grow and build, just not at the current location.

Ms. McDonald closed that portion of the meeting.

Ms. McDonald opened the board up for discussion. Mr. Calcote stated for the record it was not just about this facility but about the zone being changed to commercial, which could allow for any commercial business to be there. Mr. Calcote said once we open that door, we cannot close it. Mrs. Stahelin stated they could find property in an area where there are not so many hoops to jump through and an area where it is already commercial. She stated she did not see any safety issues, but knows there are a lot of places in East Texas that are better suited, which require no zone change. She would love to see it come to our community though. Mr. Franklin stated that as a parent who has had to send his child to rehab, he would have loved to have had this available here, but as the representative to District 1, he can not in good faith agree that it is the best area. He stated it is too close to a church, schools, residents, and that everyone he has seen has always been in a rural area. Mr. Franklin stated it is too congested in the city to have it in. Mrs. Pavletich states she is in support of their endeavor/mission and that there is a need for it, but she is concerned about the area. Ms. McDonald stated there is a need for it, and it is suited, but not at this location. Ms. McDonald closed that portion of the meeting. Mr. Calcote made a motion to not approve the zone change request with a Special use Permit. Mr. Franklin seconded the motion. Ms. McDonald called for a vote. All members voted to deny the request.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, DISCUSSION

ADJOURN

Ms. McDonald adjourned the meeting at 1:04 PM.