

GRAND JUNCTION PLANNING COMMISSION
Public Meeting -- February 28, 1984
7:30 - 8:05 p.m.

The public meeting was called to order by Chairperson Susan Rinker at 7:30 p.m. in the City/County auditorium.

In attendance, representing the City Planning Commission were:

Bill O'Dwyer	Miland Dunivent
Ross Transmeier	Dick Little
Susan Rinker, Chairperson	

(Commissioners Jack Ott and Glen Green were absent.)

In attendance, representing the Planning Department were:

Don Warner Karl Metzner Janet C.-Stephens

Rachelle Daily, of Sunshine Computer Services, and Terri Troutner were there to record the minutes.

There were approximately 64 interested citizens present at the beginning of the meeting.

Chairperson Rinker called the meeting to order and stated that tonight, before the public hearing, there was to be a public meeting.

1. #3-84 SPECIAL USE PERMIT-PREGNANCY CRISIS CENTER

Petitioner: First Baptist Church
Location: 428 North 7th Street, Grand Junction, Colorado
81501

A request for a special use permit for a Pregnancy Crisis Center on approximately .2 acre in a residential multi-family zone at 32 units per acre.

PETITIONER'S PRESENTATION

Mr. Bob Witt, First Baptist Church, presented a brief overview of the petitioner's request for the special use permit and discussed the following points:

1. The church had originally bought the property located at 428 N. 7th Street with the intention of future expansion. However, it was felt that a special form of outreach in this location would provide greater value to both the church and the

community. Of several options, the Pregnancy Crisis Center had won the majority of congregation approval.

2. It was felt that this outreach opportunity would benefit the entire community and that the community could, on a broad scale, become involved with and support such a project. It would be a cooperative effort involving many of the churches in the Grand Valley and it was thought that this particular use would best fit the residential complexion of the neighborhood.
3. Mr. Witt insisted that this use was in keeping with the intent of the Seventh Street Corridor policies in that it was not a business use, it would be a low-traffic, quieter operation than for which the Corridor is presently zoned. Hours of the operation would be 8:00a.m. - 5:00p.m., 5 days per week.
4. Comparisons were made to Birthright and Colorado Christian Services. They were not intending to be in competition with them.
5. In conclusion, Mr. Witt stated that the church was proud of the Seventh Street heritage. They did not want to alter or detract from the corridor and maintained a sincere interest in providing the best use for this property. "We truly believe that the Crisis Pregnancy Center will meet this need."

At this time the microphone was handed to Marty Martin, Board Member of the Crisis Pregnancy Center. He presented a brief overview from the standpoint of the Board of Directors. The following points were discussed.

1. "What is a Crisis Pregnancy Center?" He spoke mainly of the emotional crisis faced as opposed to the physical crisis of an unwanted pregnancy. This was to include counseling, providing pregnancy tests, financial aid, clothing, and adoption services if needed. On-going help for mother and child after the pregnancy would also be provided.
2. "Why have the Crisis Pregnancy Center?" He stated that a great need existed in the Grand Valley and cited a letter from Dr. Kenneth Lambert, Director of Mesa County Health Department, indicating that approximately 1,200 abortions are performed in Mesa

County each year and approximately 200 illegitimate births. Mr. Martin felt that this resulted in approximately 1400 crisis pregnancies per year, or 110 per month.

3. The Crisis Pregnancy Center would not be publicly funded.
4. Persons operating the facility would be well qualified to handle the various situations arising from a crisis pregnancy.
5. "Why this particular location?" Convenient location for those in need of those services. A residential atmosphere conducive to services is to be provided. Parking is currently available. Also the price was a principal factor, and a very generous offer was made.
6. In conclusion, Mr. Martin stated that they are very sensitive to the impact made relative to this location. The amount of traffic expected would be from 3-5 people per day which is considered low. Also, a commitment to preserving the appearance of the location would be upheld. Impact would be minimal.

QUESTIONS

Bill O'Dwyer: "You say that this will not be publicly funded, and we appreciate that. How will this be funded? Is there to be a charge made to the individual?"

Marty Martin: "There will be no charges made to the individual. This will be by donation only by both individuals and groups. The Directors are actually responsible for raising the funds for the Center."

Bill O'Dwyer: "Would you feel that if this was located on Eighth Street or Ninth Street or any other street adjacent to the current proposed location, do you feel that it would diminish your people that you are going to work with?"

Marty Martin: "I think from the standpoint of location that there are other locations in Grand Junction which do have the visibility that this does. The unique appeal to us is the residential atmosphere conducive to the services provided. Also there is the practical aspect of the tremendous financial burden we would not have since this is to be made available at a very reasonable fee."

Ross Transmeier: "How many full-time employees would you have, two?"

Marty Martin: "Yes. There will be a Director and Associate Director who will probably not be there on the property at the same time due to overlapping schedules. In addition, there will be volunteer counselors who will be present. Probably one counselor in addition to the Director."

Ross Transmeier: "Now, is the house still going to be used as a residence for one of these Directors? Is anyone going to be staying there overnight?"

Marty Martin: "No. At present both Directors have homes already."

Ross Transmeier: "You won't need to change any of the parking that is there now?"

Marty Martin: "No, not with the level of traffic that is expected. They would park behind the residence which is already used as parking for the First Baptist Church."

Dick Litle: "Do you plan to have any of your clients as residents there?"

Marty Martin: "No. The plan is to refer them to local homes. This referral service is provided. There is no intention of using this as a boarding house for transients and that type of situation."

Miland Dunivent: "I noted in one of the proposals there might be some night sessions?"

Marty Martin: "When we originally submitted the overview, we did mention that it would be open one night a week. At this point, the Directors will set the schedule. There is a potential for it being open one evening per week until approximately 8-9p.m. but at present, there are no plans for that."

Miland Dunivent: "Well then, if this is a possibility, will this present problems with parking, lighting, etc?"

Marty Martin: "No. We're talking about 1-2 people being counseled at a time. No group sessions are proposed, but there would be a certain amount of flexibility for individuals arriving later in the evening."

Pastor Fraser, Sr. Pastor of the First Baptist Church, spoke about having nothing to gain by seeing commercial interests or non-residential interests come into this area. He reaffirmed a commitment to preserving this historic value of the Corridor, and are trying to operate within the feeling of the Corridor. The church felt that this use would be low-key and more acceptable to the community because of that stance. "We respectfully ask that the Grand

Junction Planning Commission grant the First Baptist Church the special use permit that we have requested."

Dick Little: "Pastor, at the present time the church does have evening functions, is that right?"

Pastor Fraser: "Yes, we do. And there is a parking lot immediately behind both facilities. We use that at night constantly. It would also be available for use by the clinic."

STAFF PRESENTATION

Karl Metzner reiterated that there were two considerations to be recognized, 1) The site plan, and 2) The use in question. There was a concern over both parking and access; however, after hearing the comments made by the Petitioners, he felt that these problems could be worked out. The use in question did not, however, comply with the Seventh Street Corridor policy (Sec.3-19-C1) and the Downtown District policies (Sec. 3-19-10H) of the Zoning and Development Code which support only residential uses for this area. "Therefore, since the criteria does require that we meet all policies, we are required to turn it down."

Karl once again reminded everyone that the Planning Commission was the final say in this matter and they had received letters and petitions both for and against and he passed those around to the Commission members.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

IN FAVOR:

Bob Mulder stated that with regard to the petition for the Crisis Pregnancy Center, there would be a couple hundred names listed, many who live right next door to the property in question.

COMMENTS AGAINST THE PROPOSAL:

Kathy Jordan, 440 N. 7th Street, spoke out in opposition of the Center as a representative of her neighborhood. She felt the use was not compatible with adjacent uses and current policies such as the Seventh Street Corridor, and an additional Seventh Street Historical Corridor policy which preserves this area for historical purposes. She felt that any new construction should be consistent with the current historical character of the Corridor. New non-residential uses should not be allowed north of Grand Avenue. If this special use permit is granted, it was feared that this might open the door to other use changes and they would no longer have this residential area.

It was felt that this use would threaten the integrity of the neighborhood, and decrease the property values. She pointed out that none of the people who sought the variance actually lived on North Seventh Street and therefore are not concerned about the area. She stated that out of approximately 228 signatures on the church's petition for the Center, only 23 live within the original town mile and only 3 of those live within 1/4 mile of the property. Any business use was not thought to be compatible with this area. Any increase in traffic would only increase the problems already facing the area. The majority of residents in this area feel that this neighborhood should be preserved in integrity and therefore, a request for denial was made.

Jack Berry, 417 North 7th Street, spoke in opposition of the Center stating that if approved, soon there would be a Baptist Bookstore, or something else in its place. He pointed out the empty businesses already present in Grand Junction and wondered why the church did not choose one of these. He insisted that this should remain a residential use and a request for denial was made.

Sharon Birdell, 712 North 7th Street, also spoke out in opposition stating that there was a real parking question to be considered. She wondered if it was adequate.

Loran Zipse answered her question in that there was a deal with R-5 School whereas the school would grant parking privileges in exchange for the use of the church for both commencement activities and gym facilities.

Dave Hasty, 433 North 7th Street, thought there would be a parking problem since the church would be giving up some of their parking spaces. "Opposed to this use 102%!"

David Hasty, 433 North 7th Street, added that nothing was mentioned about signs. He thought that the sign would detract from the area.

Jeannie Verhey, 325 Ridgeway Lane, mentioned that concerning the adjacent uses, there would probably be a lot less opposition if the church chose a location off of Grand Avenue rather than Seventh Street. She and Carol Harshman had been so impressed with the area, that they wrote the book, "Fabulous Old Houses of North Seventh Street." Had there been the commercial use in this area, it would not have prompted her to write this book.

PETITIONER'S REBUTTAL

Pastor Fraser thought that the question of signs should be negotiable and perhaps limited to something on the door. For the question of parking, he stated that there were about 20 spaces available for parking right across from the alley which were not used much during the day. He felt that the church has a real historical connection with this area; thus an historical committment.

STAFF REBUTTAL

Karl again stated that the primary reason for this appeal is because of the use in question, not necessarily on the site plan.

MOTION: (COMMISSIONER TRANSMEIER) "MADAM CHAIRMAN, I MAKE A MOTION THAT ON THE QUESTION OF FILE #3-84, THE SPECIAL USE PERMIT FOR THE PREGNANCY CRISIS CENTER, THAT WE APPROVE THE SPECIAL USE PERMIT."

Commissioner Litle seconded the motion.

Chairperson Rinker requested a vote. Commissioners Transmeier and Litle voted in favor while Commissioners O'Dwyer and Dunivent were opposed. Chairperson Rinker broke the tie by voting in opposition of the special use permit. The motion was denied by a vote of 3 to 2.