



MINUTES

Carbondale Planning Commission
Wednesday, June 20, 2018
Room 108, 6:00 p.m.
City Hall/Civic Center

Ms. Litecky called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Sheffer, Hamilton, Love, Lilly, Litecky and Bradshaw (ex-officio)

Members Absent: Miller, Le Beau, Henson, and Burnside

Staff Present: Taylor

1. Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Sheffer moved, seconded by Mr. Love, to approve the minutes for May 2, 2018.

The motion to approve the minutes passed with a unanimous voice vote.

2. Citizen Comments or Questions

There were none

3. Report of Officers, Committees, Communications

There were none

4. Public Hearings

PC 19-01, 6:02 pm- Steven Batchelder has proposed a text amendment to Title 15-2.29 of the Carbondale Revised Code, commonly referred to as the Nonresidential Districts Use Table, relative to Fraternities and Sororities in the BPR, Primary business, zoning district.

Ms. Litecky declared Public Hearing PC 19-01 open and asked Mr. Taylor to read the legal notice.

Travis Taylor, Senior Planner for the City of Carbondale, read the legal notice.

Ms. Litecky asked Mr. Taylor to present the staff report.

Mr. Taylor was sworn in and read part A of the staff report.

Ms. Litecky asked if there were any questions of staff.

There were none.

Ms. Litecky asked if the applicant was present and wished to speak.

Steven Batchelder, of 1304 Gartside Street, Murphysboro, came forward to speak about the Fraternities request and the importance of displaying the Greek letters and crest on the front of the fraternity buildings. Mr. Batchelder went on to speak about the pride, gatherings and possible investments from alumni of the fraternity with having the display of the Greek letters and crest for the Delta Chi. He felt that this creates a stronger core for the fraternity and those alumni that have ties to Delta Chi. Mr. Batchelder also spoke about the future plans to improve the house and how they hope to improve the property values with the changes, including landscaping, roofing, interior and exterior painting, sealing and finishing off the basement, and overall improving the safety of the building with fire code upgrades. He also hopes that displaying the Greek letters would help to the community of Carbondale/SIU/student life.

Ms. Litecky asked if there were any questions of the applicant.

Mr. Sheffer asked what the budget is for the property's upgrades and improvements. Mr. Batchelder stated that over the next two years they are looking to invest \$100,000 to \$150,000 into the property. Mr. Sheffer also asked how parking would be handled at that location. Mr. Taylor stated that in the downtown district the parking requirements are waived, what is currently located at the property is all that would be provided and the City is not required to provide any more parking. Mr. Sheffer then asked the applicant why they decided to make it a permitted use instead of a special use permit. Mr. Batchelder stated that with all of the improvements they are planning on doing to the property are tailored specifically to a Fraternity or Sorority and in the future if they decided to grow or sell they will not have to worry about changes if it is a permanent use. Mr. Sheffer asked if Mr. Batchelder understands by going this route he is asking to change City code and will make this impact the City moving forward. Mr. Batchelder stated that he understood that and thought it would be a good step for Delta Chi to take for the future of the fraternity. Mr. Taylor then stated that it was a long discussion between the applicant and staff about the timeline for the property purchase, the special use process would have taken longer for them to do.

Dr. Hamilton asked of the 27 other properties in that district how many might be possibly adapted into a fraternity or sorority. Mr. Taylor stated that at this time he is unsure because he is not sure what a fraternity or sorority looks for when purchasing a property, but, with many of those properties being multi-unit, they would be easily adaptable. Mr. Hamilton asked Mr. Batchelder what Delta Chi stands for as an organization and what they do for the student population. Mr. Batchelder stated that Delta Chi wants to give the students a positive college experience and be a support system for them in their time at the university.

He stated that they require a certain GPA to be active in the chapter and to be an officer they must have a higher GPA, if not met they cannot be part of the chapter. The chapter recently went through a new selection process of their members to make sure they have good representation. He also feels like having the fraternity in a downtown location will help to hold them accountable within the community and make sure they act correctly. Dr. Hamilton asked who the current advisor is for Delta Chi. Mr. Batchelder stated that Dr. Wood is the current advisor and there is also an advisor committee that is called the ABT through SIU. Dr. Hamilton asked how many members would be living at the house and would there be organized meals served. Mr. Batchelder stated that they do not have organized meals at the fraternity nor is it a plan in the future unless it is a special event. As far as residents, he stated that they are looking to have 15-16 living at the residence.

Ms. Litecky asked about the layout of the house. Mr. Batchelder stated that there are four units with two bedrooms each, therefore there would be four residents per unit. Ms. Litecky also asked about the monthly meetings that would be taking place and where the members would park for the meetings with such limited parking around the residence. Mr. Batchelder stated that the students would have to purchase permits from the City for lot parking and, as far as meetings, they are hoping to finish off the basement of the property to use as a meeting room. There was then a brief discussion about parking among the Commissioners. Ms. Litecky then asked how many members the fraternity has currently. Mr. Batchelder stated that they currently have about 26 members after graduation. Ms. Litecky asked what the policy for the Delta Chi is for partying and alcohol, both nationally and locally. Mr. Batchelder stated that locally they are pushing for a no alcohol facility and nationally the Greek Council has many rules and regulations for alcohol and parties. Ms. Litecky also asked who will own the property. Mr. Batchelder stated that it would be owned by Barrister Properties. There was then discussion about property taxes and if Delta Chi would be paying the taxes. Mr. Batchelder stated that would be something he would have to look into.

Andrew Jordan of 210 West Hospital Drive, the Chapter President for Delta Chi, came forward to speak about the alcohol and partying question that was earlier asked. Mr. Jordan explained the guidelines for the different types of events within the Delta Chi and how they make sure it is safe, with no underage consumption.

Dr. Hamilton asked if this property would be subject to annual rental inspections. Mr. Taylor stated that they would be and they would have to pay the \$35 rental fee per unit.

Ms. Litecky asked if anyone wished to speak in favor.

There was no one.

Ms. Litecky asked if anyone wished to speak in opposition.

There was no one.

Ms. Litecky asked Mr. Taylor to read the analysis.

Mr. Taylor read Parts B and C of the staff report for PC 19-01, with a recommendation of approval.

Ms. Litecky asked if the Commissioners had questions for staff.

There were none.

Ms. Litecky asked if there were questions from anyone to anyone.

Ms. Litecky asked if the Delta Chi Chapter had ever been brought up for disciplinary actions for alcohol problems. Mr. Jordan came forward and stated that there was one incident back in 2016 because of one of their members. The chapter was put on corrective action by the national charter and they went through the process and passed. There was then a brief discussion about the incident. Ms. Litecky also asked if the current location on Hester was a chapter house. Mr. Batchelder stated that the chapter was renting the house on Hester and there is signage at that house. Ms. Litecky and Mr. Taylor then discussed the signage restrictions that the applicant would have because of the district the property is located in and what types of signage they could use.

Ms. Litecky declared PC 19-01 closed and asked for a motion on the findings of fact.

Mr. Sheffer moved that the Commission accept as findings of fact Part A of the staff report for PC 19-01, the applicant was present, and one spoke in favor and none in opposition, seconded by Ms. Lilly.

The motion was passed with a unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Sheffer moved that the Commission recommend approval of a text amendment allowing a fraternity and sorority house as a permitted use in the BPR, Primary Business, zoning district and send PC 19-01 to City Council, seconded by Mr. Love.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes – 5 (Sheffer, Hamilton, Love, Lilly, Litecky)

No – 0

Mr. Taylor stated that the item would move forward with recommendation for approval of PC 19-01 and that the item would be on the City Council agenda for discussion at their meeting on July 24, 2018.

5. Old Business

There was none.

6. New Business

- A.** FY 2018 Annual Report-Mr. Taylor gave a brief review of the annual report for the Planning Commission that was presented to the Commissioner. Ms. Litecky stated that she would like to see a more attendance from some of the Commissioners moving forward. Mr. Sheffer then discussed the lack of quorum at some of the meetings with low attendance.

Mr. Love moved to approve the FY 2018 Annual Report and send it to City Council, seconded by Ms. Lilly.

The motion was passed with a unanimous voice vote.

- B.** City Council Agenda from May 8, 2018, May 22, and June 12, 2018.

Ms. Bradshaw reviewed the City Council meetings as they related to Planning.

7. Adjournment

Ms. Litecky adjourned the meeting at 6:52 p.m.