

**CITY OF PETERSBURG
ZONING BOARD MEETING
Wednesday, September 14, 2022**

The Petersburg Zoning Board met on Wednesday, September 14, 2022, at 6 pm in the City of Petersburg Office Conference Room.

Present: Jenny Rexrode, Chairman, Jason Kaposy, Tyler Kuhn and new members McKenzie Henritz and Robert McCalley.

Joanna Kuhn appeared before the Zoning Board to represent a project by the Eastern Regional Family Resource Network.

Chairman Rexrode called the meeting to order and read the public notice that appeared in the Grant County Press for two publications. *Eastern Regional Family Resource Network, property owner at 2 Maple Hill Avenue, request a zoning variance for this property. They desire to use the property as a Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program, managed by a non-profit organization. Currently zoned R-1 Residential the property would need to be zoned Pro-Professional. Any objections to this request must be submitted in writing to City of Petersburg, 21 Mountain View St., Petersburg, WV 26847 by COB by September 13, 2022.*

For the record three written objections were filed to this Public Notice: Robert Hyre, Lauren Doyle and Lauren Mullenax.

Joanna Kuhn stated that Eastern Regional Family Resource Network has been a non-profit since 1995. We identified a need in the community for homeless youth ages 18 – 24. This project will consist of a two-year program that will be addressed to youth 18 – 24 to give them tools resources and skills they need to achieve long term permanent housing. There will be a supervisor, support staff to help them develop plans of action individually. Some may be interested in college, some may be ready to go right into work, they will help them acquire their drivers license. They will have a maximum of eight individuals at any time, men, and women. The men will be housed on the ground floor and women on the second floor. They will also be able to accept parenting youth. She stated that this is not a recovery house, their intention is to take people that have gone through the recovery process and need a place to land as an additional step into the community. The hope this will help with motivation to improve themselves and achieve long-term stable housing. The second component to this grant issued by the Housing and Urban Development who awarded the money to the WV Coalition and Homelessness. That component is Rapid Rehousing so it's a combined program transitional housing, currently there is only one other one in the state, the Bartlett House in Morgantown, WV, they are any age. This program will help place participants, that qualify, into apartments and they will provide rent for up to for up to 24 months so they can further achieve goals of long-term stable housing with employment. She continued to say that there may be other opportunities with children that are being held in detention that may not have anywhere else to go, like 17 ½ that would be welcome into the home, they do not have suitable housing to go to. The problem is out there.

Zoning Board Chairman Rexrode asked if there will be always supervision. Ms. Kuhn stated that this is a voluntary program, so they are not mandated by the court or anyone else. So, they will have non-traditional hours for there staffing, maybe only if there is a need, they will have 10 cameras so they will have a 360 view from outside and every room in the house except bedrooms and bathrooms will have a camera.

Zoning Board Member Henritz asked who will screen the tenants? Ms. Kuhn said that when someone calls any help line or is present at her doorstep, they go through a coordinated entry program at the WV Coalition and Homelessness, they have a series of credentials and questions they ask. Then they are routed out throughout the state at appropriate placement.

Zoning Board Member Henritz asked if there were any employment requirements with the program? Ms. Kuhn answered they want them to, they are in the process of building policy, if someone is in school full time, they need to be in school, but they need employment. Employment is needed because you won't be able to achieve long-term stable housing with out employment.

Zoning Board Member McCalley asked if it was a requirement. Ms. Kuhn stated no it is not. She stated they have not written that into the policy, because they may be in school full time. They are working toward full time employment so they can achieve long term housing.

Zoning Board Chairman Rexrode asked if they need to pay for their lodging. Ms. Kuhn stated that at this point there is no program income, but they will implement a savings type account that each person will have to contribute towards, so they have money when they leave. The program, since it is a youth demonstration housing, it has extra features that other grants do not have, for instance help with the first month's rent, turn on utilities, those type of things that normally a parent would help a child get into a place. The natural supports for this age group are fractured or non-existent, so they would be stepping into this role and providing those extra financial supports.

Zoning Board Member McCalley expressed that somewhere he got the impression that they had been doing this for a while and commented that this is the first go around. Ms. Kuhn stated yes, for this project. She has been with the agency for 8 years; she has visited the facility in Morgantown.

Zoning Board Member Kuhn asked if there are other houses like this in the state or is this the only one. Ms. Kuhn stated that Bartlett House is a transitional Rapid Rehousing program, in Morgantown. In the application process through WV Coalition and Homelessness there are seven other applicants and four of them are developing the same thing, in other parts of the state.

Zoning Board Chairman Rexrode asked what has been the one in Morgantown. Ms. Kuhn answered it is just an adult facility. Ms. Rexrode asked if there have been any problems. Ms. Kuhn answered that she visited the facility last year so she could understand how it works. That facility also has permanent housing so they have people that may have a room and have been there 10 – 12 years. She continued to say that there has never been a problem is not realistic. Her board has the right outlook and appetite to help things in our community.

Zoning Board Chairman Rexrode stated that the biggest thing people assume there will be a lot of drug addicts. Ms. Kuhn stated they are already living here. She further stated that this is not a recovery house, they will not have active users there, active drug users will be detrimental to progress of anyone else living there.

Zoning Board Member Kaposy asked if they will drug test the occupants. Ms. Kuhn stated that yes, they will have monthly drug testing. They will also be inviting the community stakeholders, anyone in the community that works with them. They will connect them with the resources they need within the community to help them achieve their long-term housing goals. She said they will have Armed Forces Recruiters available.

Zoning Board Member Henritz asked if this was focused on our local youth. Ms. Kuhn responded they will serve Grant County, Hardy County, Hampshire County and Pendleton County.

Zoning Board Member McCalley spoke of the reference to "we", he asked who she is talking about. Ms. Kuhn stated that she is referring to her agency the future staff they will be hiring and the community partners. They will be matching services together and helping residents evaluate their plan, make changes as necessary and provide them the momentum to continue forward in achieving the goals they have set for themselves, so they can take the next steps. The next steps may include staying in Petersburg or going somewhere else.

Zoning Board Chairman Rexrode asked if they already knew the homeless ones, they would be housing. Ms. Kuhn said no, they do not, but in January each year there is a project called "Point in Time", and it is always the coldest night in January and overnight and it is difficult to get this done, but they have a questionnaire to determine the need for federal help, section 8 housing that would be built. She further stated that this whole area, including Mineral County has not had a very good turnout of volunteers to determine that need.

Zoning Board Member Kaposy asked how many homeless people are in Grant County. Ms. Kuhn stated that she doesn't have the exact numbers but there have been 90 homeless people identified in Keyser. She stated that many of the homeless population is transit. She stated that on very cold days they try to offer them a hot meal to be able to identify the numbers, but she said it is a really hard thing to identify. Hampshire County can identify 189 children, three years ago, that were homeless through their backpack program, that includes children living in cars, sleeping on couches, etc. Most of those children were in elementary school.

Zoning Board Member McCalley asked if Ms. Kuhn lived in the Petersburg area. Ms. Kuhn said yes, she lives near the American Legion. Mr. McCalley stated that all you have to do is come down the river and you see shelters all the way down, he asked if those are homeless people. Ms. Kuhn stated that she identifies them when she sees them walking around with backpacks, almost always that is an indication, and bicycles are a good determining factor. There is a lot of traffic between Petersburg and Moorefield and now you are seeing a lot of people on foot. Mr. McCalley asked if those people are candidates. Ms. Kuhn said that will depend on the individual

persons, the age group and do they have the desire for long-term stable housing and are they active drug users.

Zoning Board Member Kaposy asked if they measured their desire for long-term stable housing with an interview process. Ms. Kuhn stated yes, they do have an interview process and a regular intake system that the WV Coalition and Homelessness uses, called HMIS, the process takes about two weeks.

Zoning Board Chairman Rexrode asked if they will cook and clean for themselves at this home. Ms Kuhn stated that she hoped so, laughed. Ms. Rexrode stated that she didn't know what age they were, but there are some homeless people under the bridge. Ms. Kuhn stated the program has a small food budget, but they are going to have SNAP benefits and also hope to build support with the Mountaineer Food Bank and our local grocery stores for things like that and overall this is a very generous community. The nutrition department at WVU, Vicki Fertig that is someone that can come in and teach them how to cook, she hopes to bring in someone from banking to show them how to write a check and balance a checkbook, a chance to teach them life skills that often get overlooked even in families that are not fractured. Most of the people that will be in this home will not have a family that they can go to that would normally provide support. There are over 5,000 children in foster care, more and more they are aging out so they are turning 18 years old in foster care and are estranged from their families.

Zoning Board Member McCalley asked if there was a measure of their success. Ms. Kuhn stated that no this is a demonstration of this program so this is the first. Mr. McCalley asked if we were being guinea pigs. Ms. Kuhn answered no I hope not, because they are able to develop this with certain standards to achieve their outcome, they have flexibility to change things around if their approach isn't working, they can make adjustments to their approach. Mr. McCalley asked what the qualifications are for the staff. Ms. Kuhn said they are looking for individuals with at least a bachelor's degree and a background in social work or justice or any of those partnerships she has previously mentioned. Any of the other groups involved, support groups, partners, retired people that want to come back and serve the community, anyone in a part-time role that would be a good mentor. Mr. McCalley asked if they were still working on a job description. Ms. Kuhn said yes, they are still working on a job description, this house will not open until December or January. Ms. Kuhn stated that this is the first hurdle in the process for grant funding.

Zoning Board Chairman Rexrode asked why she chose Petersburg over the others. Ms. Kuhn stated they received a grant from WV Housing Development Authority – Home 4 Good for this type of project. She wrote for the grant, and they were approved for \$108,150. Ms. Kuhn stated that she has her real estate license, so she started looking for a property that fit their needs, she needed a single-family stick-built home, she needed be close to resources.

Zoning Board Member Henritz asked how many bedrooms are in that home. Ms. Kuhn stated that it has 4 bedrooms and there is a 5th bedroom upstairs but you have to walk through another room to get into that room, so it probably won't be used as a bedroom.

Zoning Board Member McCalley asked if people will be doubling up. Ms. Kuhn stated that yes, 8 residents will be maximum. One of the bedrooms will be designated a "sick room", there will be a private room if there is a parenting youth, and a maximum of three people per room. The

idea is to make it so they are driven to achieve their goals and, they will want privacy. Ms. Kuhn stated their goal is not make it so comfortable that they will not pursue their goals. She spoke of other uses this home could meet on a temporary basis.

Zoning Board Member McCalley asked if this was her first small business. Ms. Kuhn answered no, she explained she didn't form this, it has been an agency since 1995 and there are family resource councils, they were formed by the governor's cabinet and groups of local people were some of the first forming members. Mr. McCalley clarified that this wasn't her private interest. Ms. Kuhn stated no, she was an employee, the executive director of the program.

Zoning Board Chairman Rexrode stated that some of the guidelines that the house doesn't qualify is with the distance between the houses. Ms. Kuhn stated that the zoning map was difficult to ascertain the zoning, she said she thought it said it was Commercial. Chairman Rexrode stated that is true except for the little block that includes the property in question. Chairman Rexrode asked what she would do with the property if the zoning board did not approve the professional use. Ms. Kuhn stated they would have to sell it.

Zoning Board Member McCalley clarified that Ms. Kuhn did not buy the property. Ms. Kuhn stated no, the agency bought the property.

Ms. Kuhn stated there is ample parking for the property. The distance between the houses is measured from the walk door to door.

Zoning Board Chairman Rexrode asked if they would have access to the back. Ms. Kuhn stated yes, the staff will have plenty of parking and there is room to make a driveway.

Zoning Board Member Henritz asked if there were any ADA requirements that would need to be addressed by the zoning board. Ms. Kuhn stated no, there are not for their needs, and she doesn't know about the zoning board. Ms. Kuhn further explained that is considered a single-family home versus an apartment complex.

Zoning Board Chairman Rexrode asked about the men versus women numbers and how many they can have of each. Ms. Kuhn stated that there will be a maximum of eight people with 2 -3 downstairs and 2 - 3 upstairs and two bedrooms upstairs that will be rotating for whatever the need is at the time, sickness, or parenting youth. Chairman Rexrode stated could it be all men or all women. Ms. Kuhn answered yes, it could be depending on the need.

Zoning Board Member McCalley asked why isn't there a Board of Directors member at this meeting? Ms. Kuhn said that their president is in Elkins, and she didn't invite them.

Ms. Kuhn gave them all brochures explaining the mission of the agency and their goals. They work with alcohol prevention, drug prevention and poverty prevention. Zoning Board Member McCalley stated that certainly there was help needed with many young adults to give them the best chance. He asked if this program could be successful. Ms. Kuhn stated that what she will see as a successful outcome, and she made the analogy of having your high school picture hanging in your parents' home, she wants to have each of these kids that succeeds to accomplish stable

long-term housing to hang their photograph in this house to be able to return some day and see their existence acknowledged.

Zoning Board Member Henritz asked how long they have secure funding. Ms. Kuhn stated two years. Mr. Henritz asked for the program. Ms. Kuhn clarified the funding is secure for this youth demonstration housing project is a two-year grant, if the outcome is successful there will be additional money they would have to apply for. Mr. Henritz asked what would happen if the money is not renewed. Ms. Kuhn stated that there will be alternate courses of financing, she said because of national awareness of homelessness, she also stated that the kitchen was super nice. She further stated that there are extra funds available for this project. She stated that she has extra money left from the Home 4 You grant, and she received an email that there are additional monies available for her to use for hard costs or programing costs, she is going to use the extra money that she will likely receive for upgrading the heating and cooling units.

Zoning Board Chairman Rexrode asked the amount of the grant money she has received so far. Ms. Kuhn stated the two-year grant is \$409,000 that will cover staffing, utilities, insurance, and anything you normally need to run a house, plus salaries, so it is well funded at \$200,000 plus, it will be a well-funded project to be able to put the staffing there. The first-year costs will include the upgraded kitchen, which was gutted, so a chunk of that money has gone into the kitchen, that's why they had to have the environmental review because the money was going to hard costs. Ms. Rexrode stated the kitchen was probably a \$30,000 to \$40,000 if not more. She repeated that the financing is a grant. The building was bought with a grant. She is working from three different grants and is now working to attain a fourth with state grant money.

Ms. Kuhn stated she heard a report from the Substance Abuse Block Grant, in that meeting they were talking about the settlement amount from the drug companies. She understands that from the Substance Abuse Prevention Grant, the state has one-half a billion dollars, they will form a foundation to manage that money. She stated there is a crazy amount of money out there.

Zoning Board Chairman Rexrode stated her main concern has to do with the distance between the homes in that neighborhood. Ms. Kuhn offered to erect a fence between the properties to remedy the problem.

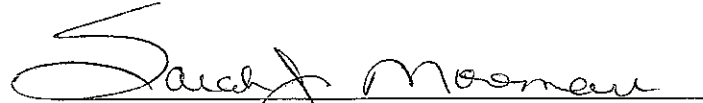
EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR DELIBERATION

The meeting reconvened with the same people gathered in the conference room as before. The voting proceeded, the zoning board agreed to keep the zoning as R-1 and allow the project to proceed under the existing zoning the request passed 2 – 1.

Roll Call:

Jenny Rexrode ----- no
McKenzie Henritz----- yes
Tyler Kuhn-----abstained
Bob McCalley-----abstained
Jason Kaposy-----yes

The Zoning Board Passed the proposed project by Eastern Regional Family Resource Network to provide a home for homeless young men and women ages 18 – 24, with the goal in mind to achieve stable long-term housing for each individual participant.


Sarah J. Moomau, Recorder


Jenny Rexrode, Chairman of Petersburg Zoning Board