

**REZONING AND CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT . . . HALFWAY HOUSE IN AN R-3,
LIMITED MULTIPLE DWELLING DISTRICT . . . LOTS 6, 7, 8, AND THE WESTERLY
HALF OF LOT 9, BLOCK 16 OF MANKATO CITY . . . HOUSE OF HOPE, INC.**

Applicant

The applicant is House of Hope, Inc.

Request

The applicant is requesting a rezoning of the property from M-1, Light Industrial to R-3, Limited Multiple Family Dwelling, and a conditional use permit for a halfway house in the R-3, Limited Multiple Family Dwelling.

Location

The property is described as Lots 6, 7, 8, and the Westerly Half of Lot 9, Block 16 of Mankato City (southeast corner of the intersection of Spruce Street and 3rd Avenue).

Existing Land Use

The property is currently vacant. Surrounding land uses include a variety of commercial and residential uses.

Land Use Plan

The City's Land Use Plan designates this area as Light Industry.

Zoning

The site is zoned M-1, Light Industrial.

Floodplain

The site is not located in a floodplain.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

The site is not located in an environmentally sensitive area.

Public Utilities

Public utilities are available to the property.

Parking

The required parking for the development is one space per every four beds. There will be a total of twenty-five beds within the facility. The development will have 10 employees on a major shift. One parking stall is required for every three employees. The depicted parking on the plan should be adequate.

Site Plan Review Committee

The Site Plan Review Committee reviewed the proposal on May 21, 1997, and made the following comments:

1. The building is sprinkled.
2. A revised landscaping plan shall be submitted which depicts more plantings around the building.
3. The petitioning on improvements of Spruce Street from 2nd Avenue to 3rd Avenue and the alley from Spruce Street to Maxfield Street shall be done.
4. A signage plan shall be submitted.
5. A drainage plan shall be submitted.
6. All parking shall meet City standards.

Review

House of Hope, Inc. is requesting a rezoning of the property from M-1, Light Industrial to R-3, Limited Multiple Dwelling, and a conditional use permit to allow a halfway house in the R-3, Limited Multiple Dwelling District. House of Hope, Inc. is proposing to move its facilities from Fulton Street to the proposed location. They have expressed an interest to do so because they have outgrown their current facilities and also wish to expand the use of the facility. Currently, House of Hope, Inc. is a halfway house for those who have drug or alcohol problems. They also wish to house work release and intensive supervised release inmates from the Department of Corrections.

It is staff's believe that the proposed use would be a buffer between commercial and residential uses. Neighboring properties are zoned R-1, One-Family Dwelling District and R-3, Multiple Family Dwelling District. In addition, the parcel has remained vacant for a considerable amount of time; therefore, staff would recommend rezoning the property.

The building on the site is approximately a 10,000 square foot building which will be sprinkled. The development meets the maximum allowable lot coverage including future expansions and storage areas. There will be 14 two-bedroom units and one handicap unit. There will be a total of seven offices for staff and approximately ten employees on a major shift. The site is providing the necessary amount of parking stalls, and a building for storage purposes. Landscaping is being shown with a variety of plantings. Staff recommends that the proposed landscaping be revised in order to implement additional plantings around the building. The necessary walkways and open space areas are being shown.

With the project, the City is requiring that improvements be made to Spruce Street and the abutting alley, and that the applicant petition for such improvements which include curb and gutter for Spruce Street and the hardsurfacing of the alley. With the addition of impervious surfacing and drainage from the building, staff is requesting that a drainage plan be submitted for the site.

The current site plan is in need of setback alterations that have to be made and a revised site plan must be submitted before the item is forwarded to the City Council for their review. Staff feels that there is sufficient room on the property to meet the necessary setback requirements.

Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the rezoning.

Staff recommends approval of the conditional use permit with the following conditions:

1. A landscaping plan shall be submitted to the Planning & Zoning Administrator for review and approval. Once the landscaping plan has been approved, it shall be implemented and maintained.
2. Signage shall comply with Section 10.87 of the City Code.
3. A lighting plan shall be submitted to the Planning & Zoning Administrator for review and approval. The lighting plan shall depict lighting away from neighboring properties.
4. All trash and recyclable material containers shall be located in enclosures which shall be constructed with materials which are similar and complementary to the materials found on the main buildings.
5. A drainage plan shall be submitted to the City Engineer for review and approval.
6. The improvement of Spruce Street from 3rd Avenue to 2nd Avenue and the alley adjacent to the property from Spruce Street to Maxfield Street shall be petitioned.
7. Parking for the development shall meet City standards. The City may require additional parking if the use exceeds what is required.

Attachments

1. General Location Map
2. Current Zoning
3. Proposed Zoning
4. Site Plan
6. Larry Norland Letter

REQUEST, PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

HOUSE OF HOPE, INC.
119/121 Fulton Street
Mankato, MN 56001

CY 16-97
Rezoning/CUP
Larry Norland Letter

A Brief Background and History

House of Hope began in 1971 as a halfway house for recovering alcoholic men mainly from the Mankato area. Early records show there was also a contract with the State of Minnesota, Department of Corrections, to accept referrals from them.

My tenure as Director began in June, 1982. The typical resident at that time was a 32 to 42 year old male. The older men were the "typical" alcoholic with alcohol being their only choice. The younger residents typically used alcohol and some other drug or drugs, with marijuana being the usual drug other than alcohol. With alcohol being the least expensive, and legal, that was most common and is also currently. The last few years we have been seeing more cocaine, crack cocaine, and LSD in addition to the alcohol and marijuana. The average age of residents is now more mid-twenties.

Due to fluctuating funding, consistent referrals from counties has become more and more unpredictable in the last few years. Just before I started as Director in 1982, my successor had secured a contract with the VA Medical Center in St. Cloud. During the 15 years I have been with HOH we experimented with a small halfway house in some rental property for chemically dependent women. We closed it after 2 years because of lack of funding and few referrals. During the last 10 years we expanded the VA referrals by adding the VA Medical Center in Tomah, Wisconsin. For a few years we had a contract with the Federal Bureau of Prisons and accepted referrals from them for approximately four years. About seven years ago I negotiated a contract with the State of Minnesota, Department of Corrections. In the last 5 years that contract is what has kept HOH in operation. The county funding and the VA referrals are not consistent enough to count on solely to operate the HOH. In 1988 we purchased our second house at 121 Fulton and expanded from 10 beds to 17 beds. Still, at times, there is a need for more bed space - at least 24 to 26.

Over the years we have had to be adaptable, flexible, creative, and willing to diversify in order to stay in existence. The Board of Directors and I, as well as the rest of the staff, believe in the halfway house concept and mission. Because of our beliefs we have persevered, overcome difficulties and obstacles and kept a viable program in operation.

Clients

We accept referrals from:

1. Any county in Minnesota
2. Any other state if funding is available
3. The VA Medical Centers in St. Cloud, MN and Tomah, WI (temporarily inactive)
4. The State of Minnesota, Department of Corrections
5. Vinland Treatment Center, Loretto, MN (which specializes in the brain-injured patient)

Our current conditional use permit with the City of Mankato limits us to accepting only residents who have alcohol or drug problems. On occasion we have requests for residents who don't necessarily have a chemical problem but need a structured environment. In our request I will ask for a conditional use permit that won't limit us to just the chemically dependent resident. If we get approval for the new site and building I would also attempt to secure a contract with the Federal Bureau of Prisons again and reactivate the VA Contract from St. Cloud and Tomah.

With the Department of Corrections, there are two types of clients we work with: work release inmates and intensive supervised release inmates. The work release inmates have served the majority of their sentences in a State Correctional Facility such as Faribault or Stillwater. If they qualify for work release they are released to a facility such as House of Hope to finish out their sentence, a period of 3 to 8 months, in order to secure a job and a place to live. They are still considered inmates and are under the jurisdiction of the Department of Corrections. They have to follow strict guidelines and rules or they could be returned to the State Institution they came from to finish out their sentences. Typical offenses include various degrees of felonious burglaries, assaults, forgeries and drug violations. The intensive supervised inmates are both different and similar. Their crimes are usually more serious and their stays in the halfway house are of shorter duration- anywhere from 1 to 3 months. They also have to secure employment and a place to live, however they have been discharged from a State Correctional facility and have ended their sentences. They remain on probation, however, with a State Correctional Probation Officer and are under close supervision. Sometimes they are also put on electronic monitoring while they are a resident. Typical offenses include the same as work releasees but may include aggravated assaults (a weapon was used or the victim was injured), vehicular homicides, certain degrees of criminal sexual conduct and/or terroristic threats. To clarify the criminal sexual conduct charges, HOH screens these very carefully.

page 3

All referrals are carefully considered and examined individually, including the criminal sexual conduct cases. If a prospective client is considered a "sexual predator" they are declined admission. However, if the sexual misconduct charges were inter-familial, happened on only one or two occasions, and the perpetrator was intoxicated or high during the offense, we may admit the person. This type of client would also have participated in some form of treatment successfully while incarcerated to be considered for admission. We also may accept a resident that has had a sexual relationship with someone not of legal age as long as the ages of the victim and perpetrator are similar and the relationship was consensual. HOH staff take very seriously the responsibility of accepting only those residents that pose little, low or no risk to the staff, fellow residents and citizens of the community.

CONCLUSION

The House of Hope Board of Directors and Staff believe we have evolved into a program that is no longer suitable for our location or the two houses out of which we operate. We believe we have found a more suitable location on Third Avenue and feel it is time to build a facility that is designed with the space we need for our mission, program and operation.