

Lynn zoning board approves eight new homes

Originally Published on Wednesday, May 02, 2012 By Chris Stevens / The Daily Item

LYNN — The Zoning Board of Appeals approved two proposals by the Neighborhood Development Association Tuesday that will add a total of eight single family homes to the city's housing stock.

The plan for four homes at Summer and Morris streets was approved without debate but a second proposal for four homes on Suffolk Court was met with staunch neighborhood opposition.

"We want to see change but four houses will create much more congestion in what is a little area," said Ken Hawkes, who lives across the street from the proposed development. "We would be in favor of three homes."

Peggy Phelps of the Planning and Development department for the Lynn Housing and Neighborhood Development said a study of the area shows that the four single family homes is exactly what the neighborhood calls for.

"We're really trying to create a new market," said Phelps. "A new urban density."

Phelps said the project is Phase I of a larger development plan for what she called the Sagamore Hill Corridor Overlay area. In the big picture, Phelps said the neighborhood will eventually include small businesses and larger apartment complexes as well.

Zoe Green, who lives at 12 Suffolk Court along with Hawkes, her husband, said squeezing four homes on undersized lots would create safety issues and traffic congestion.

"You realize these house lots are pretty equal to what's already there; they fit right in," said ZBA member Daniel Gisonno. "They're equal or smaller."

Hawkes said he disagreed and also said he doubted that anyone with families would buy the homes because they appear on paper to be too close together.

"I don't think anyone else would know better what's right for the area than those of us who live there," he added.

ZBA Chairman Jeanne Curley also pointed out that Phelps could have decided to build an apartment building and would not have needed any variances because it's allowable under the zoning.

"Well, that would be wrong too," Hawkes said.

City Councilor at large Daniel Cahill spoke in favor of the project as did Angela Cahill.

"I think a project like this is important for the future of Lynn," she said.

Suffolk Court resident Cheryl Debonis called the project overwhelming and asked that Phelps offer something more appropriate for the area.

Sand Bar owner Chris Brown said he was concerned new neighbors would complain about noise from his bar despite the fact that he is following the rules and regulations regarding noise attached to his liquor license.

Committee member Patrick Calnan told Brown they can't make a decision based on what might happen. Brown agreed, but said he just wanted his concerns on file.

"I really think this is best for the neighborhood," said Phelps.

The board approved the project 5-0.

The board also approved a second NDA project that would put four homes, identical to the Suffolk Court project, on an empty lot between Morris and Summer streets.

"This lot has long been a problem," said Ward 7 Councilor Rick Ford. "It's overgrown and an eyesore."

Ford said he had the owner ticketed a number of times for neglecting the property then he introduced him to LHAND Executive Director Charles Gaeta and the pair struck a deal.

The homes will be roughly 1,500 square feet, two floors, six rooms, three bedrooms, with a garage, according to Phelps. They will also be tri-colored with two different colors of vinyl siding and a third color for the trim.

Ford said the project was perfect for the neighborhood and he said he was also speaking for Ward 6 Councilor Peter Capano, who could not be at the meeting.

"I think it will bring the whole neighborhood together and it will look really nice," he said.

The project was approved 5-0 with no opposition.

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