

## NEIGHBORHOOD INFORMATION MEETING

PROJECT: Young Peoples Learning Center (2<sup>nd</sup> Neighborhood Meeting)

DATE: August 25, 2014

PLANNER: Rebecca Everette

APPLICANTS: Heather Griffith, Dennis Griffith, Janice Griffith

### Planner & Applicant Presentation:

The meeting began with a synopsis of the process completed thus far by the project, including holding a conceptual review meeting with the City, an earlier neighborhood meeting in July and one round of staff review following a formal development application submittal. The applicants then gave brief overview of the project:

- We are proposing to add a second story to the existing building. As a child care center, we already bring in screeners, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, etc. The additional space would be used by these providers to meet in a formal space at the building to offer these services to children and improve their lives.
- We have received many letters of support from the neighborhood and community. At the last neighborhood meeting there were questions and concerns raised about parking. We want to study the parking issue but have held off until CSU classes were back in session. We believe there is no parking problem, but want to work with those concerned about the issue to complete a parking study. This morning we did an inventory of open parking spaces and at 9am, there were 28 open spots.
- Another concern we've heard from one neighbor and the City are the kinds of uses and services that will be offered, and whether this is really legitimately child care. There are concerns about office creep, but to have these speech and language pathologists there is a part of best-practice child care. It is a relatively new concept, but it is being done in other, high-quality child care facilities and it's what we're striving for. We are the closest facility that will be providing these services to the MAX.

### Questions, Comments & Responses:

**Question (Citizen):** Since the last meeting, has anything happened?

**Response (City):** The project has been submitted and gone through one round of review internally with staff.

**Question (Citizen):** Were there any recommendations or issues from staff?

**Response (City):** Poudre Fire Authority wanted appropriate emergency access. There were several comments from Planning about design of the building because it's located in a historic district; the

building itself is not designated or eligible for designation. There were also comments about trash enclosures and other site issues that need to be brought up to code. If there are specific questions about these comments we can go into further detail tonight.

**Question (Citizen):** Are the people in the neighborhood concerned about parking? People that live nearby?

**Response (Applicant):** Yes, those down the street on Matthews.

**Comment (Citizen):** Our house is maybe a block away, and our son attends the facility and I am in and out of the area all day long and I always see parking available. Everyone drops their children off then leaves, they don't come and park and stay. I haven't observed an issue with parking and I don't see these services changing that. I remember people coming in for isolated circumstances at the facility in the past, and I didn't see any change in parking when that occurred either.

**Comment (Citizen):** I agree, and I think parking is always going to be an issue as the City grows. Every neighborhood is going through these types of discussions. Some businesses are excellent for a neighborhood and I believe this is one of them. I don't think adding extra professionals are going to be intimidating to the neighborhood or draw other businesses.

**Comment (Citizen):** My name is Buddy Osbourne. I have been driving in the area for many years and occasionally have to stop at the center, and I've never had a problem finding a parking place in all this time. There's always parking there and across the street, even with the storage bins because of current construction, there's a lot of parking there.

**Comment (Applicant):** Today I walked around the corner to take pictures of all the spaces that were open throughout the day. It ranged from 28 to 38 open spaces, even with the construction that is occurring and blocking some of the normally available spaces.

**Question (Applicant):** Where is the farthest you've had to go to park?

**Response (Applicant):** I always go to the eastern spot on Mathews Street, it always seems to be open.

**Question (Citizen):** What are those signs in front of the building?

**Response (Applicant):** That is a loading zone, but it's not a protected loading zone.

**Response (City):** We checked with Parking Services if they were aware of the loading zone; they were not. They have not had any complaints about the loading zone or general area and there are no current plans to remove the loading zone.

**Comment (Applicant):** It seems there is definitely more of a parking problem on the 700 block of Remington versus the 800 Remington block, which is where those who have concerns may live.

**Comment (Citizen):** Where I live, we are often impacted by students parking in the street and I often think to myself I may need to go and park near Young Peoples because they always have parking spaces open.

**Comment (City):** Other comments from the last meeting included concerns about parking, comments about the vans in the street and that there can be poor visibility when backing out. There were comments about the use of the building. We also received an email about building materials and ensuring high quality building materials are used in the expansion.

**Question (Citizen):** The van parking issue, how relevant is that to this project?

**Comment (Citizen):** I was also thinking that, the vans have been there a long time; you've been in business a long time.

**Response (Applicant):** We've been there 20 years and when we bought it there were 2 longer vans that the previous operators were using. They were there for 20 or 30 years before us. The center has been there a long time.

**Comment (Citizen):** I would think that the improvement of the facility and the outward appearance is better for the community than worrying about vans that have been parking there for ages.

**Response (City):** There is no land use code regulation about who can park in public parking. The parking issues for this project primarily relate to the provision of off-street parking. Child care centers are required to provide off-street parking for their employees at a defined ratio. They do not currently provide any off-street parking. Young Peoples Learning Center may request a modification of standard to this parking requirement given that they feel there is adequate parking and don't anticipate increasing parking demand significantly. A modification of standard needs to be approved by the decision maker, in this case, the Planning & Zoning Board.

**Question (Citizen):** Would you suggest they prepare for their argument based on how long they've been doing this without a particular issue?

**Response (City):** Applicants can use whatever reasoning in support of their project. Being established in the neighborhood is something that a decision maker may weigh. Fundamentally when I'm reviewing the project we're reviewing it against the standards from the Land Use Code. The Board will be looking at my staff report, public comments as well as the applicant's presentation and their own interpretation.

**Comment (Citizen):** My son goes to Young Peoples, at the other center. I know people shouldn't get hung up on the van issue, but it sounds like you're trying to be sensitive to the issue. I know it can get difficult to back-up and not hit someone – if there's a way to alleviate some of that, I think it helps in addressing the concerns and as a general observation.

**Response (Applicant):** We looked into a couple options, such as renting parking spaces about a block away. It didn't seem to make sense since we would need an administrator to go retrieve the vans when needed and it didn't seem the best fit in terms of service for the children. We also looked for signs that children are nearby and to be careful when backing out. We're also going to make sure our vans are parked across the street during drop-off and pick-up times. The vans are only in front of the center when we're loading or unloading, rather than trying to walk the kids across a street.

**Comment (Citizen):** I'm more concerned with my child walking a distance to get to the vans. I'm vigilant there not because of the vans, but because of those coming off Remington going way too fast.

**Response (Applicant):** We have also experienced that, with people speeding through the area.

**Comment (Citizen):** Remington has gotten so busy, and everyone is so busy in life with their cell phones and they come off so fast and fly through. You have to be watchful in the area, but I don't see the vans increasing the hazard in the area.

**Response (Applicant):** One reason we're parking the vans where we are is that we've always had permission to park our vans in that location with the adjacent owner.

**Response (Applicant):** We also considered moving our van parking to Mathews Street; I thought that might be a little wider street, but the City let us know it is the same width as Plum Street.

**Comment (Citizen):** As a parent with a home in the area, it's such a valuable service, and I hope the City would look at not putting too many restrictions on affecting the center and those of us using the services.

**Response (Applicant):** One of the important parts to this project review is the need for on-site parking, which would require taking out playground space in the back. We would need to remove approximately

a third of our playground area for parking. It would break our heart to have to remove this amount of space. We're going to have to give up some for the trash enclosure, but not as much as if we had to provide on-site parking. Because of the space available it doesn't seem the best option.

**Comment (Citizen):** I would anticipate the parking issue may come up at the hearing given the concerns raised at the first neighborhood meeting; it would be good to have a full assessment of the parking situation so it can be addressed at the hearing.

**Response (Applicant):** We expect to do a 4-time-a-day study, but it didn't make sense to look at this until CSU students were back in session. There's so much parking on Mathews street right now, and that's with Locust being blocked off. Right now there's just not a significant parking issue.

**Response (Applicant):** It is a less populous street than between Plum and Locust. It's conceivable we could park the vans there, but seeing as we have permission to keep them parked where they currently are and have been for 20 years, it doesn't make sense.

**Comment (Citizen):** I think you should leave well-enough alone.

**Response (Applicant):** We are going to put a note in the vans that your right front tire should touch the curb so there is as much room as possible. That might help get in an extra foot of visibility.

**Comment (Citizen):** I thought from reading the notice letter, the issue, potentially, was the building. I didn't have any idea parking could be an issue. I would hope the parking could be waived. I've read in the paper how some of these big buildings have been put up in the City with no parking, like The Summit.

**Response (City):** There are different requirements in the code for different uses, it is also based on location with the City.

**Response (City):** On the topic of use, the way the City is processing this is as a secondary primary use for office in the building, in addition to child care. This is because outside clients could be seen at the building. The property is split over two zone districts (Neighborhood Conservation Medium Density and Neighborhood Conservation Buffer), one of which does not permit an office use. Taking a conservative reading of the code, this will be processed as an addition of a permitted use, to add the office use district to the zone that does not permit the use; this would be adding the use specific to this project and site only.

**Question (Applicant):** Is there anyone here opposed or concerned about the office space?

**Response (Citizen):** I came to the last meeting and I'm in full support of this project.

**Response (Citizen):** I am also in support of the project.

**Comment (Applicant):** When you look at the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, it's an odd configuration and something should be added to it and you ask what you should put up there. The code seems to suggest care of children, so do you increase the centers' number of children, or do you rent it out and make an apartment? To me it makes sense to have services like these – what else would you put up there?

**Response (Citizen):** When you said that is what you were planning, I thought it made so much sense. I think it is a big convenience to have it. You're not driving all over, increasing pollution, increasing vehicles on the road. It's a one-stop shop.

**Response (Applicant):** The idea that the therapist can observe the child in the natural, fun environment is a big advantage for them and the kids. I also think it improves the quality of the teacher through increased collaboration, with experts on site and more input and more advice available sooner. We call these professionals already to come out to the facility, but maybe several days later; it isn't immediate. Having them on grounds and having those conversations would be a great facilitator to improving outcomes.

**Question (Citizen):** What's the next step?

**Response (City):** Based on comments staff gave at the first review meeting, we've requested another round of review. Young Peoples Learning Center will revise their submittal documents and resubmit. From there, staff will determine if further review is required; if not, the project would move to the Planning & Zoning Board. Another letter will go out 2 weeks ahead of time prior to the public hearing. At the hearing, they will take public comment and make a decision.

**Question (Citizen):** If the next round of review goes well, how soon will the next meeting happen?

**Response (City):** It depends on timing, there is only one P&Z hearing a month. It also depends on when the next round or review is submitted and if additional items are needed prior to the hearing.

**Response (Applicant):** If we got everything resubmitted by September 3<sup>rd</sup>, could get on for the October meeting?

**Response (City):** There is potential if everyone at staff review is ready to proceed to hearing.

**Question (Citizen):** It sounds like there were really only several people with concerns about parking?

**Response (Applicant):** There was a couple and an individual.

**Question (Citizen):** Does the City look at all the people that don't come to the meeting as a positive thing? If I get a letter and don't have a problem, I generally don't go to the meeting. Does the City look at this issue?

**Response (City):** To some extent, the volume of comments and attendance can be looked at. The P&Z members take great interest in the comments at neighborhood meetings and try to be responsive to public input. They also look at the content of the comments, not necessarily the quantity of the comments.