

Memo

To: City Council

From: Bryan Myrkle, Community Development Director

Date: 9/19/2019

Re: Edmond Senior Apartments – Phase II

As City Council members know, there is a proposal for a Phase II of the Edmond Senior Apartments.

The proposed site plan has been reviewed and approved by the Charlotte Planning Commission, yet there remain two significant issues to resolve regarding this proposal. The first regards parking, the second is a request for a PILOT tax incentive.

Parking

When the first phase of the Edmond Apartments was developed, the City made significant changes to its zoning ordinance to accommodate the project's needs. At that time, parking requirements for this kind of multi-family development in the Central Business District were set at **1.5 parking spaces per residential unit**. The proposed second phase of this development would result in 71 residential units at this site, which in turn would require 107 parking spaces under our ordinance. **TWG Development is proposing 78 parking spaces, or just more than 1 parking space per unit.**

The City's Zoning Board of Appeals has jurisdiction over certain exceptions and special approvals, including parking requirements. Specifically, the authority to **“permit the modification of the automobile parking space or loading space requirements where, in the particular instance, such modification will not be inconsistent with the purpose and intent of such requirements.”**

Unfortunately, despite this reference, the City's ordinance does not indicate the purpose and intent of the parking requirements. However, it does provide some guidance as to what minimum level of parking should be considered adequate for a wide variety of land uses, including senior housing. The ordinance suggests the minimum parking for senior housing be 1 for each 3 units and 1 for each employee. Under this formula, the minimum parking requirement for this development could theoretically be as low as 26 spaces (24 for resident and two for employees).

Obviously, there is a huge disparity between the currently required 107 spaces, and the low of 26 contemplated for senior housing elsewhere in the zoning ordinance.

Over the past few weeks, I have had the chance to talk about this proposal with a number of downtown business and property owners, and also with the Downtown Development Authority. In every case, while they have expressed general support for the idea of a Phase II at the Edmond Apartments site, they have also expressed a concern about residents and their visitors taking up valuable public parking spaces if there isn't enough off-street parking provided. The current proposal would allow for every unit to have one associated parking space, and there would be seven spaces for visitors and employees. While this might be enough to avoid most spill-over parking, it has been pointed out that during the winter, most businesses stockpile plowed snow in their parking lots. This could actually reduce the number of available parking spaces to less than one per unit during the winter.

The Downtown Development Authority Board did vote specifically to recommend to the City Council that it not reduce the parking requirement for this development below the current 1.5 space per unit standard.

In talking to TWG Development representatives, **I have recommended they look into forming a reciprocal parking agreement with Liberty Church at the corner of Washington and Lovett.** This could help alleviate most potential parking problems, but I do not know the status of that recommendation.

For their part, **TWG has also indicated their willingness to officially limit residents to a single car**, if that proves necessary. They have also indicated that their experience with senior housing at other sites does not support the need for parking at a level of 1.5 spaces per unit. I believe they

will be providing more information about their experiences for your review prior to the meeting.

PILOT

City Manager Guetschow will be advising you on most aspects of the Payment In Lieu Of Taxes incentive that you will also be considering. However, one resident of the current Edmond Apartments raised several **issues related to development quality and management**, that are appropriate to address in the context of a tax incentive, i.e. “do we, as a city, want to incentivize more development of this kind.”

I did work to arrange a tour of the first phase of this development, so Council members could see the facility first-hand, and to determine the merit of the complaints.

Those who took the tour can speak for themselves, however, from my perspective, **the quality of the building’s construction appeared to be on the same level as other new apartments** the City has been involved with over the past 10+ years, including those at the Masonic Temple and above downtown storefronts.

One issue raised that did seem to have particular merit is **the issue of odor**. During our visit, it was apparent that while there are odors commonly associated with new construction (paint, glue, etc.), there is also serious odor in the building due to the indoor garbage collection and disposal system. I talked to TWG representatives during the tour, and they acknowledged the problems with garbage odor, particularly from pet waste (kitty litter, primarily). We also discussed potential remedies, and **they seemed willing to make appropriate changes to design or procedure to eliminate the problem**.

It is not my intent to make a recommendation in support or opposition to this project. However, I wanted to provide you the most information possible prior to Council’s consideration of the issues. Should you have any questions about this, please give me a call at (517) 543-8853 or an email at bmyrkle@charlottemi.org.