

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Monday, October 20, 2014

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ben Westerburg
Judy Poole
Dwayne Yeager
Vernon Guy

MEMBERS ABSENT Jo Ann Thomas

OTHERS PRESENT:

Bruce Fleming, Zoning Director	Barry Wall, Blanchard Park, LLC
Ann Cottrell, Zoning Asst.	Darryl Minter
Robert George, City Engineer	George McClenden
Shane Warren, Lead Pastor First Assembly	Jayson Heath
James Adams, Assembly Boardmember	Todd Hubbard
Bob Holtzclaw, Architecture Associates	Bobby Keen
Donna Minter	

The Monday, October 20, 2014, Planning Commission Meeting was called to order by Dwayne Yeager. The Commission approved the minutes of the September 15, 2014, Planning Commission meeting.

The ONLY application for review was **PA-14-10000001**. The applicant is **FIRST ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH INC.** The property is located on **BLANCHARD STREET** with the following legal description: **LOT 4 OF THE THIRD RESUBDIVISION OF LOT 4 UNIT 2 WEST MONROE PLAZA AS PER PLAT IN PLAT BOOK 24 PAGE 185 UNDER DR#1205521, OUACHITA PARISH, LA.** The request is **PLANNING APPROVAL TO ALLOW A CHURCH IN A B-3 (GENERAL BUSINESS) DISTRICT.** This application was tabled at the September 15, 2014, Planning Commission meeting to allow Bruce Fleming, Zoning Director, to organize a meeting with city officials and developers to discuss the issues raised in that meeting. The meeting was held at West Monroe City Hall on September 23, 2014, at 10:00 A.M. Tonight, October 20, 2014, Mr. Jayson Heath, Executive Pastor for First Assembly Church “Church”, spoke on behalf of the application. Mr. Heath provided a handout to the Commission members that included a Preliminary Water Study (Lot Development Hydraulic Analysis), Letter from John Eason of the Louisiana State Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD), and an overall site plan. The Lot Development Hydraulic Analysis from Hunt, Guillot & Associates determined that “with the installation of the detention / storage pond, the proposed sites hydraulic will comply with the West Monroe City Code”. Robert George, City Engineer, stated that he had just been given this information and he will have to go through the calculations. An email from John Eason of the Louisiana DOTD determined that “...we do not see a church of this size at this location warranting the need for a traffic impact study..” and “...based on our review, the district will defer any access connection issues to the local street governing jurisdiction..”. Furthermore, it stated that “...we are requesting drainage plans and calculations for this site be submitted to the district for review and all drainage should be coordinated with the local governing jurisdiction...” Vernon Guy wanted to be sure that these calculations covered the entire property being purchased and not just the part being developed. Mr. Heath referred to the Hydraulic Study stating that this covers the entire 16.22 acres being purchased. Vernon Guy is concerned about the low points of this property. It was stated that any other structures other than the current proposal would require additional drainage study. Mr. Heath stated that the Church had spoken with a representative from ENTERGY that confirmed that ENTERGY will not allow a structure to be located in the easement but that parking is allowed in the power line easement. The project will have 498 parking spaces and 22 handicapped parking spaces for a total of 551 parking spaces. There is no official letter from ENTERGY that is available. In the future, the Church may bury the power lines in order to further develop the property. Robert George addressed the Board concerning his initial comments to the Commission via email. For Items 1 & 2: He stated that the Church has agreed to relocate the sewer line as required. Elevations will be required. He is in agreement with the resolution of this issue as discussed in the meeting held at City Hall on September 23, 2014. The City Engineer’s Office and the Public Works Department will be involved in this process. Engineered plans are required and the work shall be done by a properly licensed contractor approved by the City. Item 3: A Drainage Impact statement will be required and a review of the calculations will be performed. Item 4: Mr. George referred to the Site Plan (SP1) of the proposed driveway location. He has no objection to the proposed driveway; however, the

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Monday, October 20, 2014

Church must obtain a variance for this driveway location through application to the Board of Adjustments as it does not fulfill the requirements of Section 12:5047 of the City of West Monroe Code of Ordinances (entrances to non-residential properties shall either coincide with intersecting streets, or be offset by 25 feet). Mr. George further stated that the peak traffic time for the church will not coincide with the peak traffic time of the area. This driveway will be a full service driveway. This is the best place available with the least expense to the Church. Mr. George also has no objections to the letter from Mr. Eason of the DOTD stating that no Traffic Impact study will be required. The issue of a long proposed new traffic signal at the intersection of Blanchard Street and McMillan Road was discussed. This has been in the works for a period of time, and funding may soon be obtained to make this traffic signal a reality. Vernon Guy discussed the area surrounding the property including various restaurants, hotels and retail stores. He wanted to make sure that the Church understood that should this application be approved, it applies only to First Assembly of God Inc and wanted those exact words to be included in the minutes of this meeting. He also discussed the fact that restaurants that serve alcohol with a meal may want to locate within the vicinity of the property and requested that a waiver (signed & publically filed by representatives of the Church) be required that will allow alcohol sales less than 300 feet from the Church's property lines. Bruce Fleming stated that not allowing the sale of alcohol within 300 feet of a church is a Louisiana State Law and that the City of West Monroe does not have control over this, making a waiver ineffective. Shane Warren, Pastor, stated that the State does have a waiver process and referred to R.S. 26:81 and R.S. 26:281. He stated that the Church would agree to sign such a waiver; however, the Church would not be in favor of a "Bar Only". Pastor Warren went on to discuss the need for the church to relocate (growth, landlocked, currently in a 90 year old facility, visibility, desire to serve West Monroe and remain part of the West Monroe Community, heart to serve, etc.). This project will be \$10 - \$12 Million Dollar Investment. Ben Westerburg asked the plans for the current location once this facility is complete. Pastor Warren stated ideas have been to donate the property to the City of West Monroe to locate a Cultural Arts Center, or possibly a charter school, or other type of assembly facility that would be used by the entire community. ***BEN WESTERBURG*** made a motion to **APPROVE** this application WITH THE STIPULATION THAT A WAIVER BE SIGNED THAT WILL ALLOW ALCOHOL SALES WITHIN 300 FEET OF THE PROPERTY AND THAT SUCH A WAIVER BE FILED PUBLICALLY, ALSO, THIS PLANNING APPROVAL IS ONLY FOR FIRST ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH, INC. ***VERNON GUY*** seconded. All in favor, motion approved.

As there was no further business to be discussed, the meeting was adjourned.