

PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD/LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY MINUTES

The Brevard County Planning & Zoning Board met in regular session on **Monday, June 10, 2024**, at **3:00 p.m.**, in the Florida Room, Building C, Brevard County Government Center, 2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way, Viera, Florida.

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

Board members present were: Henry Minneboo (D1); Ron Bartcher (D1); Robert Sullivan (D2); Brian Hodgers (D2); Ben Glover (D3); Mark Wadsworth, Chair (D4); Debbie Thomas (D4); Bruce Moia (D5); Robert Brothers (D5); and John Hopengarten (BPS).

Staff members present were: Tad Calkins, Planning and Development Director; Jeffrey Ball, Planning and Zoning Manager; Alex Esseeesse, Deputy County Attorney; Trina Gilliam, Senior Planner; and Kristen Champion, Special Projects Coordinator.

Excerpt of complete agenda.

Seminary Covenant Community Inc. (Bruce Moia) requests a change in zoning classification from IN(L) (Institutional Use Low Intensity) to RU-2-15 (Medium-Density Multiple-Family Residential. The property is 2.92 acres, located on the northeast side of S. Courtenay Pkwy., east of Banana Blvd., approx. 1,466 ft. south of Airport Rd. (24Z00014) (1260 S. Courtenay Pkwy., Merritt Island) (Tax Account 2501136) (District 2)

Jeffrey Ball read the application into the record.

Bruce Moia, 1250 W. Eau Gallie Blvd., Melbourne, stated that they're representing a group called Wings of Grace and what they do is they build affordable housing. They house underprivileged youth. We have developed a model that we're building the first of its kind in the City of Melbourne. It's just received site plan approval and it's getting ready to break ground for 24 units of affordable housing that is specifically geared for youths turning out of foster care.

What happens currently is when teens turn 18, they're no longer funded by the state. The parents kick them out and they're basically homeless and it's a shock to them. What Wings of Grace, who's a nonprofit organization, has done is they've partnered with Ways for Life who's been working with teens aging out of foster care for quite some time. They've established this prototype of units where they house them temporarily. They train them on site and get them ready for life if they're not prepared. They train them on how to get a job, how to interview, how to take care of themselves, how to do their finances, etc.

They found another spot, they want to build these all over the county, so they found this spot on Merritt Island and that's this site right here. What they want to do now is get rezoned so they can actually put this development in this location and then hopefully get another one and do them all over the county.

Henry Minneboo asked where they get the money to finance this project and Bruce Moia responded that fortunately, he's not the one who has to find it, but they do grants to do these things. Right now, Wings of Grace has scattered homes all over the county that they do this but now they're going to put it into a multi-family development where they can be there on site and provide the services for them on site.

Henry Minneboo asked if it takes into account perpetual maintenance and Bruce Moia replied yes, they want this to be long term.

John Hopengarten stated that he's on the affordable housing council here and we've seen projects like this come forward and they're needed. The problem with the youth, they're 18 years old, they have no place to go. We need properties like this, so I'm hoping they'll do a good job and that they will put up some nice buildings and have nice training for the people so they can become productive citizens.

Bruce Moia said yes, that's the whole idea.

Public Comment:

Elizabeth Michaleman, Merritt Island, stated that she lives within the zone of reason around this development. I don't have a single problem with what is said about what the facilities are to be used for. I have a major problem where it is. This property is in a flood plain. It is zoned as such. A portion of this property is considered a Coastal Hazard Region. It's across the street, nestled lovingly in between Jefferson and Tropical Elementary. We're a small, tiny island. I would love to see affordable housing; I just don't think this property is geared for that particular project.

Now I wanted to go through this and based upon the application, I'm seeing 45 homes. They want to go to RU-2-15, so that is the opportunity is to build 45 homes on this property if I'm not mistaken. I have a concern with that as well. The traffic, this is an island and some of you live here so you already know the challenges, especially in South Merritt Island. We have two by-ways. We have Tropical Trail and Courtenay Pkwy and then we get one, Tropical Trail.

As someone who lives in the area, I already know the traffic issues at school time going to and coming from. I already know the problems with 520, which by the way, in case anyone wants to know, 520 West and 520 East (both sides) were picked as the top five for most congested byways. If we have storms and we want to get off the island, according to Emergency Management, it's somewhere in the range of 66 hours to try and get to safety.

When do we stop looking at what you think we need and look at what we have? And protect what we have? We're a barrier island, our job is to protect the mainland. That's what we're here for. They're doing more studies about it and out best universities are doing these studies and they're interesting.

I'm against it. I'd like to know more about it. I got a chance to meet the gentleman (applicant) when we were out there to have a discussion, and this is not what he told me out there. I think it's great, my friend is a foster group home right next door to me, and I don't have a problem with that. She's not on a floor plain. She's not in an area that I think is very sensitive. I think there's risk to flooding with the school. You have to start weighing what's more important; the kids that are going to school and the possible flooding and how many kids end up in this program.

It sounds like a great organization, maybe we have another opportunity to do something in something that already exists. I hope you hear me. I can get into the environmental aspect of it. I was supposed to have 20 more people here, we were going to talk about the traffic. I'm just asking very politely to please consider what I'm talking about.

Robert Sullivan stated to the Chair that he just wanted to reiterate what he had on the very first set of agendas about evacuations and Coastal High Hazard areas. This does about it. We are talking about Merritt Island. We are talking about a single access for evacuation and half of it is in the FEMA Flood Zone. It's a Zone AE, I fish bodies out of the water doing search and rescue, it's not fun.

I do agree with the young lady here, it's an extremely noble commitment here, I just think it's the wrong spot.

Brian Hodgers asked Bruce Moia if it's 43 units, not 45 units, correct?

Bruce Moia responded that would be the max that we could possibly build, but we're not proposing to build that number. I don't know what the number is, but it's not going to be 45.

Brian Hodgers asked since it says multi-family, is it going to be townhomes?

Bruce Moia responded no, it's going to be a housing complex, I guess institutional looking kind of thing, where they have all their rooms but have a common kitchen, common laundry, common facilities. They'll have training rooms. It's not townhouses or anything like that.

Brian Hodgers asked how many buildings it is going to be, and Bruce Moia responded that he doesn't know how many units we're going to be able to fit on site but it's his understand that they're going to take the building that they did in Melbourne at 24 and put it on that site. It's also his understanding that they might try and add a couple more units, but I don't believe we're going to get anywhere near 43.

Brian Hodgers asked if that one in Melbourne is one single building and Bruce Moia responded yes, it is.

Pastor Paul Rosbury, Chairman of Seminary Community, stated that Wings of Grace is one of their ministries. We have 30 ministries up and down the coast and we acquired this church in 2012 from an existing church. At the time, the roof was gone, and we've renovated it to that point. Currently, when we're talking about this aging out of foster care, there's an education building right next to the sanctuary that's about 4,800 sq. ft. There's also a parsonage on the property. So, what we're talking about is maybe taking the education building, which is already existing on higher ground, and using that as the possible building that would house the youths as well as maybe some other facilities. The maybe where the parsonage is, extend it over to there. We really don't know what the site plan is going to be, we don't know the numbers yet, but we want to move forward with this as quickly as possible.

I did tell the lady (Elizabeth) that I will meet with them and have them come talk to us because we are in the neighborhood. We want to be friendly and I'm working every way I can so that we can help our County to build what we need. Right now, we need over 300 housing units for aging out foster care kids. Now, every place we're going to look we're going to have to come back to you and see if that's the right property. I thank you for your time and I hope that you'll help us move forward because that's what we need to do for the whole County.

For clarification, Mark Wadsworth asked that we're going to utilize some of the existing buildings and maybe add one if needed.

Bruce Moia replied yes. Obviously, we're going to use the building if they're already there.

Motion to approve rezoning from IN(L) to RU-2-15 by Brian Hodgers, seconded by Debbie Thomas. The vote was 8:1 to recommend approval.