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[MPC Comment] Agenda item 10

1 message

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To: "commission@knoxmpc.org" <commission@knoxmpc.org>

Tue, Jul 11, 2017 at 9:49 PM

The Knoxville/Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) has proposed a definition for supportive housing that includes recovery housing.

The term "supportive housing" is applied to homeless housing more often than to recovery housing. Supportive housing and recovery housing/sober housing should have different definitions. These two things are not synonymous.

The adoption of a definition for either supportive housing or recovery housing should also be separate from an entire ordinance change. Recovery housing should address things like maximum number of occupants, staff-to-occupant ratios, requirements for no substance use, etc. The proposed definition lumps everything together and indicates that supportive housing is for five persons or more (but no maximum number is given) and that people may stay in the housing indefinitely. It also says this type of housing is "linked to on- or off-site services." This needs to be clarified to be meaningful--what kind of services? For supportive housing it could be laundry, dental care, cooking, and hair and nail care. For sober-living or recovery housing it might reasonably include anger management group therapy, AA or NA meetings, and substance abuse treatment.

Substance abuse recovery housing CANNOT legally include on-site treatment services unless the facility is licensed by the state Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services https://aata.site-ym.com/page/tennessee_slf

A simple statement like this under item D. In the MPC definition would resolve many problems:

D. The applicant shall provide a description of the on-site or off-site treatment and any special care needed; any facility which offers treatment services for substance abuse requires a license from the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS).

There is also nothing in the proposed definition that addresses proximity to child day care centers, school, parks, etc.

The definition for supportive housing seems too vague regarding what it is and too specific regarding what zones it is allowed in. It includes details for adding supportive housing with use on review in transitional and Office B zoning.

At the February meeting we asked for recovery housing/ halfway houses, sober houses to NOT be allowed in Office B zoning because this would lead to more applications for Office B zoning, and this zoning allows methadone clinics and pain clinics with use on review. Allowing supportive housing/recovery housing in OB zones would open the door to more intensive use in the future in areas where things like pain clinics and methadone treatment centers immediately adjacent to single-family housing are NOT appropriate.

Please note that Mendala Recovery Services on Ebenezer Road, which is referenced in the MPC staff report, is located in Transitional zoning. If this facility meets state Mental Health and

Substance Abuse Services requirements as a recovery home then it should be permitted in the current zoning.

Thank you,
Margot Kline
President, Council of West Knox County Homeowners

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This message was directed to commission@knoxmpc.org