

city of saint paul
planning commission resolution

file number 21-54

date December 17, 2021

WHEREAS, Charles Stephens and Laurel Gamm, File # 21-309-362, have applied to rezone from R4 one-family residential to RT2 townhouse residential under the provisions of § 61.801(b) of the Saint Paul Legislative Code, property located at 83 Douglas Street, Parcel Identification Number (PIN) 01.28.23.42.0065, legally described as Geo. Benz' Subdivision lots 4 and 5; and

WHEREAS, the Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission, on December 9, 2021, held a public hearing at which all persons present were given an opportunity to be heard pursuant to said application in accordance with the requirements of § 61.303 of the Saint Paul Legislative Code; and

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul Planning Commission, based on the evidence presented to its Zoning Committee at the public hearing as substantially reflected in the minutes, made the following findings of fact:

1. The applicant proposes to rezone the property to RT2. A land use under consideration by the applicant is housing for veterans at risk of homelessness using multiple small prefabricated single-family homes. Four units on permanent foundations would be built on the property, sourced through the company YardHomes and financed through a YardHomes / MAC-V (Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans) partnership, wherein the applicant would own the property for ten to fifteen years, YardHomes would own the dwellings, and MAC-V would pay YardHomes and the applicant monthly to house veterans on a short-term basis. At the end of a set term, ownership of the dwellings would transfer to the applicant. While operated by MAC-V, the property would not be used to provide services to the applicants, differentiating it from a supportive housing land use. Neither a detailed site plan nor building plans or elevations are available at this time. Draft site plans shared with staff indicate variances may be necessary under the current zoning code, including for building width and rear setback. This land use – housing for veterans – has followed other ideas, including a pair of small duplexes with parking.
2. The proposed zoning is consistent with the way this area has developed. Per § 66.214, the RT2 townhouse district is “intended to provide for a variety of housing needs and to serve as zones of transition between one- and two-family residential districts and multiple-family residential districts and business districts.” Further, RT2 “provides for housing that has many of the amenities of single-family dwellings arranged in a low-density, multiple-family pattern.” Existing housing in the area is a mix of one- to four-unit residences, and this property neighbors mixed-use, commercial, and institutional uses, making a neighborhood-scale infill housing land use appropriate. The institutional use to the northeast is the St. Paul West 7th Street Salvation Army, which provides food, financial, and community services to people in

moved by Reilly

seconded by _____

in favor Unanimous

against _____

need. 7th Street W to the south of the property has a variety of small businesses, residences, non-profit organizations, and parking lots, with only one commercial building on 7th Street W extending to a third story.

3. The proposed zoning to allow neighborhood-scale infill housing is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. In the Future Land Use Map, this property is designated Urban Neighborhood, and is directly adjacent to the Mixed Use-designated West Seventh Street corridor, an important transit corridor served by the 54 and 74 bus routes. Urban Neighborhoods are “primarily residential areas with a range of housing types... [where] multi-family housing predominates along arterial and collector streets, particularly those with transit.” Urban Neighborhood Policy LU-34 reads, “Provide for medium-density housing that diversifies housing options, such as townhouses, courtyard apartments and smaller multi-family developments, compatible with the general scale of Urban Neighborhoods.” Policy LU-35 reads, “Provide for multi-family housing along arterial and collector streets, and in employment centers to facilitate walking and leverage the use of public transportation.” The applicant’s intent to establish small homes harmonizes with Policy H-49, “Consider amendments to the zoning code to permit smaller single-family houses and duplexes to facilitate the creation of small-home development types, such as pocket neighborhoods and cottage communities” and the Comprehensive Plan’s value of “Missing Middle” housing types.

Concerning the intent of housing homeless veterans, Policy H-37 reads, “Encourage the development of affordable housing in areas well-served by transit and/or in proximity to employment centers” while Policy H-18 read, “Foster the preservation and production of deeply affordable rental housing (housing affordable to those at 30% or less of AMI), supportive housing and housing for people experiencing homelessness.”

Rezoning to RT2 also contributes to the current District 9 Area Plan goal to “Maintain existing housing stock while developing new housing to meet the diversity of households’ needs.” The Plan goes on to state that the “Housing stock, both new and refurbished, should continue to provide a mix of incomes with affordable places to live. Additions to the housing stock should take place near transit.” Key Strategy for housing number 12 promotes “those stretches of West 7th between key nodes as the appropriate location for higher-density residential use, in order to add diversity to the housing stock while preserving the traditional neighborhood fabric and supporting existing and future transit investment. Key Strategy for public transit number 67 promotes “new development that will fully utilize existing transit services”. Additionally, the RT2 zone conforms to priority action number 1., “Maintain the character of existing residential areas by keeping zoning appropriate to residential neighborhoods.”

4. The proposed zoning is compatible with surrounding uses. This parcel is surrounded by one-family and two-family homes with multi-family (3+) buildings scattered through the neighborhood. One block south, 7th Ave W is lined with two- and three-story mixed-use properties with commercial on the bottom floor and residential units above. Small multi-family lies directly to the east, with a parking lot and large Salvation Army a little bit further. An RT2 zoning here would strengthen the transition from the Salvation Army and multi-family to the east to the duplex and single-family area to the west.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Planning Commission recommends to the City Council that the application of Charles Stephens and Laurel Gamm for rezoning from R4 one-family residential to RT2 townhouse residential for property at 83 Douglas Street be approved.