

BOROUGH OF AKRON COUNCIL MEETING- MAY 22, 2017

Council Members present- Justin Gehman, Vice-President; Thomas J. Murray, Earl Shirk, Tammy Ruth, Nathan Imhoff, Monica Hersh. (John Williamson not present)

Others present- Mayor John McBeth, Susan Davidson, Borough Manager; Kenelm L. Shirk III, Solicitor; Police Chief Thomas Zell, Dick Wanner, Ephrata Review; Fred H. Whitley, Marian M. Whitley, Evan Shupp, Amos Reiff, Belinda Shrout, Les Zimmerman, Mary Jane Zimmerman, David Bair, Jacob Zimmerman, Ella Mae Zimmerman, Greg Stief, Helen Peifer, Gary Martzall, Jim S. Amstutz, Carlos M. DeJesus, Pat Kurek, Linda Kane, Donald L. Weaver, Julie Hocking, Scott Cover, Scott Althouse, Gatehouse; K. L. McEllhenney, Nancy Pratz, Keith Landis, Lynne Beth, Bill Shanefelder, Kathy Hanna, Emmett Hanna, Sarah Shirk, Jeff Shirk, Steve Heydt, Dave Dreibelbis, Helene Heuyard, Matthew North, Guy Hull, Betty Hull, Mark Walmer, James Welch, Donald Reese, Glen Beiler, Jr, Diane Bates, Scott Ruth, Deb Laws-Landis, Lester Auker, Adriane Shirk, Don Basarab, Abe, Witman, Christine McEllhenney, Randy Shrout, Deanne Rupp, Larry Rupp, Bonnie Brenner, Terry Smith, Kathryn Kurtz, Brian Kurtz, Bob Rollman, Warren M. Hackman, Lois Coleman, Amber Stief, Nancy Wenger, Sam Baughman, Harold A. Penner, George D. Wolf, Helen Royer, Rebecca Pereverzoff, Tracy Rhinier, L. Baron, Angie Frain, James Frain, Judy Baughman, Mark Miller, Carol M. Shaub, Nathan Shirk, Denis Eckert, Gary Lashky, Ingrid Magill, Vernon Weaver.

Justin Gehman, Vice-President of Akron Borough Council welcomed visitors to the May 22, 2017 Borough of Akron Committee meeting.

Gatehouse

James Welch, Attorney representing the Gate House mentioned that a petition to amend the Akron Borough Zoning Ordinance was presented to Council on May 8, 2017.

Attorney Welch mentioned he would take questions from Council now that they have reviewed the petition and will also take questions and comments from the public.

Kenelm L. Shirk III, the Borough Solicitor mentioned there are three things Council can do in regards to this petition. 1) Defer to the future 2) Turn it down 3) Refer to the Borough Planning Commission and Lancaster County Planning Commission.

At this time Justin Gehman, Vice-President of Akron Borough Council called to order a Borough Council Meeting.

Council opened the meeting to visitor's comments in regards to the Gate House.

Bill Shanfelder, 105 Third Street, Akron PA wants to know more about Gate House and if we want this operation in the Borough.

Christine McEllhenney, 11 Scenic View Drive, Akron has no objections and no problem with the Gate House. Kay McEllhenney, 11 Scenic View Drive, Akron wants to hear what the Gate House has to offer.

Warren Hackman, 1242 Hillcrest Road, Akron has three daughters and is opposed because of security concerns and Gate House being close to school and daycare.

Lester Zimmerman, Tobacco Road, mentioned the Gate House will have a direct impact on everyday farming, concerned about daughters and family. This property is an historic property, will never know residents, concerned for his business and the honor system for his produce business.

Nathan Shirk, 276 Tobacco Road, Ephrata PA, asked why do we need a third drug treatment center in the Borough. Not necessarily told the truth by the Gate House, this is a residential property and is skeptical.

Steve Heydt, 602 Fulton Street, Akron – opposed

Betty Heydt, 602 Fulton Street, Akron- mentioned she is a mom with a special needs child and we don't want Gate House in our town. Betty mentioned the residents would have to walk past a daycare, kids at bus stops to get to the closest bus stop. Heydt also mentioned that she researched statistics on drug rehab and 41% end up homeless. We must protect our kids and Gate House has court ordered residents. We don't have the resources to take care of individuals and we don't need this around kids. These 25 people are not investing in our town and why should we change zoning for this.

Guy Hull, 14 East End Avenue, Akron – against the Gate House

Jeff Shirk, 307 Main Street, Akron doesn't know all the facts and I don't think Gate House was treated fairly. The Beacon House located on S. Ninth Street is there for drug and alcohol abuse. Jeff also mentioned the concern for children and there are forty three registered sex offenders within a three mile radius of Akron Borough.

Miriam Whitley, 1247 Main Street, Akron mentioned the Boxwood Inn is a beautiful property and Akron already has treatment centers and Gate House is a non-profit. Do we need to be subsidizing their cause? Whitley also mentioned we don't need strange men walking around the bike trail. The residents will have free time. Akron Borough is doing its share and mentioned she does feel bad for Mr. Fitzpatrick who owns the Boxwood Inn.

Julie Hocking, 1302 Diamond Street, Akron mentioned Gate House tells a good story. Fifty percent are court ordered and where do they come from and only one third comes from Lancaster County. Hocking also mentioned the neighbors to the Gate House in Lititz complained about the Gate House residents being inconsiderate to their neighbors by cutting through their yards, loud, profanity, playing basketball at 10 or 11 at night. An R-1 zoning cannot become a drug and alcohol facility.

Fred Whitley, 1247 Main Street, Akron would like to have commentary from Gate House. The Borough has designated properties in lieu of this property and once Council does this it will be a precedent and does not want to see the guidelines change. Residents can check themselves out anytime.

Scott Cover, 1302 Diamond Street, Akron mentioned opening the Borough up to many locations like this and it doesn't fit in R-1.

James Frain, 15 Crestview Drive, Akron asked why Akron? Scott Althouse mentioned that Gate House integrates their clients into the community. Althouse mentioned he looked at 10-12 properties across the county with adequate space to mitigate any concerns that the Lititz neighbors had complained about. Althouse also mentioned that in the 45 years under our care we never had a client commit a violent crime and there are no sex offenders. Althouse mentioned at one time the Lititz Gate House turned residents away when high but no more, we get them to another level of care. Drug and alcohol addiction is a disease. Althouse also mentioned the Boxwood Inn property has three acres and gives more room and not a lot of remodeling is needed inside and would also like to put offices on the property. The Akron Mennonite Church and daycare support Gate House and we have tried to be transparent.

James Frain commented that people's perceptions are real to them and this would put your clients under suspicion, but also mentioned what the Gate House is doing is honorable.

Angie Frain, 15 Crestview Drive, Akron appreciates what Gate House is doing but has two children and has safety concerns.

Don Reese, 17 Miller Road, Akron PA mentioned he is not really in favor of Gate House. Reese mentioned he has a daughter and has sympathy for these men. There is a terrible drug problem but the situation is going to present itself.

Keith Landis, Fulton Street, Akron mentioned he took a drive and it is .8 miles from the Boxwood Inn to the closest bus stop. What percentage of Gate House residents are court ordered? Landis mentioned there are a lot of houses in between the Boxwood Inn and bus stop and do we really want to bring this into our community because other Council members and police will have to deal with this. What are you (Gate House) doing to bring something to Akron?

Nancy Pratt- Fulton Street, Akron mentioned she lost her husband who was addicted to opioids. Her husband stayed at Gate House and mentioned their goal is honorable but Akron is not the right place for this.

Lucille Baron, 1002 Hillcrest Road, Akron is opposed to the Gate House.

Les Auker, 112 S. Ninth Street, Akron is opposed.

Shrout ,1301 Diamond Station Road, mentioned only so many staff for residents.

Randy Shrout, 1301 Diamond Station Road, Ephrata is opposed. Randy mentioned he is a former drug user and alcoholic and when you are high you don't care and if you don't have a spiritual base you won't heal these people. Shrout also mentioned property values are going down.

Kathy Hanna, Main Street, Akron mentioned that 10% of the properties in Akron are tax exempt and asked how much acreage in Akron is tax exempt. Will Akron be saturated with non-profits and is opposed to Gate House.

Emmett Hanna, Main Street, Akron is opposed to the Gate House.

Greg Stief, 1228 Diamond Street, Akron mentioned that the Gate House is honorable to help people but has seen what drugs do to people. Opposed

Mervin Zimmerman, 135 Bethany Road, Ephrata mentioned he is friends with the Zimmerman family (Tobacco Road) and is concerned about the Gate House. Opposed.

Deanna Rupp, 12 Willow Street, Akron does not want to invite any more drug issues to this town. Opposed

Gary Martzall, 37 Dawn Avenue, Akron mentioned that the Gate house will be too close to kids, school and daycare.

Helene Heuyard, 1236 Diamond Street, Akron is opposed. Heuyard mentioned she doesn't want strange men walking around her house and robbing people in the area for drug money.

Diane Bates, 939 Main Street mentioned she came with an open mind and drug addiction runs in her family. Bates mentioned she runs on the Rail Trail and Tobacco Road because she feels safe. Opposed.

Deb Laws Landis, 503 West View Drive, mentioned family that has gone through rehab and feels like we need to welcome Gate House.

Rebecca Pereverzoff, 16 Circle Drive, Akron mentioned a nephew that has addiction issues and Akron should be motivated by compassion and make a difference.

Resident, Fifth Street, Akron mentioned Akron Mennonite Church has no issues with Gate House and hope there is a place that these people can go.

Lynn Beck, Eagle View Estate Ephrata is in favor of the Gate House.

Bonita Brenner, 5 Dawn Avenue, Akron PA does not know enough about the Gate House.

Amos Reiff 235 Tobacco Road, Ephrata opposed.

Ingrid Magill, 925 High Street, Akron getting information on the Gate House.

George Wolf, 16 Miller Road, Akron PA mentioned that he served on Akron Borough Council and was Akron Borough Mayor. George mentioned that tax exemption also affects school districts and changing an R-1 is opening a can of worms. R-1 is set up for a reason and if we permit this in R-1 how many more will ask for the same thing. There is commercial here and other zoning. Opposed.

Glen Beiler, 117 Broad Street, Akron PA mentioned he has grandchildren that live in Akron and will be attending schools. Beiler also mentioned adding another tax exempt property is an issue. Safety on the Rail Trail is an issue and there is a stigma of drug and alcohol rehabs.

Helen Peiffer, 1222 Main Street, Akron mentioned she was a previous director of Diamond Street Daycare and came here to get information not give an opinion.

Lashley, 911 Eshelman Drive Akron mentioned there is a rehab on S. Tenth Street with piles of rubbish and do we want to bring another facility like that into Akron.

Scott Ruth, 928 New Street, Akron mentioned the tax base in Akron and we will have to pay more. Payment in lieu of taxes does not work. Scott also mentioned that fear is given to us for a reason and it helps guide us to be careful. Opposed.

Dennis Eckert, 58 Third Street, Akron mentioned his main concern is security. What if they leave at night and break into your house because they need money for drugs. Eckert mentioned if anyone breaks into my house they will not be walking out. Opposed.

Tim Cable, Main Street, Akron mentioned he lives beside a B&B and different people are in and out. We are supposed to be a Christian community- are we? Makes no difference to me be an open community.

Terry Smith, 3 S. Green Acre Circle (West Earl Twp) mentioned he does not like the way the Gate House looks at West Earl residents' concerns. Residents want to know more about the Gate House facility.

Brian Kurtz, 7 East End Avenue, Akron PA is opposed to any change in the R-1 Zoning.

Don Weaver, 11 S. 12th Street, Akron PA personally not in favor of this community but would like to know how many staff live within one block of their facility. Weaver also mentioned there are plenty of properties outside Akron borough that have plenty of acreage.

Jim Amstutz, 1135 Main Street, Akron mentioned do not get locked into one individual story. Do we define someone by a mistake made by a person? Opportunity to be compassionate and give a second chance.

Greg Stief, 1228 Diamond Street, Akron asked if any parents in the school or daycare are aware of this proposed facility? Stief mentioned changing residential zoning is wrong.

Scott Althouse, Gate House Director addressed the audience and Council mentioning there was an anonymous flyer in the Shopping News which misstates a lot of what Gate House does. Althouse mentioned the Gate House has a 45 year history in Lititz. He has letters of support from Lititz Police department. Gate House is not proposing a commercial use but a residential use. Althouse also mentioned that legal counsel has legitimate concerns and Althouse lives only five blocks from the Gate House in Lititz. Althouse also mentioned that most issues can be reviewed by the Borough Planning

Commission and also added that not one violent crime has occurred from the residents of the Lititz or Mountville Gate Houses.

Althouse mentioned that we can't control every person's activity and there is admission criteria for the Gate house. Since 2014 EMS has been to Akron Borough twenty times for overdoses.

Gatehouse is a non-profit and community based program restoring individuals into the community. Clients do experience a homelike environment to integrate into the community. From a tax perspective Gate House would submit to a contractual enforceable tax and would commit to that in perpetuity.

Jodi Holland, Executive Director of Gate House mentioned it is difficult to hear negative comments. Addiction is a hideous disease and Gate House wants to change clients and teach them to give back. Gate House wants to be a solution to the drug problem and work with the community. Part of the program is after care. Gate House does not want residents to be homeless, we want them to succeed.

Mark Walmer, Attorney and Gate House Board Member mentioned watching the growth of a drug epidemic and there are not enough facilities. Walmer mentioned the Gate House is helping people, accredited, and received a \$250,000.00 grant to expand services by opening a new facility and a top notch organization.

James Frain, Crestview Drive, Akron mentioned people are people and they do make bad decisions. Don't put people at risk. Frain mentioned we do care about these people but this is not a good location for residents or clients. (applause)

Don Reese, Miller Road, Akron, mentioned would parents of Diamond Street Daycare support this. If residents would come back impaired then someone is getting them the drugs.

Betty Heydt, 602 Fulton Street, Akron asked Council to vote no.

Justin Gehman thanked everyone for their comments.

Thomas Murray stated in answer to a comment from the audience if Council would refer it to the Borough Planning Commission and Lancaster County Planning Commission the final decision is still with Akron Borough Council. Tom Murray also asked Scott Althouse what zoning districts is Gate House located in Lititz and Mountville. Althouse mentioned Lititz is in mixed and Mountville is residential.

Nathan Imhoff asked what are you going to bring to our community? Scott Althouse mentioned offering partnership to combat drug addiction, payment in lieu of taxes and develop a relationship for community events.

Thomas Murray stated the petition wants to add community transitional housing, health services- license to operate community based rehab and behavioral health services which is permitted in C1 by special exception. Scott Althouse mentioned Gate House is not medical care in a traditional sense, it is a non-hospital residential care.

Thomas Murray stated Council has three options 1) do nothing 2) reject petition 3) forward to Borough and Lancaster County Planning Commissions.

Scott Althouse thanked everyone for coming out and will open a facility whether in Akron or somewhere else and are committed to helping. Offered a tour of the Gate House facility in Lititz to anyone who is interested. Gate House will always be a friend to Akron.

Les Zimmerman, 380 Tobacco Road mentioned his farm animals don't like a lot of ruckus. Zimmerman also mentioned his property is the closest to this proposed facility and this needs to be taken into consideration.

Monica Hersh mentioned that a friend's brother is an addict and there has to be a fix to this problem. I know it's here- it's great, not just in our community; Let's look at Gate House in Lititz and Mountville and try to gather facts. We need to look at all the information before we put up a wall.

Tammy Ruth mentioned this is awesome but not willing to make zoning amendment for this.

George Wolf, Miller Road mentioned he has a 54 year old niece that has been in drug treatment and this is in everyone's life. It's a good idea but wrong location.

Thomas Murray made a motion to reject the Gate House petition to modify the R1 Zoning District to permit Community Transitional Housing which is already allowable in C-1 District by special exception. Earl Shirk seconded the motion. Earl Shirk mentioned that he has had a fairly long history working with drug rehabilitation and is very sympathetic. However, the R-1 zoning is not the right place.

Roll call

Thomas Murray- aye

Earl Shirk- aye

Justin Gehman- aye

Tammy Ruth – aye

Nathan Imhoff- aye

Monica Hersh- aye

Motion carried.

Other Business

Tom Murray made a motion to hire Keller Martin as temporary summer help beginning May 24, 2017 at \$10/hr and not to exceed 800 hours. Earl Shirk seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Kenelm L. Shirk III mentioned the Handi-Vangelism PILOT program proposal will be discussed at the next meeting.

Tom Murray made a motion to approve 4 temporary banners to advertise "Akron Day in the Park" approximately 24" x 56". Earl Shirk seconded the motion. The banners will be taken down the day after the event. Motion carried.

Earl Shirk made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Thomas Murray seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Davidson
Borough Manager