STILLWATER BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
REGULAR MEETING OF NOVEMBER 7, 2013
IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OKLAHOMA OPEN MEETING LAW, THE AGENDA WAS POSTED November 4, 2013
IN THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING AT 723 SOUTH LEWIS STREET

Members Present:
Steve James
Ron Walker
Joe Merrifield
Terri Ventress
Robert Williams

Members Absent:

Staff Present:
John Dorman, City Attorney
Tom Coots, Planning Assistant
Cindy Gibson, Admin. Coordinator

Guests:
Kelly Harris
Noble Sokolowski

1. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER.**

Chair James calls the meeting to order at 5:30 PM and explains the board and its purpose. The following are sworn in at 5:32 PM:

Mr. Noble Sokoloski Mrs. Kelly Harris Mr. Tom Coots

2. **BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND CONSIDER POSSIBLE ACTION ON:**

a. Executive Townhomes, LLC, **VARIANCE (PZ.13.1784),** requesting review and granting of a variance request to Chapter 37, Section 37-130 (2) and (3) for driveway requirements on property addressed as 620 and 624 S. Ramsey Street, in the RMI (Residential Multi-Family Intermediate) district. **Coots** Keystone

Tom Coots, Planner 1 presents staff's report and findings.

Chair James asks if there are questions for staff.

Mr. Williams asks what the parking requirement is; Tom responds that it is three (3) spaces per unit for residential with four or more bedrooms.

Discussion is held regarding the public parking area that is being constructed with this project, does not count toward their meeting the requirement; nine spaces being required on-site; understand that the public parking on 7th will be used by the tenants; and this area will be over-run with others in the public parking.

Chair James asked for presentation by the applicant or any person wishing to speak on behalf of the applicant.

Mrs. Kelly Harris, Keystone Engineering at 923 S. Lowry come to speak on the following:

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- Here on behalf of the applicant
- Has left area for future building but at this time, planning to build the one building with three townhome units and the nine required parking spaces
- Applicant is providing the additional public parking for the area
- The hardship is that the parking area is being held to a commercial design and there has been 2 existing driveways on Ramsey that have been functioning for decades and are maintaining the 50 foot driveway separation between the 2 driveways on the property as well as widening the separation on the north.
- The conditions are peculiar to this piece of property because commercial drives and parking is typically on collector streets or more traveled roadways. The separation distances are important on those heavily traffic roads. This being a local street, we believe this is peculiar as it is being designed to commercial standards. Believe the separation requirements does not match the area.
- Relief, if granted and being in agreement with staff on this one, is that Ramsey is a local street and more driveways are intended for commercial areas
- The minimum necessary is a reduction down from the 160 foot frontage to the 120 for the number of driveways and the reduction down from 65 foot spacing in between to the 33 foot for the north drive
- Asks if there are any questions

Mr. Williams asks how deep the parking lot is; Mrs. Harris responds that the spaces are 18 feet deep. Mrs. Harris explains that the design of the parking is of residential in nature in that the pull in and out, not to be used as a circle drive but it will be tight spacing.

Mr. Walker asks if the proposed 5 parking spaces can be applied to the 2nd building when it is built; Mrs. Harris responds that yes, it can be. Mr. Walker states that they would only have to provide four more spaces in this instance.

Chair James asks if there are any more questions for Mrs. Harris; none respond. Chair James asks if there is anyone else to speak in favor of this request.

Mr. Noble Sokoloski comes to speak on the following:

- One of the managers for Executive Homes, LLC and partner is his son
- Explains about the number of his kids attending OSU and number of degrees they all hold
- His son, Taylor, came to him and explained that he had an idea of how they can improve housing for the students
- First project is over on Pine Street
- Had purchased a home for Taylor to live in rather than to pay high housing rates on campus
- Worked with Mr. Gary Clark on the Westwood overlay issue
- Design for upscale townhomes in this area
- Believe this is some of the finest student housing in town
- Want to get as many of these students parking on property and off the street as they can
- Not trying to sneak anything in; have enough parking on the alleyway to meet the minimum for the second building if its built
- Donating the public parking that will be constructed on the south
- Asking for it because believe it makes for a safer neighborhood and a better project for them to market

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- If the board desires to make a condition that the 5 off site spaces cannot count towards requirement for the second building when constructed, then that is fine.
- Believe it's a great project.
- Believe that Mrs. Harris done a great job in notating that they are not asking for any more driveways than where there and to not have them backing out onto Ramsey
- Glad to answer any questions.

Mr. Williams asked why six bedrooms per unit; Mr. Sokoloski responds that they believe this to be the most common sense point for economic balancing for students to be able to share utility and living expenses. Mr. Sokoloski states that the Greek housing has changed from having members there from 4 years down to 2 years; however, many of them will group up and live together so it is easy to find 5 people from the fraternity or sorority that they can get along with and live together. Mr. Sokoloski states that this is how they came up with the number of bedrooms in these units.

Chair James asks if there is anyone else that wishes to speak in favor of this variance request; none respond. Chair James asks if there is anyone that wishes to speak in opposition of this variance request; none respond. Chair James asks for board discussion.

Mr. Williams comments that there has been two driveways there but there were two houses, not so many number of units; been many townhomes developed in that area but believes that its trying to put too much stuff on the lot; good looking units; by the letter of the code, it isn't a hardship; not peculiar to this area because there are many of them already developed; does agree it's a residential street with low traffic but going to put 18 people in this area where there were just two houses.

Mr. Walker comments that he has heard from both staff and developer that this requirement was intended for commercial area where there is more traffic.

Chair James asked Mrs. Harris to return to the podium. Chair James asks for her interpretation of the hardship, one more time.

Mrs. Harris responds that the hardship is commercial design is more geared toward the collector street and the higher traffic streets; and with those streets, you do want the driveways separated more so that you have people turning and traveling more safely; and then with the local street, there isn't much traffic at all so they don't believe it will be an endangerment to anyone traveling along that road; and so being geared more towards the commercial design versus the residential driveway design is what they are seeking.

Mr. Williams asks if Mrs. Harris believes this design to be residential; Mrs. Harris responds that with the design and how many units are on there, no but the driveways are.

Board discussion is held about having observed the area for approximately 30 minutes and there not being much traffic on Ramsey at all; making a stipulation not to allow the five new spaces to be counted towards the second building in the future; conferring with the City Attorney about stipulations and hardships; the redevelopment of single family homes to make way for constructing apartments and the projects were designed for building and driveway to commercial standards; and the first driveway having taken up the allowance for residential so that is why they are seeking commercial design allows for the driveway.

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Mr. Williams expresses the support of re-development but is concerned about over-crowding in the area.

Board discussion is held regarding how this area has developed from gravel roads, to single family homes and now more directed to a higher density but parking is still of concern, especially for off-street parking.

Chair James states that he doesn't have an issue with their request as he felt they designed it to where they were accommodating their residents, City's code, buildings to code but believes they are meeting everyone's needs as best they can and is in support of their request.

Chair James asks if anyone would like to make a motion.

Chair James moved, Mr. Merrifield seconded to grant the variance request to the number of driveways to grant two driveways on Ramsey Street and the spacing taken down to 33 feet as having met the hardship by applying the commercial rules where this is more of a residential type property and they are exceeding the commercial rules as far as parking spaces on there; the conditions are peculiar to piece of property because it is a local road rather than a collector road; staff has approved and agreed that they met #3 as the relief, if granted, will not cause substantial detriment to the public good; believes this is the minimum necessary to alleviate the un-necessary hardship; and also as a stipulation to the approval to this, the additional five spaces that they would receive could not be counted towards any other developments and parking requirements on the property.

Roll Call:	**James**	**Walker**	**Merrifield**	**Ventress**	**Williams**
	Yes	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**No**

Time: 44 Minutes

3. **APPROVAL OF MEETING SUMMARY:**

a. Regular Meeting Minutes of June 6, 2013.

Chair James asks if there are any changes and/or corrections; none respond.

Mr. Merrifield moved, Mr. Williams seconded to approve the regular meeting summary of June 6, 2013 as presented.

Roll Call:	**James**	**Walker**	**Merrifield**	**Ventress**	**Williams**
	Yes	**Abstain**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**

Time: 1 Minute

4. **MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS FROM STAFF FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION:**

a. Approval of the 2014 Board of Adjustment Meeting Schedule.

Chair James asks if there are any questions or objections for the 2014 schedule; none respond.

Mr. Marler moved, Mrs. Ventress seconded to approve the 2014 meeting schedule as presented.

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Roll Call:	James	Walker	Merrifield	Ventress	Williams
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Time: 2 Minutes

b. Next regular meeting is scheduled for January 9, 2014.

5. **ADJOURNMENT**

This regular meeting of the Board of Adjustment adjourned with all members in attendance in agreement at approximately 6:18 p.m.

Prepared by – Cindy Gibson, Admin. Coordinator

Approved by: _____
Stillwater Board of Adjustment

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