
City of Reading City Council

Conditional Use Public Hearing Thursday, January 8, 2009 Council Chambers

Conversion of 439 S 9th to a 3 Unit Rental

Vaughn D. Spencer, President of Council, called the hearing to order at 5 p.m.

Purpose

Council President Spencer announced that the purpose of the Conditional Use Hearing is to evaluate whether the proposed conversion is appropriate for a particular a property and neighborhood. He stated that City Council and staff will evaluate such items as building placement, size, characteristic of use, traffic generations, noise, hours of operation, adequacy of parking, circulation, proposed merchandise, landscaping, and overall compatibility of the use with adjoining properties and other related development impacts. He stated that Council may impose conditions to ensure compatibility with the neighboring businesses and residences.

Attendance

Council President Spencer
Councilor Fuhs
Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz
Councilor Sterner
Councilor Baez
Councilor Waltman
City Clerk Linda Kelleher
City Solicitor C. Younger
City Planner A. Miller

Council President Spencer asked City Solicitor Younger to conduct the hearing.

City Solicitor Younger issued the oath to Irina Lapa owner and her husband Mr. Lapa.

Testimony from Applicant

Irina Lapa owner, is seeking to convert the two unit rental property to a three unit rental property. Irina Lapa, owner of 439 South 9th Street, stated she purchased the property in July 2006 as a two unit rental property. She stated that she converted the property to a three unit building.

City Solicitor Younger questioned what improvements Ms. Lapa made to the building. Ms. Lapa stated that electric, mechanicals, everything was changed.

City Solicitor Younger asked Ms. Lapa where she resides. Ms. Lapa stated that she currently resides in New York City.

City Solicitor Younger asked Ms. Lapa how many rental units the building had when she purchased the property. Ms. Lapa stated that the building contained two units when she purchased the property and she added a third unit after purchase.

City Solicitor Younger inquired what Ms. Lapa will do with the third unit if the Conditional Use Application is denied. Ms. Lapa replied that she will only rent two of the units and leave the third unit vacant.

Council President Spencer inquired if building permits were obtained before Ms. Lapa made the improvements. Ms. Lapa replied affirmatively.

Council President Spencer inquired about the square footage of each rental unit. Ms. Lapa stated that information is included in the application pack.

Councilor Fuhs and Goodman-Hinnershitz inquired how many bedrooms each unit contains. Ms. Lapa replied that each unit contains one bedroom.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz inquired if Ms. Lapa obtained a permit before installing the deck. Ms. Lapa replied affirmatively.

Councilor Waltman inquired if Ms. Lapa owns any other rental properties in Reading. Ms. Lapa stated that she owns two additional single family properties on Cotton Street.

Councilor Waltman inquired how many bedrooms are contained in the new unit. Ms. Lapa replied that the new unit is an efficiency type unit and contains a sleeping area.

City Solicitor Younger entered the agenda packet as Exhibit 1.

Councilor Sterner asked Ms. Lapa to describe the building at the time of purchase. Ms. Lapa stated that originally the building contained two rental units and a store front. The store front was converted to an efficiency unit.

Councilor Sterner inquired if Ms. Lapa has obtained one and half parking spaces per unit as required by the City Zoning Ordinance. Mr. and Ms. Lapa replied that only on street parking is provided for tenants.

Testimony form City Staff

City Planner A. Miller stated that the City Planning Commission will be reviewing the application at their meeting on January 13th and will be issuing their comments immediately there after.

Public Comment

City Solicitor Younger issued the oath to Robert McFehl.

Mr. McFehl stated that the property is in good condition and is an asset to the neighborhood. He expressed the belief that Ms. Lapa has made positive improvements to the condition of the building. He stated that as the owners are out of towners they are not aware of the proper processes to follow regarding zoning permits prior to conversion. He stated that the building dimensions are approximately 15 feet wide by 30 depth. The upper units contain two small rental units and first floor efficiency. He stated that the owners learned of the need for conversion permits after the work was completed.

City Solicitor Younger submitted the property plans as Exhibit 2,

Expected Date of Decision

Council President Spencer announced that City Council will be issuing a decision on the Conditional Use Conversion Application within the required 45 day period.

Respectfully submitted by City Clerk Linda A. Kelleher