

Memo

To: Planning Commission
From: Bryan Myrkle, Community Development Director
Date: November 9, 2018
Re: Site Plan Review – Helping Hands Food Pantry

On your agenda for the November meeting is a site plan review for the proposed Helping Hands Food Pantry located between Madison and Jefferson Streets.

You will likely remember that the Planning Commission recently approved this as a Conditional Use at that site, which is zoned R-1 Single Family Residential, due to it being a faith-based operation that could reasonably be described as a use incidental to a church. Because of that, the proposed development must be evaluated as if it were a church – the primary difference being a 15-foot setback for structures, rather than the 8- and 12- foot setbacks for residential structures.

I have reviewed the site plan and find it to be substantially in compliance with our zoning ordinance, however I do offer the following comments:

- I have only heard from one resident who received notice of the site plan review. Her concern was about the proximity of the building to the adjacent residences, suggesting that there is room on the site to locate the building further away from the homes. I spoke to the architect about ‘flipping’ the layout, so that the building would be closer to the church and the parking lot closer to the residences, because I could not see that it would make any operational difference to the food pantry. That change would also move the loading and delivery areas further away from the residences. However, the pantry did not accept that suggestion.

That said, the Planning Commission has an obligation to protect the interests of nearby residents, and you may want to discuss alternatives with the Helping Hands representative.

- While this plan makes modest use of plantings to screen the site from the neighboring residences, the Planning Commission may want to consider a higher level of screening, with additional plantings or a fence. A fence is normally required between commercial and residential districts in Charlotte. Because this site is zoned residential, a fence is not technically required; however it is within the authority of the Planning Commission to insist on a fence.

- Parking shown on this site plan is adequate in design and number of spaces, however the evergreens shown in the landscaping island in the lot should be replaced with a canopy tree to better meet the requirements of our ordinance.
- Because this site is zoned R-1, there is no requirement for a dedicated greenbelt along the roadway, however the plan reserves a good bit of the site as greenspace, well beyond what would be required for a greenbelt.
- A stormwater retention and drainage plan is shown on the site plan.
- Vehicular entrance and egress appears to be adequate.
- Exterior lighting fixtures must be downward facing to confine light to the ground areas of lawns and parking lots; shielded to reduce glare, and shall be arranged to reflect lights away from all adjacent residences.
- The sign must meet the local code requirement for monument signs in that the base must be at least 50% of the width of the sign, i.e. it cannot be simply mounted on poles. The design is not clear on this drawing.

I have included the standard Planning Commission resolution for site plan approval, however that may need to be adjusted, depending on the discussion and determinations of the Commission.