



**MINUTES REGULAR MEETING
REYNOLDSBURG PLANNING & ZONING BOARD
July 18, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Ward, Furst, Barnhart, Benner, Kleckley, Brusk

ABSENT: Alabi

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Planning & Zoning Board - Regular Meeting - 6/6/2024

Minutes Stand Approved

Planning & Zoning Board - Regular Meeting - 6/20/2024

Minutes Stand Approved

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Agenda Stands Approved

SWEARING IN OF SPEAKERS

Speakers for the evening sworn in by Mr. Furst.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

App# 2024-0305; 2686 Taylor Road; Shelby Nelson of SignAffects for Bobs Discount Furniture; Variance Application

Mr. Meyer read the staff report into the record.

Mr. Lyda representing Sign Affects spoke on behalf of the application. He confirmed the "mattress" sign variance and the "loading dock" sign variance was withdrawn. Based upon the upcoming change to the code, he would like to table this application. If the zoning code changes pass, chances are they will withdraw the application.

Mr. Furst: I move that we table this application at the applicant's request until our regularly scheduled meeting on September 5th, 2024.

Ms. Barnhart: I'll second.

RESULT:	Tabled until September 5th, 2024
MOVER:	Furst
SECONDER:	Barnhart
AYES:	Barnhart, Benner, Brusk, Kleckley, Ward, Furst

App# 2024-0309; 2686 Taylor Road; Shelby Nelson of SignAffects for Bobs Discount Furniture; Variance Application

Mr. Meyer read the staff report into the record.

Mr. Lyda agreed with the staff's summary. They worked with staff to come up with a design that removed the logo because the primary purpose of the design is to direct customers.

Mr. Benner: I don't see that this needs to have a lot of discussion. We've approved signs, the precedent has been set. I move that we approve this variance for the customer pick up sign as requested.

Mr. Brusk: I second.

RESULT:	Approved
MOVER:	Benner
SECONDER:	Brusk
AYES:	Barnhart, Benner, Brusk, Kleckley, Ward, Furst

NEW BUSINESS

App# 2024-0381; 1239 Fletcher Drive; Tyra Martin of Foundation of Love for

Youth, LLC; Conditional Use Application

Mr. Meyer read the staff report into the record and showed the board pictures of the property.

Mr. Shook explained that he submitted a public records request to the Columbus Police Department regarding the current location, and they indicated they were several months behind. The Columbus City Attorney's office was able to run the report that was included in the packet. Based on what was seen on the run report and what they have seen with a similar house that previously existed on Baldwin Road, he recommended some conditions to be attached, if the conditional use was approved.

If the Board does grant the conditional use application, this office recommends strict conditions associated with such approval as follows:

1. The applicant should be limited to 1-5 unrelated persons residing in the home, which shall include a properly trained house manager who serves in loco parentis for the residents and who also resides in the home at all times to provide stability of supervision.
2. The applicant shall not have residents, other than the house manager, who have differences in ages ranging more than two (2) years maximum.
3. The applicant shall not have residents who have been adjudicated or convicted as sex offenders.
4. The applicant shall have written policies and procedures in place setting forth proper rules for residents and removal of residents who are unable to comply with these written rules. The City shall have the opportunity to review and approve any such rules, as well as the applicable discipline for violating these rules, which shall include timely removal from the home for any act of physical or sexual violence by a resident against any person, regardless whether the victim resides in the home.
5. There shall be no drugs of abuse of any kind on the premises, nor any guns or other dangerous ordinance. This property owner shall be strictly liable for this provision and any violation thereof will result in immediate revocation of the conditional use permit.

These recommendations are more or less to fill in the gaps where the state has not filled in those gaps. The state is currently considering House Bill 583 that is proposed to place additional conditions, strict rules, and regulations associated with these homes.

Mr. Meyer read the staff recommendations to the board.

a. Staff recommends denial of the proposed conditional use for a Dwelling – Group based on the following reasons:

i. The requested conditional use, based on the reasons provided by the City Attorney's memorandum, and the Project Review (#i-iii, v, and vii) of the general

standards found in Section 1109.13.D. i-iii, v, and vii, the requested conditional use does not meet the general standards of a Conditional Use. Staff is of the opinion that unique characteristics associated with the application would affect the character of the zone. That permitting a Dwelling – Group at this location would affect the use of adjacent properties, and could affect the health, safety and welfare of persons within the neighborhood. Based on these reasons, staff recommends denial of the requested Conditional Use of a Dwelling – Group.

b. If the Planning and Zoning Board does recommend approval of the Conditional Use Application for a Dwelling – Group, the following conditions are recommended by staff to be placed on the approval:

- i. That the applicant submit a site plan that shows how they meet the parking requirements set forth in Table 1105.01A, or that a parking variance is obtained for the site.
- ii. The applicant should be limited to 1-5 unrelated persons residing in the home, which shall include a properly trained house manager who serves in loco parentis for the residents and who also resides in the home at all times to provide stability of supervision.
- iii. The applicant shall not have residents, other than the house manager, who have differences in ages ranging more than two (2) years maximum.
- iv. The applicant shall not have residents who have been adjudicated or convicted as sex offenders.
- v. The applicant shall have written policies and procedures in place setting forth proper rules for residents and removal of residents who are unable to comply with these written rules. The City shall have the opportunity to review and approve any such rules, as well as the applicable discipline for violating these rules, which shall include timely removal from the home for any act of physical or sexual violence by a resident against any person, regardless of whether or not the victim resides in the home.
- vi. There shall be no drugs of abuse of any kind on the premises, nor any guns or other dangerous ordnance. This property owner shall be strictly liable for this provision and any violation thereof will result in immediate revocation of the conditional use permit.

Ms. Martin: Hello, my name is Tyra Martin and my address is 7583 Aston Court, Reynoldsburg, Ohio 43068. We were on the same page because I also pulled the police runs and in 2021, when we first opened, we actually had two police runs. The majority of those police runs were in 2022, where we had 157. Of those, 157, 90% were AWOL's. When a youth AWOL, even if they tell us, hey, we're going to the store, we'll be back. If it's not in their case plan, we have to contact the police. That's one run, they have to come out, they do to report, and when the youth returns, which 99% of the time they do, the police have to return with another run. What we did to kind of combat that is, we created a program with Columbus City Police where we just fill out the information at the top of the Columbus City Police

Department form. We fill out the information at the top, and then we fax it to them. Then we call 15 minutes later to ensure that they received it. Write the report number down. When the youth returns, we just complete the bottom half and fax that. That reduced our calls from 157 in one year to seven. The seven calls; we have never had a call for a knife, and we've never had a call for a gun. Never once. I'm not sure where that information derived. We have had calls for a mental health crisis. Where the youth is transported to Nationwide Children's Hospital. We've had a total in the four years of 11 calls for fighting, never with a weapon. We had over 200 calls of AWOL's. We've reduced those calls to seven. Not just by creating the fax document system, but also by learning and understanding how a group home works and how a group home operates. I was asked a question not too long ago from my state licensing specialist. She says, by now, because we've been open about four years, she says, by now I usually see four or five houses because the hard part is done, the policies, the procedures that's done. Why hasn't Fly House expanded? And this is my response. To open a group home for youth one must endure many sleepless nights and several years of revising policies, procedures and plans for licensing and accreditation. You must overcome many obstacles and do your due diligence. So opening another is just a matter of getting another house, rent or purchase, furnishing and securing it, and then accepting kiddos. Well, not for me. For the past three, almost four years, I have spent countless hours at the Fly House learning, growing, interacting, and genuinely discovering what our youth need to succeed. The goal was never to open multiple homes as quickly as possible. My goal has always been for the Foundation of Love for Youth to become a leading provider of life-changing resources and methods for youth and families, with a proven track record of reformed youth. Becoming one of the most trusted places for youth in our service area. I say that because I do want to read this. It was an email that I received today from my licensing specialist through the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services, who just completed her onsite visit this week. And the email stated: Tyra, I was talking to my bureau chief and supervisor yesterday in a meeting about all the good work your agency is doing with the youth you serve. They would like to do a write-up on your agency and all the things that are working well with your agency. The write-up may be used in compliance checks with other agencies meeting with new agencies, and published in our newsletter. I know we talked about the system you have created with the Columbus Police Department. Could you please send me the system you worked out with the CPD and all the family engagement tools? The visits with siblings, inviting families to events, etc. I think it is a good opportunity to demonstrate that group homes have the capacity to do good work with youth and families and get some positive recognition instead of negative. Let me know if you have any questions, Amber. Additionally, when pulling the reports, there was not one report from any of the neighbors about 850 Oak Street. All the reports came from us, and I will say that all the reports came from us, from a lack of knowledge, being new, not completely understanding our jobs, and just making sure that we were just

crossing all T's and dotting all our I's. So anything that happened, 911. We don't do that anymore because now we have put things in place, people in place. We have our psychiatric nurse practitioner, we use Nationwide Children's Services, MRSA line, and there are a lot of resources provided for us that we do not have to call the police. During the time that our youth have been at the Fly House, not one youth has been charged with any criminal act. Not one. I'm not sure where the knives and the guns, or what happened there. Or it was mixed up with someone else's group home or, I don't know, because that would have been a charge. None of our youth have ever received a charge since being at the fly house. What they received, just this past May. We had three youth graduates, one who graduated early. We had all of our youth advanced to the next grade level, and we had two who had perfect attendance.

Good evening, members of the community board. My name is Tyra Martin again, and I stand before you today passionately advocating for the establishment of a group home for foster youth in our neighborhood. This is not a plea for conditional use of the building, but a call to action for our collective responsibility towards our youth and their future, and ultimately, our future. I understand that there are fears and misconceptions about group homes and the young people who reside in them. Let me address this head on. These boys are not dangerous. They are not to be feared or shunned. There are young souls who have faced extraordinary challenges and desperately need love, guidance, opportunity and respect. And I don't know about the group home on Baldwin, and I can't speak about any other group home. But that's what we do, because that's my passion. I seek those who were born with that passion in their soul, to be a part of my staff, and give these kids the love that they deserve. Because any day, any situation, we are one experience away from anybody else's situation. As a community, we have a moral and social responsibility to care for all of our youth. Imagine if this was your grandchild, your niece, your nephew. Wouldn't you want them to have a safe place to live, grow and thrive? These boys are no different. They are someone's family and deserve the same opportunities and care we would want for our loved ones. We are one experience away from walking in anyone's shoes. And heaven forbid if something would have happened to me growing up. I would have wanted my child and Fly House because I treat them how I would want my child to be treated. Research and experience show that by supporting our youth, we see lower rates of juvenile delinquency, higher education achievements, and stronger community bonds. This is evidenced by, like I said, our recent celebration of three graduates, one early graduate, two perfect and awards, and all of our youth advancing to the next great level. By providing a stable and nurturing environment, we are helping these boys and investing in the safety and prosperity of the entire community. Foster youth need more than just a roof over their heads. They need love, guidance and respect. They need to be shown that they are valued and that their dreams are achievable. With the proper support, they can become productive contributing members of society. By denying them, we deny them their

fundamental human rights of safety, civility, and the chance to build a better future. Our youth have the same hopes and dreams as any other young person. They want to be successful. We must expand their perspectives. Help them discover their dreams. Embrace their values and support their journeys so they achieve their full potential and become their best selves. So, in closing, I urge you to look beyond the unfounded fears and stereotypes. Recognize these youth as our children, because they are part of our community and deserve the same opportunities and support we would want for our own. Let us rise to the occasion and open our hearts and neighborhoods to them. Let us show that we are a community that cares, who believes in every child's potential in the foster care system, and take seriously our responsibility to nurture and protect their future. Thank you for your time and your consideration. We are here to embrace, empower and love our youth today for a better tomorrow. Nothing more and nothing less.

Mr. Long, Tyra's husband explained how he was a truck driver and started working in the Fly House part-time. Through his time at the Fly House he realized how much mental health was being ignored. Before he was introduced to the youth, he had misconceptions about the youth that would be in these types of homes. He has since become a full-time employee and considers himself to have about 40 step-children. These kids are like his sons. He respects them, their parents, and their situations. He tries to be a gift to the youth because they are human.

Cindy Martino is a nearby resident on Bunyan Drive. Ms. Martino agrees that there needs to be support and someone to care enough to let these kids live out their dreams, but she doesn't feel that the property in question is able to provide these services. She feels as if the square footage of the home would be a violation of space. She hasn't seen any programming set and what the kids would be doing after school. Ms. Martino asked if the staff would be trained in conflict resolution, boundaries, and providing support these kids need. The applicant stated there would be group counseling and Ms. Martino once again asked about the square footage and if there was space to provide it. She would like somebody to check out the house to see if the things that are promised can actually be fulfilled. These kids deserve a good chance in life, but she doesn't feel that this home can provide everything they need. She feels these kids need one on one counseling and not group counseling.

Mary Tisdale is a resident of Fletcher Drive, and she agrees with the City Attorney's report regarding the proposed business use of this residence. She is concerned with the parking at this home as the previous resident had multiple cars on a repeated basis, creating limited access to her driveway. The adjacent corner is used for two pickups and drop-offs for Reynoldsburg City School students. This stop had 12 to 18 students and in inclement weather anywhere from 2 to 4 cars

along with other adults monitoring. The public right of way, congestion, and the safety and welfare of this number of children in the neighborhood needs to be considered. She questioned how long temporary housing would be for these children and if they would be attending different schools, what their mode of transportation would be. Ms. Tisdale asked if these foster residents were employed within Reynoldsburg, if they participate in sports, or if they volunteer within the Reynoldsburg community. She is wondering how the kids are members of the community. The frequency of police calls has her worried that the qualifications of the staff versus the needs and behaviors of the residents are not equally balanced and will put a strain on our community resources.

Ms. Rachel Shirey is a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner employed by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections. From her perspective, group homes are a necessity. Many of her patients come from disadvantaged backgrounds, abusive situations, and they have been neglected. Generally, in these situations, they tend to use illicit substances to cope. In Ohio there are 16,000 children in foster care with only 7,200 licensed foster families. Of those 16,000 children, approximately 50% are placed in the foster care system because one or more of their parents has a substance-use disorder, and approximately 35% of those children are placed in the foster care system due to abuse or neglect. Because of the enduring trauma that they experience, they do tend to have behavioral and psychological issues, and a lot of foster families are not well-equipped to deal with these issues. However, group homes have trained professionals onsite 24/7. These children have similar ages and have similar backgrounds. They are provided transportation to school and appointments and are given extracurricular activities and things beyond basic essentials they may not have gotten at home. They are provided with consistent meals and a safe and stable environment. Because of that, they're able to develop and grow psychologically and mentally into well-rounded, responsible and respectful adults, decreasing their chance of developing a substance-use disorder or committing a crime and being incarcerated. And something specifically about Fly House in Ohio. There are 28 prisons. Of those prisons, 26 house males. So a group home that is specifically for young men is an asset to the community because it fosters a safe, consistent environment. She commented that shift workers are not stable caregivers. However, she has seen where these caregivers end up being mentors and adults the kids can count on.

Mr. Scott Booker is the Father of Practitioner for Columbus Public Health as well as a residential specialist at Fly House. He addressed the concerns about the staff's training that they are all trained on My Learning Point. They go through Trauma Cares, mental health services and many other services and training to help the kids

get better. Mr. Booker judged these kids originally, just like many of the residents at the meeting. After spending time with these kids, he has realized that most of these kids are thrown into places they don't know and have to relearn a whole process and family again. These kids want hope and a chance for themselves and for their communities. When the kids arrive, they find hope in Ms. Tyra, meeting Mr. B, and other staff. He agrees that there were multiple calls to the home, but he agrees they were mainly AWOL's for kids that wanted a break, and they were back within a few minutes. He asked the board to please take in everything before making their decision.

Mr. Paul Stein is a child from the foster system and a former resident of Fly House. He was also at the New Life Group home formerly in Reynoldsburg on Baldwin Road. He compared the two group homes and how Fly House improved his daily life and can show the board that other group homes throughout the system don't care. He explained that Ms. Martin cares for the children, and she wants to put her dreamland vision in motion. Ms. Martin helped him stay in school and work. If he was late, Ms. Martin addressed him right away and guided him back on track. He worked every day while at the Fly House and had scheduled activities lined up throughout the group home to do every day.

Ms. Melissa Ross is a neighbor to the proposed group home. Ms. Ross doesn't know if this house is the best place for this opportunity right now. She expressed that the kids could have come to the neighborhood to introduce themselves and gauge the community's reaction. She agrees with the City Attorney's recommendations.

Ms. Briana Stein is a parent of Paul Stein and Aiden Stein, who were former residents of Fly House. When her son Aiden was at the Baldwin house she described it as terrible. The staff at Baldwin wouldn't talk to her, contact her, keep her in the loop, introduce themselves, or let her visit. She said they were starving her son and the other children there. She believed they were locking the children out and abusing them. The Fly House is completely different. Her son had not previously received the therapy he needed for his mental health, but Fly House did this and turned his life around. Her son Aiden was the one that graduated early this year. Both kids have great mentors from the Fly House.

Mr. Aiden Stein is a former Fly House resident who graduated early. He explained how Ms. Martin helped him get out of a residential home and into the Fly House. She took them on trips and did a lot for him while he was at the Fly House. The staff would talk to them and help them along the way. They had food, and as a team, worked through any problems. Ms. Martin pushed him to go to school and helped him get into different schools to help him graduate. He is going to pursue college next year because of Ms. Martin's guidance.

Ms. Linda Johnson is Tyra Martin's mother. Ms. Johnson talked about Tyra and how her passion to help people started very young. She told her that starting a group home would be hard, but Tyra wanted to share her love and passion with those children. Ms. Johnson went with the kids to an event and the kids had a great time in the community and being out with Ms. Martin. She asked the board to take into consideration that these are not bad kids and to give them a chance.

Ms. Betty Crafter is the homeowner of 850 Oak Street where the Fly House is located. She previously ran a foster home in the Oak Street home. When she started fostering, she took the children around the neighborhood to introduce themselves to the neighbors. These children stayed at the Oak Street home until they were 18, emancipated, or reunited with their families. The neighborhood is up and coming where some homes are becoming \$850,000. She explained that any neighborhood can accept a group home and provide a safe environment for the children. The house on Fletcher is set for one to five children, and she believes the house is suitable for those children. She talked about how Tyra and her husband continue to grow, but they are not new to this. There may be additional vehicles at the Fletcher house, but this is to get the children to the extracurricular activities they already have planned.

Mr. Paul Weaver is a current resident at Fly House. He explained how previously he was in a residential home that was a very stressful situation with fights every day and lack of support. When he was able to go into the group home, Ms. Martin was there to accept him and help him with his mental health and anxiety disorder. He will be 16 and Ms. Martin is helping him get his temps and start driver's ed. She is keeping him stable along with the rest of the youth at Fly House. Ms. Martin is the best parental figure he has ever had and hopes this application is accepted to help more young people become great.

Ms. Ricca Martin: Communities often express support for helping vulnerable populations, but may still resist the establishment of teen group homes in their neighborhoods due to a variety of complex and sometimes contradictory reasons. Here are some key factors that contribute to this discrepancy. Misconceptions and stigma. Fear of the unknown. People often fear what they do not understand. Misconceptions about mental health conditions and behaviors of troubled teens can lead to unfounded fears about safety and security. Mental health issues are still stigmatized in many societies. The stigma can lead to negative stereotypes about teens living in group homes. Such as assumptions that they are dangerous or unmanageable. Perceived impacts on property values. There is a widespread belief that the presence of a group home can decrease property values in the surrounding area. This economic concern can motivate resistance from homeowners and real estate stakeholders. NIMBY, not in my backyard attitude.

NIMBY syndrome. Many people support social services in principle, but prefer them to be located somewhere else. This is not in my backyard mentality that reflects the desire to avoid perceived inconvenience or risk. Lack of information and misinformation. Communities may lack accurate information about what a group home entails and the benefits it can bring to the residents and the neighborhood. Misinformation can fuel fear and opposition concerns about community resources or resource strain. Residents might worry that a group home will strain local resources such as schools, health care services or law enforcement, believing the community is not equipped to handle additional demands. Safety concerns. Safety and crime. There are often unfounded fears that group homes will increase crime rates or bring undesirable elements into the neighborhood. Despite evidence to the contrary. Lack of personal connection. Personal detachment. People may find it easier to express generalized support for vulnerable populations without having a personal connection to those individuals. Direct interaction and relationships often change perceptions and increase empathy. How to address these concerns? Education and awareness. Providing accurate information about the purpose and function of the group home can dispel myths and alleviate fears. Community engagement involving the community and the planning and operation of the group home can foster a sense of ownership and responsibility, reducing opposition. Success stories. Sharing positive outcomes from other community members. Our communities with group homes can illustrate the benefits and counteract negative stereotypes. Partnerships with local organizations who are collaborating with local businesses, schools and community groups can help integrate the group home into the neighborhood.

Mr. Kaleb Totten is a current resident at Fly House. He came to the meeting tonight because he doesn't feel like they are being given the same opportunities to live in a residential neighborhood and that they are being judged for their background. He wants the board to know they aren't criminals, they just weren't raised right. Ms. Martin is creating a safe place for the youth to live their lives worry-free. He is 17 years old and has been in at least two dozen homes. The Fly House is the best home he has been in. Ms. Martin gives him everything he needs and shows love for all the residents.

Mr. Orlando Wright is a current resident at Fly House. He has only been at the Fly House for two months. He wasn't expecting anything going into a group home, but since entering, his life has changed. He has been locked up and in and out of jail since he was young. Being at the Fly House helped him with everything. The first week Ms. Martin got him glasses that he didn't know he needed. He went to the dentist and finished the last four weeks of school. The other residents all treat everyone like brothers and sisters, and include everyone. He has food to eat, and he is not used to that. He wished his friends from home had these opportunities. If he had been at the Fly House earlier, he believes he would be different because he

would have been working on himself. Since being at the Fly House, he feels better.

Mr. Aaron Gordon is a current resident at Fly House. Mr. Gordon has been at Fly House since April or May and was given so many opportunities within the first day. He only had his grandmother growing up and Ms. Martin is exactly like his grandmother. Without Ms. Martin, he would feel a lot worse. He has anger issues, mental health issues, and ADHD that Ms. Martin is helping him through. He has made so many friends being in this home and these friends help him cope and hang out like family. Mr. Gordon thinks that people judge them, think that they are incapable, and don't have the right mindset, and he believes they are wrong. Mr. Gordon graduated at 17 and is working. The staff has done everything they can to support him and give positive affirmations, more than he has ever had in his life. He wants the board to give them a chance because they are not all the same.

Mr. James Shaffer is a former resident of Fly House. He was in the system his whole life and got adopted at 17. Fly House helped him graduate with a 3.5 GPA. The Fly House really cares. They offer church services and great counseling. They helped him figure out what he wanted to do with his life and made him think about helping others.

Mr. Zephaniah Bush is a current resident at Fly House. He has been there for two months and the Fly House has helped him with his anger and how to deal with it. The housemates treat him like family. Mr. Bush talked about a time when he was missing his mom and Ms. Martin called her right away to make a visit. It made him smile to know that there are people that care about his feelings and want to make sure he can see his family. He believes this home will have a positive impact on the neighborhood, and he deserves to live in a safe and calm neighborhood.

Ms. Anna Hong Sham is a Family Nurse Practitioner and a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner that has been working at the Fly House since the beginning. She firmly believes that if you want to take care of someone, you need to do it when they are young and still moldable. She has worked inpatient before and with youth that have substance-abuse disorders. The kids at the Fly House are happy and that's proof that this is a good place. She hopes they will be given a chance to allow the adolescents to stay at the Reynoldsburg location.

Ms. Zhanee Blevins is here to support Ms. Martin. Ms. Blevins had a child come to her summer camp from the Fly House. The youth from the Fly house call Ms. Martin every chance they get. This shows that they miss her, and she has a great impact on the kids. She doesn't know what the kids in Reynoldsburg look like or have gone through, but these kids should have the same opportunity. It is a group home, but they have the love and support they need. She asked the board to



please give these children an opportunity in Reynoldsburg to have a better life.

Mr. Furst invited the applicant to come back to the podium and provide additional commentary.

Ms. Martin: I did kind of want to address some of the concerns. As far as the square footage in the home. Your licensing is based on the square footage. Our licensing and accreditation bodies actually tell us how many are allowed in the home based on the square footage and the bedroom sizes and things of that nature. So with this particular home, we more than likely will not have more than four youth in the home at a time. I say that to say we lived in that home for years. We lived in that home for over a decade, myself, my husband and our four kids, and we didn't have any issues. We were not crowded. It provided the space that we needed. Group therapy is provided outside the home. I'm not exactly sure where some of the information is derived from. Group therapy is provided outside the home. One on one counseling is provided outside the home. However. Crisis de-escalation or crisis management will and can be provided inside the home. Additionally, I am a licensed independent social worker, certified clinical trauma professional, certified professional life coach, chemical dependency counselor, and I am just about finished with my dissertation for my doctorate in social work. Our staff are trained. We are a trauma informed care agency, and like Mr. Scott said, the question is never what is wrong with you? It is what has happened to you. We meet these kids where they're at, and I understand that group homes have a negative connotation. I get it, and that's why I went into this field. I've worked for the juvenile courts. I've worked as a social worker for high schools. I worked at the juvenile detention center. And those places were not places for kids. So I get it. I get the whole stereotype and not in my neighborhood. Not in my backyard. I get it, but it's not these kids who we should be afraid of. It's who they grow up to be if we do nothing now. That's who we should be afraid of. For our kids. For our grandkids. These young men have so much potential. So much potential. As far as inviting everyone out, to meet the kids, I'm glad that that was said, because, that is actually something that we want to do. Kind of like a backyard, front yard cookout where we invite everyone to meet the few kids who will be there. Also, within this home, I think someone mentioned uneven. Like having a kid that's 12 and a kid that's 18. This is part of why we have decided to expand our services. This house will have younger kiddos, not the older ones, who are housed at the Oak Street. Because like the one who said driver's ed, at certain stages and ages in their development, I can offer them certain things that I can't necessarily offer, the 12 and 13-year-olds and sometimes as a trigger, or sometimes it's just hard to explain. So it's easier, and it's going to be more structured by separating them. We also teach empathy and what he was saying, like, these are my brothers. That's what we teach in the home. I had a neighbor in the area reach out to me about this because there's been talk, and I invited her to 850 Oak Street. Come sit at the Oak Street, and you

don't even have to call me or tell me when you're coming. Just come. And that's exactly what she did. And she sat there, and she sat there for hours. And when she left she put in her application for Fletcher. She was like, I want to be a part of this. Nothing is as imagined, it's only like an experience. I can honestly say that walking into 850 Oak Street is my happy place. It used to be Easton, and Easton is still out there, but it doesn't have anything on 850 Oak Street. So, while the house is not massive. That's okay. It doesn't have to be massive. There is plenty of room. You know, the downstairs lower finished area has a nice orange couch. It is colorful. They have their gaming system. They have their tables in the back where they can do their homework. They have a table where they can sit and eat dinner together. They have a big sectional couch in the living room. We completely remodeled it. They have their TV on the wall. There's plenty of space for them. Plenty of space for them and for a staff member. And if the parking is an issue, we can always pour concrete on the side where we can add an extra car. It's not a home that can't accommodate them. It accommodated us and we did fine. It will accommodate them as well, because they're no different from my kids. I'm going to say this, we don't have a website for Fletcher, so I'm not exactly sure where some of the information is coming from. We evaluate when I tell you we cross all our T's and dot all of our I's, we evaluate everything. So, if we feel that a kiddo is not a good fit for Reynoldsburg School, they're not going to go to a Reynoldsburg school. They'll go Scioto. They'll go to a behavioral school because of the No Child Left Behind Act and because they are foster kids. They have to be provided with that through the McKinney-Vento act. And we stand on it, the schools will see us. We are in those IEP meetings. As a matter of fact, Miss Rica, actually started and completed an IEP meeting for a seventh grader. Starting an IEP meeting at that age is unheard of. But that's the above and beyond that we go through because it's not on our watch. The buck stops here. So if God places a kid with us. It's for a reason. Changed the environment, change the kid. So you have the kid they talk about. I was at Baldwin when it was this. It was that. But then I went to the Fly House, it was completely different. Change the environment, you change the kid. And I'm just going to end with this unless I have questions. The Foundation of Love for Youth opened its doors in 2021. Since then, we have made remarkable strides in positively impacting the youth in our care and changing how society thinks of and deals with youth. The success stories we have witnessed during these years are truly inspiring. I wish I could share them with you all. Our youth are always our top priority. We care for them like our own. A deep understanding of our youth and how trauma affects the way they think, act, feel and behave. Compassion for our youth and a dedication to making a meaningful impact drive our work at the Fly House. County agencies, caseworkers, families and youth can confidently affirm that Fly House stands out and embodies the essential components of transformative change. Lighthouse is committed to equipping our youth with the essential tools for success. We take this responsibility seriously. We have been praised for going above and beyond to ensure all our youth are equipped with the tools they need to

succeed. Our efforts are not always typical of a group home, but they are typical of what we should do as a community, as a parent, as their village. We're continuing to foster relationships with family members, actively working towards restoring bonds to support reunification whenever possible, and consistently exceeding expectations to the fullest extent possible. That is what we're doing for these kids. I'm just going to say one other thing. I know that we've never had a neighbor call the police on our kids, press charges, or even feel threatened or have been a victim of a crime by one of our kids. We have had plenty of neighbors wake up to their snow being shoveled. We have had plenty of kids beg me to buy them a lawnmower so they can just go around mowing people's grass. We have had plenty of kids stop and say, excuse me, ma'am, I'll get those for you and grab the groceries. Even the person I've seen, they were kind of hesitant, thinking that they were going to steal them, but no, they just walked them up to the porch. These are some of the kindest, most respectful, loving young men that I have ever met in my life. And whether it's in Reynoldsburg. Or wherever we are not going to stop loving you all. Does anyone have any questions for me?

Mr. Furst: It's clear you have a profound impact on their lives. That being said, our decision-making is bound by the conditional use factors in section 1109.15 D of our code. I take it that you've seen the city staff report, and the city attorney's memorandum? I think if the board had concerns it would be along those lines. We can perhaps address those during questions. But if the board was inclined to grant this application, would you be amenable to accepting staff's recommended conditions?

Ms. Martin said absolutely and why she doesn't take that offensive or as an insult is because she understands that everyone is trying to do their part to make it safe for everyone.

Mr. Brusk thanked her for the presentation. Mr. Brusk would like the facts behind the police reports. He confirmed the current Fly House will continue as is. Mr. Brusk also asked if the trained personnel for Reynoldsburg had already been trained. Ms. Martin explained they are in the process, but will be trained before they open the doors. Some of the staff will be shared with the Oak Street location.

Mr. Brusk asked if there was a waiting list to get into this group home. Ms. Martin explained that they are licensed through Ohio, so many kids are placed in surrounding counties, not Franklin. The caseworkers must see their kids every 30 days, so they want the kids in Fly House to reduce their driving. Many caseworkers ask to be in the Fly House due to poor living conditions elsewhere or simply the location.

Mr. Brusk asked how many buses or vehicles would be coming through per day

with school transportation and other activities. Ms. Martin said a Ford Explorer with a third row would be used. They will evaluate each child to see if Reynoldsburg could accommodate the child and that would determine what transportation would be used.

Ms. Meeks reminded the board and applicant that the Planning and Zoning Administrator intended to do a site visit six months after the conditional use is approved to verify they are compliant with the conditional use.

Ms. Ward asked if this was a foster home or if these children were placed due to discipline issues. Ms. Martin explained they are placed through county agencies.

Ms. Kleckley asked about the conditions and how the board could amend or approve them, whether as a whole or individually. Ms. Kleckley then asked the applicant what her plans were if this wasn't approved. Ms. Martin would not have it as a group home, she would make it a foster home with up to five children.

Mr. Benner asked the applicant to explain the discrepancy between the police reports. Ms. Martin is not able to explain and is especially concerned because some of the reports concerning a knife or gun would also have a corresponding hospital or arrest record, and she doesn't have any of those.

Mr. Benner confirmed with Ms. Martin that these are not juvenile delinquents, they are in the custody of Children's Services.

Mr. Benner went through some of the calls and asked Ms. Martin about them. Ms. Martin shared a story about an incident that could have been considered a sex crime with narcotics, but she was not aware of any crimes that were documented as such.

Mr. Benner pointed out that the application said between one and six kids, but her testimony said four. Ms. Martin said they would be licensed for six, but with younger kids between the ages of nine and ten it is harder to find cohesive groups, therefore four is a more manageable number. Ms. Martin explained they don't like to max out so they wouldn't go over five.

Mr. Benner asked about Ms. Martin's relationship with the Columbus Police Department. Ms. Martin explained that they have been asked to provide information about how well their group home works, based on the relationship. Mr. Shook did say that they are required by ODJFS to report all AWOL's. When the city was dealing with the previous New Life facility in Reynoldsburg they did ask Reynoldsburg to allow them to report AWOL's by fax. Mr. Shook explained that this created a challenge because these needed to be followed up on. His concern was that if something happened to a child that was reported by fax as missing, it would



then fall back on Reynoldsburg. He has more of a concern with fax reporting with the nine and ten-year-old age group. Mr. Shook would lean on the Chief for guidance on that, but he doesn't want Reynoldsburg to ever fall short an investigation on a missing child.

Ms. Martin explained it is not just a fax, but a complete process they have worked out.

Mr. Benner thanked all the speakers tonight. He wanted to point out that this is not to decide whether this is a good foster home or not. Or whether these are good or bad kids. The board is here to decide whether this applies to our code or not.

Ms. Barnhart asked if they provide respite care. They do not provide respite care. Ms. Barnhart asked if they would be contracting with all three counties Reynoldsburg has. Ms. Martin explained that they are contracted with many of the 88 Ohio counties.

Ms. Barnhart asked when they are given a referral, what they look at to consider whether that child is a fit for their home. Ms. Martin said they would go as far as interviewing the child. Ms. Barnhart wanted the board to be aware that these children come from all different agencies that are pulled from different situations. They are not delinquents, but are foster kids.

Ms. Barnhart asked what the expected payroll was for this location. Ms. Martin said it would be \$60,000 to \$70,000 monthly when you factor in benefits.

Ms. Martin owns the Fletcher house and Mr. Benner asked what she had been doing with the house since living in it. The house has been vacant for two years and since then Ms. Martin has been renovating the space to make it a group home. They confirmed it was not rented out and nobody is currently living there.

Mr. Benner confirmed this is a for-profit LLC.

Mr. Furst read the conditional use factors into the record.

Mr. Furst believes that the challenges to granting this conditional use relate to the CPD call log along with the concerns about parking and traffic. He asked if the applicant had reached out to the city in regard to adding concrete or widening the driveway. Ms. Martin did not reach out, but when she lived there she thought it was approved at that time.

Mr. Meyer explained that the parking requirements would be determined by how many staff members would be there at the same time, on the same shift. Ms. Martin said they will use the garage for parking and not storage. Mr. Meyer explained between the garage and the driveway that there would be two off-street parking spaces. The lot is fairly large and would likely accommodate additional parking, but that would be determined in the review process during the Zoning

Certificate application.

Ms. Martin explained when they lived there they had up to five vehicles and asked if they were out of compliance. Mr. Meyer explained that these are standards based on the conditional use for a group home, and not on a residential home. The conditional use has off street parking requirements, so street parking can't be considered.

Mr. Furst understands that the police logs can be mis-coded, but asked the applicant if they would be amenable to tabling the application to allow the comparison between the applicants' calls and the calls from CPD. Mr. Furst's concern is that if the same number of calls were to happen at Fletcher, this would significantly increase the calls to this area. Ms. Martin offered to address each call at the meeting. She did say the assaults were fights that did happen at the home. She denies knowing about any cutting/ stabbing incident. They have never had a person with a knife or gun. Ms. Martin explained that anything with a weapon would be a citation against her license and the facility. She does not have any weapon citations against her. She had one citation from a hospital due to constraints of a youth. A staff member did not use the proper restraints. The staff member was trained and eventually terminated.

Mr. Furst pointed out that due to the policies and procedures in place, the number of calls has decreased. Ms. Martin said they have decreased by 75.8%. Attorney Shook offered the call codes to the board and confirmed he does see a reduction in calls from 2023 to 2024.

Mr. Furst asked if the application was granted if Ms. Martin thought the number of calls would be typical for calls in a typical suburban area.

Ms. Martin wants to be transparent and can't guarantee that. Sometimes a child is placed with them that is not a good fit. One example was a child making 911 calls for turning off the TV and asking 911 to turn the TV back on. Once a child is identified as not a good fit, they aren't removed immediately. It takes time to get the child placed elsewhere, but it would be no more than 30 days. She doesn't see more than 7–10 calls a month.

Mr. Benner asked what age groups Ms. Martin was proposing for Fletcher Drive. Ms. Martin wants to continue to house 16 and 17-year-olds on Oak Street. The older kids that are working towards independent living. For Fletcher, she is looking at children aged 8–11.

Mr. Benner asked if she was willing to accept the attorney's stipulation regarding a properly trained house manager who lives or who serves in loco parentis for the residents, and who resides in the home at all times to provide stability of

supervision. Ms. Martin agrees with the 24-hour supervision, but to have someone live in the home is against ODJFS's rules and policies. Someone will be staffed there 24/7, but to have someone living there would put them out of compliance.

Ms. Martin said one to three staff members would be on location at a time. Mr. Benner asked how they determine how much staff is needed and when. ODJFS required ratio is one staff per ten children. Ms. Martin's ratio is one staff per five children. If a child is AWOL all the time, they may have to put them on a one to one so that the child has their own personal staff watching them. That is when you would have an increase in staff.

Ms. Martin said that the Fletcher house will have nine staff members, once fully staffed.

Ms. Martin explained that they now create an individualized service plan for each child. This plan tells whether the child can have a phone, can go on walks, or go to the gas station, without always being considered AWOL.

Mr. Furst asked about the conflict with a house manager and ODJFS regulations. Ms. Martin said she would double-check with her license specialist, but she doesn't believe her license would allow a live in person. Mr. Furst asked if a trained house manager accomplishes a similar intent as the in loco parentis. Mr. Shook doesn't believe that accomplishes what they are trying to do. Mr. Shook would like clarification by ODJFS. Ms. Martin is worried that a live-in mom figure would affect her insurance as well.

Mr. Furst explained that there are a couple of unresolved matters that he would like clarification in order to place his vote. He asked if the applicant would be amenable to tabling the application to a future date. Mr. Furst asked for additional documentation regarding the call log, and clarification on the regulations from ODJFS regarding a house manager living on premises. Attorney Shook explained the house manager would live there, and it would be more of a family atmosphere. Ms. Martin was trying to understand how this person would fit into a group home. Mr. Shook explained it is a parental figure that could have a job outside the home, but is typically there when the children are not in school. A stable and consistent parental figure.

Ms. Martin asked if ODJFS does not allow the live in person if the application would be denied. Mr. Furst explained it is not necessarily no, but he would like all the facts.

Ms. Martin is worried that financially she will be not able to pay a person 24 hours a day. Ms. Barnhart asked if a group home is not approved, what Ms. Martin would do with the property. A group home has trained staff that will work with the children.

If a group home can't be done, she will use this home as a foster home where it is a family raising kids without trained professionals. A foster home. She plans to rent it out to a foster family since it is already setup for this use.

Ms. Kleckley asked what safety guards and policies they have around prescription drugs.

Ms. Martin has partnered with CDI, which does blister packs for the residents. The staff is trained, and the medicine is locked in a container and the container is locked in a closet. When it is time for the medication they have logs, the staff has to fill them out, and they are distributed one by one.

Mr. Benner: I make a motion that we table this until the regularly scheduled meeting on the Planning and Zoning Board on August 15th.

Mr. Furst: I second.

RESULT:	TABLED
MOVER:	BENNER
SECONDER:	FURST
AYES:	BARNHART, BENNER, BRUSK, KLECKLEY, WARD, FURST

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

Planning and Zoning Administrator

Chairman