

ORDINANCE NO. O-1415-25

ITEM NO. 8

STAFF REPORT

GENERAL INFORMATION

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| APPLICANT | Alpha Gamma Delta Chapter |
| REQUESTED ACTION | Rezoning to RM-2, Low Density Apartment District with Special Use for a Fraternity or Sorority House |
| EXISTING ZONING | R-2, Two-Family Dwelling District |
| SURROUNDING ZONING | North: R-2, Two-Family Dwelling District East: R-2, Two-Family Dwelling District South: R-2, Two-Family Dwelling District West: R-1, Single-Family Dwelling District |
| LOCATION | 920 Chautauqua Avenue |
| SIZE | 1.05 acres, more or less |
| PURPOSE | Sorority House |
| EXISTING LAND USE | Sorority House |
| SURROUNDING LAND USE | North: Residential East: Residential South: Residential West: Residential |
| LAND USE PLAN DESIGNATION | High Density Residential |

SYNOPSIS: Alpha Gamma Delta Chapter is requesting to rezone from R-2, Two-Family Dwelling District to RM-2, Low Density Apartment District with Special Use for a Sorority. The sorority house experienced a fire in the last year and they are taking this opportunity to completely remodel the interior, build an addition, and reconfigure the parking lot. The addition will consist of a 1,700 square foot chapter room and a 270 square foot storage area. Currently, the parking spaces do not meet the requirement of one space per accommodation; there are currently 62 parking spaces. The expanded parking lot will contain 72 spaces; there are approximately 70 beds and one house mother so the parking expansion will meet the required parking.

This block was initially zoned R-2, Two-Family Dwelling District, when the City of Norman first adopted the Zoning Ordinance in 1954. The sorority is requesting to expand, therefore rezoning with the Special Use is required to bring the sorority house into zoning conformance.

ANALYSIS: The Upsilon Chapter of Alpha Gamma Delta was established in 1919 at the University of Oklahoma. The sorority has been at this location for over a half of century. Alpha Gamma Delta originally occupied 930 Chautauqua and requested to expand the building in 1968. Another sorority occupied the residence directly north at 920 Chautauqua, the intent was to first expand the residence at 930 Chautauqua then demolish the residence at 920 Chautauqua to expand and accommodate parking. Since then Alpha Gamma Delta has occupied 930 Chautauqua; the structure was built at 930 Chautauqua and 920 Chautauqua is now a parking lot.

This block was initially zoned R-2, Two-Family Dwelling District when the City of Norman first adopted the Zoning Ordinance on July 13, 1954. On February 8, 1968 the Alpha Gamma Delta Chairman requested to rezone from R-2, Two-Family Dwelling District, to R-2 with Permissive Use for a sorority. Ordinance No. 2034 passed City Council on February 27, 1968 and the Permissive Use for the sorority was granted.

Then on June 27, 1996 City Council held a Study Session regarding concern for rooming and boarding houses in residential neighborhoods. An ordinance was drafted that requires all rooming and boarding houses, including fraternities and sororities, to obtain Special Use only in multi-family dwelling districts. Since the adoption of Ordinance No. O-9697-6 all quasi-unit quarters, which include sororities and fraternities, must acquire Special Use. This Special Use can be obtained only in the RM-2, Low Density Apartment Dwelling and R-3, Multi-Family Dwelling District, and in RM-6, Medium Density Apartment District.

Staff recommends rezoning to RM-2, Low Density Apartment District with Special Use which is the most compatible and lowest zoning that will allow a sorority. The surrounding neighborhood has long been established as one of the first university neighborhoods because of the close proximity to campus, which is two blocks away. This neighborhood grew around the University of Oklahoma and has evolved into various residential styles to accommodate student life as well as family life; sororities, fraternities, single-family homes and two-family dwellings have co-existed in this neighborhood for over a half-century.

ALTERNATIVES/ISSUES:

- **IMPACTS:** The sorority is expanding parking to accommodate the number of beds, which will reduce the amount of on street parking in the neighborhood. In fact, the parking lot expansion will allow two on-street parallel parking spaces on the west side of Chautauqua directly in front of the sorority to be eliminated. Because the sorority has long been established in the neighborhood staff does not believe the rezoning and Special Use will negatively impact the surrounding neighborhood.

OTHER AGENCY COMMENTS:

- **PARK BOARD:** Park land dedication is not required for this project.
- **PUBLIC WORKS:** The parcels are platted as part of Parsons Addition lots 31-40, and all public infrastructure is in place.

- **PREDEVELOPMENT: PD14-34 held on November 20, 2014**

There were no neighbors in attendance for the Predevelopment meeting.

- **BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT:** The Board of Adjustment will hear a request for a Variance for this application on December 10, 2014. The variance application is to the five-foot landscape strip on the north side of the property and increased lot coverage. Staff will update the Planning Commission after the Board of Adjustment decision during the December 11, 2014 Planning Commission Meeting.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recognizes that the sorority has been part of the OU campus for almost 100 years and that this location has been the home to the sorority for at least a half century. Staff recommends approval of Ordinance No. O-1415-25.