

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION DRAFT MINUTES OCTOBER 3, 2016

PUBLIC HEARING AGENDA Item #12 – SU161001 - Specific Use Permit - Ron Wright and Associates (City Council District 5). Senior Planner Charles Lee presented the case report and gave a Power Point presentation for approval for a Specific Use Permit to operate a Bail Bond use in a existing office lease space located at 2502 E. Main Street. The property is within a 6,480 square foot office building on one lot generally located at the northeast corner of E. Main Street and N.E. 25th Street, more specifically 2502 E. Main Street. The property is currently zoned Planned Development (PD-237) District, generally allows for Heavy & Light Industrial uses. The property is within the Central Business District Corridor (CBD), Section No. 4. The applicant is Ronald Wright and the owner is Howard Perry, Perry & Associates Inc.

Mr. Lee stated according to Ron Wright, the applicant, he has been doing business at various locations since 1972 under the business name Ron Wright and Associates and Ron Wright Bail Bonds. Mr. Wright is now seeking to set up a new office here in Grand Prairie. The applicant intends to conduct various professional legal-related services from the new office. According to the applicant's Operational Plan, the 372-sq. ft. office space will be used for court reporting, process service, private investigations, claims adjusting and bail bonds. Our society's criminal justice system provides for those accused of crime and arrested the opportunity to post a surety bond, subject to a judge setting said surety, and allowing for release of the accused from the custody of a jurisdiction. The bond is intended to assure the accused returns to said court on date set by the court or forfeiture of that bond shall occur if the accused fails to appear. Bail Bonding companies provides that surety & risk to those accused who are unable to raise bond set by the judge in providing a bail for accused release for a fee. Current processes and procedures allow for many elements of the bail bonding business be done electronically, often utilizing credit cards and other forms of digital currency. In Texas, and more specifically Dallas County, to operate a bail bonding business you must be licensed by the State and must further comply with the minimum eligibility criteria: including experience, financial requirements and other minimum standards adopted by the local county's board (Dallas County Bail Bond Board) and sheriff departments.

Mr. Lee stated the property may be accessed via two driveways located on E. Jefferson. The parking lot is paved and striped for passenger vehicle parking. The property has adequate parking to accommodate the proposed use. As this is an existing building and developed property, no building or site changes are proposed. According to the applicant the business currently has five employees, but he is hopeful that the number of employees will grow. Hours of operation are from 8:30 AM to 5:30 PM Monday through Friday. While the business continues to operate after hours and on weekends most of the work is done off site.

Mr. Lee stated the Central Business District No. 4 is intended to accommodate many of the city's industrial automotive uses. It is also the southwest regional center for auto salvage activities of major insurance companies. While this area permits a number of industrial related uses within its boundaries, CBD 4 also prohibits a range of land uses; including among other uses: drug/alcoholic rehabilitation centers and pawn shops. These uses have been deemed inappropriate and incompatible with the goals of the Central Business District, especially along our major corridors, which have been established to enhance and facilitate improvements and

redevelopment of Main Street and Jefferson Street. Staff suggests that the proposed Bail Bond business falls into this same category. According to the Grand Prairie Police Department, the proposed bail bond facility, which will service greater Dallas County, will inevitably bring people accused of crimes into our community that may not have otherwise come to Grand Prairie. Currently, there is an existing bail bonds business located at 1601 W. Jefferson Street (Metroplex Bail Bonds) that has been serving the area since the Mid-1980s. Allowing for an additional bail bonds business in the Central Business District is inconsistent with attracting the anticipated land uses for the entire Central Business District corridor. Furthermore, 2505 E. Main, the prospective site serves as a key entry-point into the city from the east and therefore could pose adverse perception of Grand Prairie's desired goals.

Mr. Lee noted while staff finds many of the elements of the existing site as appropriate for the proposed use, such as: 1) being located in an industrial zoning district; 2) being surrounding by land zoned for Light Industrial (LI) District uses; 3) being surrounded by existing land uses that are primarily Auto Related Businesses, trucking businesses, and other industrial related uses; and 4) that fact that there are no residential zoning or residential uses in close proximity to this property, staff suggests that this use should not be located along either of the Central Business District's two major corridors as the use is likely to pose an adverse effect to the desired goals of the City. It may also limit the interest of property owners that would like to invest and/or redevelop their property in the Central Business District due to the negative perception that these types of business often generate. Staff is therefore not supportive of this request based on inconsistency with the City's adopted plans. The Development Review Committee recommends denial of this request.

Commissioner Spare stated the applicant would only be leasing a portion of the building as office space, but the use requires a Specific Use Permit, does the building current have a sign on the building and would they be allowed to advertise as a bails bonds use. Mr. Spare asked staff to address the law enforcements comments.

Mr. Lee replied the applicant would only be leasing an office space within the building, he intends to conduct various professional legal-related services from the new office. There is currently a sign on the building, but the applicant would not be advertising as a bail bonds office. Mr. Lee stated there is currently an existing bail bonds business located at 1601 W. Jefferson Street, and an additional bail bonds business in the Central Business District is inconsistent with attracting the anticipated land uses for the entire Central Business District corridor.

Chairperson Motley noted there were no questions for staff, opened the public hearing, and asked for speakers.

Shannon McGauley was present in support of this request.

Ron Wright with Ron Wright and Associates, 1047 Peregrine Place, Kennedale, TX was present representing the case and to respond to questions from the Commission. Mr. Wright stated he intends to conduct various professional legal-related services from the new office, he conducts court reporting, process service, private investigations, claims adjusting and bail bonds.

Attorney Steve Bell, 9400 N. Central Expressway, Dallas, TX representing Mr. Wright said they understands the Police Departments concerns, but they do have a clear understanding as to why they are opposed to this use. Mr. Wright's office would not be a place people would come to hang around, and the sign would not be advertising Bails Bonds. Mr. Wright runs a good solid clean business.

Commissioner Lopez asked on average how many bail bond cases doe they see, and would they be adding any window or yard signs on the premises.

Mr. Wright stated they would probably start off with one to two cases in several months, and no they would not have any additional signs on site.

There being no further discussion on the case, Commissioner Moser moved to close the public hearing and approve case SU161001 as requested by the applicant, and that no sign advertisement of a bail bonds office be permitted on site. The action and vote being recorded as follows:

Motion: Moser

Second: Lopez

Ayes: Johnson, Lopez, Moser, Motley, Smith, Spare, and Womack

Nays: None

Approved: 7-0

Motion: **carried.**