

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
VILLAGE OF PHILO
PROPOSED GROUP HOME
SEPTEMBER 4, 2013

The meeting was called to order by Trustee John Mumma, in the Thelma Melohn Gymnasium at the R.E. Franks Meeting Center at 7:00 p.m. Present at this meeting are Trustees Steve Messman, Pat Pioletti, Rachael Garrett and Paul Brady. Trustee Steve Sappenfield is absent. Also present are the Village Attorney, Paul Hendren, Village Engineer Dave Atchley and Village Clerk, Judy Kirby. Trustee Mumma explained that he was asked to be President Pro Tem for President Larry Franks who is absent tonight due to a family medical issue. Trustee Mumma read a brief statement about this special meeting and then introduced the guests from the Alan G. Ryles Company, Sherry Newton, Jeremy Rieman and James Wachtel. He asked the Village officials and guests present tonight to listen to the A. G. Ryle Companies representatives' presentation and not interrupt until they were finished. Trustee Mumma stated there would be a question and answer session afterward and that he expected the audience to be considerate and not become unruly. He would not hesitate to ask someone to leave, should that happen. It was noted that tonight's meeting is being voice recorded. John then introduced Sherry Newton and gave her the floor.

Ms. Newton explained that the goal for the residents is to be independent. They deal with both physical and emotional disabilities. Residents learn simple tasks such as how to bathe, catch a bus to strive to be independent. They go to work or school or to a day program. The staff responds to help them do as much as they can or do for them. Sherry stated Illinois is one of the last states to fund people in homes. She stated group homes are cost effective, are overseen by the Department of Developmental Services and provide a safe and happy environment.

Dirk Rice asked "Why (move residents to) Philo, from Tolono?" Sherry responded that the facility in Tolono is a 16 bed home that is downsizing. She said logistically it is close to the medical director that is here in Philo and added that the four-bedroom home can easily be converted to their needs.

Gary Franks asked why they did not approach the Board prior to the sale. Ms. Newton asked, "Did you have to ask (before you purchased your home)?" Gary was concerned about setting a standard, not fair to either business or residents. Sherry said if they would have just moved in quietly, no one would know (that it was a group home).

Crystal Vecchio asked how the Tolono home was zoned. Sherry was not sure about the Tolono home leased by the Ryle Companies. She stated there are over 30 in the State of Illinois.

Other questions asked were what organizations set guidelines and who funds the group homes. Sherry indicated the Department of Human Services and several other bureaus set the guidelines and the homes are funded by the Department of Public Aid and the State of Illinois/Medicaid.

Ms. Vecchio inquired about the listed purpose on the purchase/loan. Was it non-owner occupied residence or family home?

Dirk Rice wanted to know the number of people to live there. Sherry indicated eight (8) plus staff, mostly 2 or more.

Dan Conley commented that if they are bused to Champaign every day, it makes more sense to save gas and have the home in Champaign.

Gary Gaither also wondered why Philo, since we don't have handicap curves, sidewalks, no grocery store, and the like to teach life skills. Sherry commented that some of the residents are from small towns, they like low key and like small town living just as Philo residents do.

Dave Laker said this could be a problem to have a licensed corporation, a business with 8 to 10 people in a non-conforming neighborhood. Sherry indicated this is a business, for profit and Lynn and Al Ryles are passionate people. She stated this would be the only house in Philo, no more, no others.

Karl Harris commented that this home is located near 12' corn, a septic that doesn't work and at an intersection where the stop sign gets run all the time.

Cassidy Causey said she had an uncle that lived in a group home in Robinson. She doesn't feel the group home will impact Philo, actually safer to live near a group home and property values will not be affected.

When asked, Sherry indicated she can't say who will live in the home, but they would be ages 18 to 101.

Other concerns voiced were that of parking and number of fire or medical calls. Gary Gaither wanted the representatives to know that if a 911 call is placed that the Philo Fire Department's first responders do not take "call offs" and the expenses of an ambulance would be their responsibility.

In regard to the lack of sidewalks near this residence, Dirk Rice asked if the Village could be forced to construct them. Sherry indicated "no." When asked if the residents go out around town, she said "yes, but never alone."

Mr. Curry stated his son was at the Robinson and Monticello facilities and said he did chores such as mowing and working in a pizza parlor. He noted they have five steps from low supervision to different home. They teach skills and monitor and tailor services to needs and residents use the money earned for home needs and vacations. The goal is for people with disabilities to live in a home within a community.

Attorney Paul Hendren commented that we are aware of some of these issues. Village has retained a lawyer to assess what discretion or authorization we have and advice will be given to the Board in due course. The Ryles Company has council, too. From the information and responses to the questions, the Village will decide what decisions they need to make.

Paul stated if the public was done with their questions, he would like to present his questions to the Ryles representatives.

Explain type or formal diagnosis of resident

Intellectual or developmental disability (old term, mental retardation)

Epilepsy, wheel chair or walker, seizures

Intellectually learn slower

Fourth grade to 8th/9th grade level

Halfway House for drug abuse or alcohol

No, there are different funding streams and different regulations for that type of home

Type of services

If we (anyone) do it, they teach/support it. All daily living skills

Ultimate goal

Five Steps

Timetable to modify home

60 to 90 days

Additional structural issues

No

Is there more staff at different times?

No

Resident Dave Laker asked if they can be forced to take “early out prisoners” Ryle Companies responded that their residents cannot be dangerous to themselves or others. Mr. Laker stated he had an 18 year old in this type of facility and the overall experience was positive, can’t say good, but it is up to the staff.

Mr. Hendren asked about the residents’ daily activity. They are bused to the Development Service Center.

Trustee Brady said the minister at the Presbyterian Church, Cindy Shepherd asked “What can the citizens of Philo do to welcome (the group home)?” Trustee Brady asked if they have contacted other local churches. Sherry said “no, not yet.” Trustee Brady said you have to ask, come to them for questions or concerns; they want to be a good neighbor. Trustee Brady added another major concern is fire, stating that these facilities have about 1400 fires per year. The Ryles representative stated they practice panic situations, one per shift per month and they can evacuate under 3 minutes. She also indicated they may do a sprinkler system. The company was also reminded that Philo does not have a sanitary sewer system and they should be aware and possibly contact Champaign County Public Health to save time and trouble. Trustee Brady also voiced concern about Roosevelt Road traffic and possibility of lawsuits. It was noted they would have more liability than a normal family.

Trustee Pioletti said the first response to understand the fear that people have, is really more an issue with site selection and questions about special use permit. He feels we are literally miles apart, my understanding isn’t fear, but that attitude the ordinance doesn’t mean anything (to them), that we think we understand. He also has concerns of taking care of the outside of the house. They responded that they plan to do some landscaping, mow, fix fences, etc. to be proud of the home and keep it well maintained.

PRESIDENT PRO TEMP: Trustee Mumma closed the meeting stating nobody on the Board or public is against the service that is provided to people with disabilities. The concern is with a business or corporation being in an R-1 residential area. He indicated this issue will be further discussed. Trustee Mumma also stated there were good questions asked and he thanked everyone for coming out tonight.

VILLAGE CLERK

PRESIDENT PRO TEM