

There being no further questions for staff, Chairman McCall asked if anyone would like to speak on behalf of the application. Mr. Lawton White, 318 Eager Road, spoke on behalf of the application. Mr. White said when he bought the property, there were people living there. Mr. White stated he was not looking to rezone or to add on to the duplex. Mrs. Quarterman asked if Mr. White was OK with the conditions of no more than 2 people in each duplex unit. Mr. White stated that if he had three people in each unit, that could work, but he is not trying to make a big ordeal of the issue, and he was trying to play by the rules. Vice-Chairman Strickland asked if he intended to rent it to VSU students. Mr. White stated that he wanted to rent the duplex units to good renters, and currently, he is renting to a group, and he is trying to recoup some of the money he spent on the property. Mr. Holt stated that staff had recommended approval with two conditions, and asked if Mr. White was OK with the conditions. Mr. White stated he was OK with both conditions.

Chairman McCall asked if anyone else would like to speak to the Board in support of the application. No one spoke. Chairman McCall asked if anyone would like to speak in opposition to the request. Ms. Deb Cox, 318 Crestview Drive, spoke in opposition. Ms. Cox expressed concern about rental of the property to a group, and asked if the property was being leased to a halfway house for felons. Mr. White stated it was a group, but was not for felons. Mr. White stated he rented some properties to Greenleaf for folks who were attending Alcoholics Anonymous, and while this was not one of those properties, two people who are licensed for such treatment wanted to rent a property for similar type folks. Chairman McCall asked if he rented it to a group, would he let them manage it? Mr. White stated he would be involved in managing the property, and that the group would be monitoring the people who lived on the property as well. Ms. Cox stated that she had studies that showed that 83 percent of felons recidivate, and that there were statistics that there were property crimes and drug crimes affiliated with felons, and that she hoped there were no sex offenders living in the house, and that there are often mental health concerns with offenders. Ms. Cox expressed concerns with the monitoring of halfway houses. Ms. Cox stated that their neighborhood is a family neighborhood with a low crime rate, and that she owns her house, but would not hesitate to move if crime becomes a problem. Mr. Brantley asked if staff's recommendation of no more than two per duplex unit would alleviate her concerns. Ms. Cox stated that statistics show that 3.5 of those 4 people are going to reoffend, and it does not alleviate her concerns, and she would rather have VSU students living there. Mrs. Quarterman stated that ZBOA's concern was land use, not who lives in them. Mrs. Quarterman stated that if it had not become nonconforming, it would not be on the agenda. Mrs. Quarterman asked if there was a condition placed on the approval, if the Board decided to approve, that stated no halfway houses were to occupy the property, would that alleviate any concerns? Ms. Cox stated it would not, that the duplex still lowers property values. Ms. Cox stated they had more property owners moving in rather than renters, and she was happy with that.

Chairman McCall asked if anyone else would like to speak in opposition to the application. Anthony Rowe, 317 Crestview Drive, spoke in opposition. Mr. Rowe stated he would like to see fewer renters in the neighborhood. Mr. Rowe expressed concern about the size of the house, and the duplex, and the number of people living on the property. Mr. Rowe expressed concern about whether any permits had been pulled. Mr. White stated he had pulled permits. Mr. Rowe stated he was glad permits had been pulled, but he was concerned about the number of people on the property. Mr. Rowe expressed concerns about people from this property walking through his property to shop nearby, if they did not have cars.

Chairman McCall asked if anyone else would like to speak in opposition. Elena Edgeworth, 2805 Northfield Drive, bought her house nearby and has two minor children. She is concerned about a halfway house there. She lived in a bad neighborhood previously, and her car was broken into. She stated she preferred a residential use, but she was concerned about a halfway house.

Chairman McCall asked if anyone else would like to speak in opposition. Jonathan O'Connor, 316 Simpson Road, stated that he was concerned about halfway houses. Mr. O'Connor stated he had two