

Planners discuss town code changes

Transitional housing proposal prompts need for modifications

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ELKTON – Modifications to the town code for transitional housing were proposed last week by the town's Planning Commission.

The modifications need to be approved by council after a public hearing that likely will take place in January.

Pham Chopra's recent flurry of property purchases in Elkton has prompted the changes, as he plans to open transitional housing for drug and alcohol addicts

and victims of post-traumatic stress disorder.

The proposals include modifying the definition of a "dwelling" in Chapter 110,

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Section 302 of the town code, which pertains to land development, to add four things that would not be considered a dwelling. These include: transitional housing/living center, home for adults, group home and nursing home.

Additional changes include defining "living/sleeping quarters" and "transi-

tional housing/living center."

The commission-approved definition of "transitional housing/living center" is as follows: "Refers to any type of housing or living situation that is transitional. The primary purpose or mission of transitional housing or living environments is to help the resident become a productive member of society. Transitional housing or living facilities often offer low cost housing and are designed to be temporary. Transitional housing or living may or may not have

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including the Elkton Theater on Old Spotswood Trail.

Plans may include opening a bed and breakfast in town

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other common threads among residents. Transitional housing or living provides professional support, education, and a stable living environment. Common types of transitional living include transitioning from jail or prison, an addiction treatment center, a mental health facility, military service, abusive home situations and homelessness."

The commission also approved a requirement that any transitional housing/living center provide the following: a defined mission statement, professional support on premises to assist with transition, defined period of stay, defined admission policy, defined conditions of residence that are aligned with the principle of transitioning back to productive society, and a defined policy adherence enforcement protocol.

Other uses of the same general character as those listed above and deemed appropriate by the Planning Commission could be approved.

Chopra has said his plans may include opening a bed and breakfast in town.

Zoning Administrator Charlotte Shifflett said that Chopra expects families who come to visit their loved ones at transitional living centers to stay at an affordable bed and breakfast.

Chopra has stressed that any transitional living centers would be non-medical.

By consensus, the Planning Commission members said they believe transitional living centers should go in R-6 residential zoning.

That would likely require Chopra to request a rezoning for one or more of his properties and apply for a special exception permit.