



# City of Aurora

44 East Downer Place  
Aurora, Illinois 60505  
www.aurora-il.org

## Legistar History Report

**File Number: 19-0132**

**File ID:** 19-0132

**Type:** Petition

**Status:** Draft

**Version:** 2

**General Ledger #:**

**In Control:** Planning & Development Committee

**File Created:** 02/19/2019

**File Name:** Hope For Tomorrow, Inc. / 537 Hartford Ave / Special Use - Community Residence, Major

**Final Action:**

**Title:** An Ordinance Granting a Special Use Permit for a Community Residence, Major (1520) Use on the Property located at 537 Hartford Avenue (Hope for Tomorrow, Inc. - 19-0132 / AU29/2-18.227-A/Su - SB - Ward 4) (PUBLIC HEARING)

**Notes:**

**Agenda Date:** 03/28/2019

**Agenda Number:**

**Sponsors:**

**Enactment Date:**

**Attachments:** Exhibit "A" - Legal Description - 2019-03-14 - 2018.227.pdf, Exhibit "B" - Memorandum of Agreement - 2019-03-14 - 2018.227.pdf, Land Use Petition and Supporting Documents - 2019-02-18 - 2018.227.pdf, Property Research Sheet - 2018-12-10 - 2018.227.pdf, Legistar History Report (Special Use) - 2019-03-12 - 2018.227.pdf, Findings of Fact - 2019-03-12 - 2018.227.pdf

**Enactment Number:**

**Planning Case #:** AU29/2-18.227-A/Su

**Hearing Date:**

**Drafter:** sbroadwell@aurora-il.org

**Effective Date:**

### History of Legislative File

Ver- sion:	Acting Body:	Date:	Action:	Sent To:	Due Date:	Return Date:	Result:
1	City Council	02/26/2019	referred to	Planning Council			
	<b>Action Text:</b>		This Petition was referred to to the Planning Council				
1	Planning Council	03/05/2019					
	<b>Notes:</b>	<i>Representative Present: Jeff Gilbert</i>					

*Mr. Gilbert said the project is we are hooking up for the city water. Our well went dry. We've been having some problems with it off and on for the last probably 6 or 7 months. We've been able to get it running temporarily. We just decided to annex in to get the great City of Aurora water, but also to resolve the problem once and for all.*

Mr. Broadwell said there is a water hook up that came with the annexation, so I think we are moving forward with that. The Annexation and Special Use are really just to bring this under the city's standards for the property. We are annexing it as R-1 Single Family Dwelling District. The Special Use is just for the community residence. Do you want to say anything about the organization itself?

Mr. Gilbert said Hope for Tomorrow is a 501c3. I started the organization with my wife in 1999. We went as a 501c3 in 2001. We purchased the house at 537 Hartford in 1999. We received a group home status from the County many, many years ago. I don't know exactly when, 15 or more and we've been operating on Hartford. We have another property on Hartford also since 1999 and 2002 when we bought the other property. We've never had any problems in the community. As a matter of fact, when we went for zoning for the 2 properties on Lake Street, a group home at 469 N. Lake Street, which is our homeless veterans program and our office, which is licensed for substance abuse and treatment and everything, the President of the neighborhood watch at that point and the block captain, which lived right across the street from the 537 address came to City Council and said that Hope for Tomorrow is not a problem in the community. It is the solution to the problem in the community. I did my Master's thesis on neighborhood resident's views of peer-lead recovery homes. We surveyed the entire neighborhood of people that lived within 2 blocks of the homes and they didn't have a problem with the homes. People that lived further than 2 blocks weren't aware that they existed, which we interpreted as positive because if they were problem homes they would have been known about. In addition, throughout the years I've had many conversations, just being in the neighborhood, with Kane County Sheriffs. Most of them weren't even aware that they were there, which again, we interpret as positive. We're community friendly. The rules are set up to be community friendly. We enforce the rules to make sure that it is community friendly.

Mr. Thavong said how many people do you have in their right now?

Mr. Gilbert said that are 8 guys to a house. We don't have anybody in 547 now because there is no water, but I combined them into 652 Hartford right now, but at capacity we have 8 and 8.

Mr. Thavong said is it mostly like substance abuse?

Mr. Gilbert said there are substance use disorder and remission. They have to be clean. Some of them have dual diagnosis. We don't allow people with violent criminal backgrounds and we don't allow people with crimes against children. They have to be clean. If they have any kind of a criminal record, it is substance related basically. It could be a DUI. It could be a retail theft, but that's because they were under the influence and they are on probation and they need to abide by all state, local and federal laws.

Mr. Thavong said thank you for what you do.

Mr. Gilbert said it is my pleasure.

Mr. Thavong said in terms of engineering have you contacted Kane County to get a permit for the well, sealing of the well, abandoning the well?

Mr. Gilberts said Michels Plumbing is handling all that, Matt Michel specifically and so he has because we've talked about it. I guess Kane County is requiring that, it is kind of in a tunnel, not really a tunnel, but I guess it has walls that go down and they requiring that be filled.

Mr. Thavong said as you move forward that is something that we would want to see.

Mr. Beneke said you'd have to have a permit, obviously, with us to get the connection and part of that process is the confirmation that not only have you applied for the permit for capping/disconnecting the well, but also that it was completed.

Mr. Gilberts said Matt is handling that. We spoke last week and he said that is all being taken care of.

Mr. Frankino said on Fox Metro's end, I believe we've (inaudible) the inspection request. There is a number that, again, should Michels not remember that they are supposed to get an inspection on that, just maybe give them a reminder. Matt, I believe we've been working with him a little less, but I think he is aware of the fact that we have to have that inspection on behalf of the city.

Mr. Gilberts said okay. If I talk to him today I'll mention it.

Mr. Broadwell said we are working through the public notice. We have the signs here. I think once you get that up and get the affidavit back to us that would be really what we need for the public hearing. For the Annexation, that will meet up with the Special Use at the P&D meeting on, I believe, March 28. Right now the public hearing for the Special Use is March 20th. For the Annexation, there will be like a District mailing process that I'll put together and send to you in the next few weeks. We'll probably just vote this out next week for Planning Commission and then I'll be in touch with the next steps.

1	Planning Council	03/12/2019	Forwarded	Planning Commission	03/20/2019	Pass
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**Action Text:** A motion was made by Mr. Broadwell, seconded by Mrs. Morgan, that this agenda item be Forwarded to the Planning Commission, on the agenda for 3/20/2019. The motion carried by voice vote.

**Notes:** Mr. Broadwell said the Petitioner was here last week to speak about this project. They've completed the public notice process. I make a motion to move this forward to the Planning Commission meeting on March 20, 2019. Mrs. Morgan seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2	Planning Commission	03/20/2019	Forwarded	Planning & Development Committee	03/28/2019	Pass
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**Action Text:** A motion was made by Mrs. Duncan, seconded by Mr. Chambers, that this agenda item be Forwarded to the Planning & Development Committee, on the agenda for 3/28/2019. The motion carried.

**Notes:** Mr. Broadwell said this is a Special Use for a Community Residence, Major at 537 Hartford Avenue. The Petitioner, Mr. Gilbert, from Hope for Tomorrow is here. They are requesting approval of this Special Use. Details of the request include continued use of the existing structure in compliance with the city's applicable standards for group homes that provide recovery assistance to clients with substance use disorders. A little bit of background. The property is currently in unincorporated Kane County. It is about 3.5 acres and it maintains a 2 story detached single family home that is approximately 2,000 square feet. There are 5 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms and 8 beds. You can see more in the property research sheet. What's going on here is that Hope for Tomorrow, this social service agency, is in unincorporated Kane County and they are being annexed. There is also an Annexation Petition coming with this. The Special Use and the Annexation will meet up at the P&D meeting next week. The Petitioner is going through the Special Use approval process so that they can continue to use this property for this organization in a way that meets the city's standards for this type of use. The property will be annexed per the R-1 One Family Dwelling District and also be connecting to city water.

Ms. Tidwell said I just heard you say R-1 and I see that in here, One Family Dwelling zoning, but I also see Special Use for a Community Residence. Is that R-1 or is that a different designation?

Mr. Broadwell said it will be zoned R-1 with a Special Use. If it were just a home, it would be annexed as R-1, but because Hope for Tomorrow is in there, it is coming in as R-1 One Family Dwelling District with a Special Use.

Mr. Cameron said is the Special Use attached to the lot or to the use? In other words, if they were to move out, would it revert, or what happens?

Mr. Sieben said well the Special Use stays with the property, but if Hope for Tomorrow were to move, another group home major could move in if that were possible. It would stay with the property.

Mr. Cameron said and my understanding is that the primary reason for this is that the current well has failed or is failing and they prefer to have a more reliable source of potable water.

Mr. Broadwell said yes. The Petitioner is here and he can talk more about that as well.

Mr. Sieben said the answer is yes. This area south of Prairie between generally Elmwood over to Randall, the south side of Prairie, this area does have city water on most of those streets. They were done back in the 80's I believe. With these properties, when the wells go out, and if they are contiguous, we have had a policy of annexing them. The only reason this is coming through as a Special Use and not a simple annexation is because Mr. Gilbert's use does fall under the Special Use.

The Petitioner was sworn in.

I'm Jeffrey Gilbert, 479 N. Lake Street in Aurora, Illinois 60506. Thank you for inviting me tonight. Hope for Tomorrow has operated this home in its current capacity since 1999. About 6 months ago, we started running into issues with the well. We would come up with a very temporary fix. The problem would repeat itself. We would come up with a temporary fix. This went on. It was very costly. It was also just very inconvenient to the residents in the house. Most recently, probably 2½ months ago, the fix wasn't working anymore and so that's when we contacted Michels Plumbing to find a solution. We have hooked up to the city water. It is a permanent fix. It is also some of the best water in the State of Illinois. Just to give you a history of what the house does. As I said, we've operated in that location since 1999. In 2008, I did my Master's thesis on Neighborhood Perception of Peer Lead Recovery Homes. What we found through a survey of the neighborhood was that people that lived within 2 blocks of the home did not have a problem with the home being there. People that lived further than 2 blocks away weren't even aware that they were there. So my thesis director and I interpreted those results as positive because if it was a problem everybody would have known about it. So when I established the policies and the rules for those houses, because I have another house on the street too, but that's another date maybe, we want to be community friendly. Our residents need to abide by all state, local and federal laws. They gather outside in the back, not in the front. They keep the volume down. They have to be substance free. We do not accept people with violent criminal backgrounds or crimes against children. We never have. We don't accept sex offenders. We accept men just like myself or other men that maybe have drank too much alcohol and want to get their life back together. We have a huge opioid epidemic in our entire country. What we see on an average is about 85% of Hope for Tomorrow clients report achieving the longest and/or best quality sobriety they've ever known in their entire life. What that does is it returns to society a productive, law abiding, substance free, mentally stable person in the community that's working, engaging, being involved with their children, being involved with their family and giving back to society. That is what Hope for Tomorrow does.

Mrs. Owusu-Safo said typically how long do people stay in the house, the rotation of new people that come in?

Mr. Gilbert said we require a minimum 6 month commitment. But I also tell them that I do not believe that's any near long enough. I do have people that have been in that house for this week, I think, going on 800 days. Every week I get the roster and we put the day they came in and today's date. We do that on Monday. As of Monday, we have residents who have been in that house for almost 900 days actually. Another one has been there about 500 and some days. So the rotation, I think the average is probably 200 to 300 days. Not everybody, because there are people that return back to the use and then they are not appropriate for recovering at that point so we refer them to a more appropriate level of care. We do random drug screens. We keep an eye on them. They have curfews. We have phases, different phases, as they advance toward their progress goals. They can go to a Phase 2 or a Phase 3, which a Phase 2 gives them an 11:00 o'clock curfew and a Phase 3 gives them a 12:00 o'clock curfew and we don't have curfews after midnight. I think we all know nothing good happens after midnight.

Mrs. Anderson said I have a question. How many individuals live in the house at one time?

Mr. Gilbert said a capacity of 8, but it depends on the time of the year. Sometime when it's really cold, we might have 8, but then it is 6 or 7 on an average.

Mrs. Owusu-Safo said are typically these men that are from the general area or are they coming from

other places? I'm just trying to see what kind of support group they have in the home.

Mr. Gilbert said they have a fantastic support group, probably one of the best they've ever had because they have a group of men who are working together toward a common goal. It is a support of community. I'm a counselor. I'm a Masters level counselor. My assistant is working on his Bachelor's in social work and he is a counselor. They have our support and everything too. They also have the 12 Step Communities. We work with faith based organizations to try to create a holistic approach to this.

Mrs. Anderson so do they have to be 21 and older?

Mr. Gilbert said 18 and older. These are adult men.

Ms. Tidwell said is there training in life skills for them while they are at the facility?

Mr. Gilbert said there is. Years back when Mayor Weisner put together that Homeless Task Force, we worked with Carpenter's Place and they developed the 13 Major Areas of Life. So we work with life skills, we work with job skills. Our residents all have to work full time. When they come in, most of them are unemployed. I tell them you have 7 days to get a full time job. They go I haven't worked in 2 years. There's your problem. You have too much time on your hands. You need to do a budget. You need to go to meetings. You are going to get drug tested on a random basis. Some people say we are pretty strict.

The public input portion of the public hearing was opened. No witnesses came forward. The public input portion of the public hearing was closed.

Mr. Broadwell said staff would recommend approval of the Ordinance granting a Special Use Permit for a Community Residence, Major Use on the property located at 537 Hartford Avenue.

MOTION OF APPROVAL WAS MADE BY: Mrs. Duncan

MOTION SECONDED BY: Mr. Chambers

AYES: Mrs. Anderson, Mr. Chambers, Mr. Divine, Mrs. Duncan, Mr. Elsbree, Mr. Gonzales, Mrs. Owusu-Safo, Mr. Reynolds, Ms. Tidwell

NAYS: None

#### FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Is the proposal in accordance with all applicable official physical development policies and other related official plans and policies of the City of Aurora?

Mr. Chambers said these are listed in the staff report.

2. Does the proposal represent the logical establishment and/or consistent extension of the requested classification in consideration of the existing land uses, existing zoning classifications, and essential character of the general area of the property in question?

Mr. Reynolds said I believe the proposal is a wonderful use for the property.

3. Is the proposal consistent with a desirable trend of development in the general area of the property in question, occurring since the property in question was placed in its present zoning classification, desirability being defined as the trend's consistency with applicable official physical development policies and other related official plans and policies of the City of Aurora?

Mr. Reynolds said it is consistent.

4. Will the proposal maintain a compatible relationship with the traffic pattern and traffic volume of adjacent streets and not have an adverse effect upon traffic or pedestrian movement and safety in the general area of the property in question?

*Mrs. Owusu-Safo said there should be no impact or change to the current traffic volume or patterns.*

*5. Will the proposal allow for the provision of adequate public services and facilities to the property in question and have no adverse effect upon existing public services and facilities?*

*Mrs. Anderson said these are already in place.*

*6. Does the proposal take adequate measures or will they be taken to provide ingress and egress so designed as to maximize pedestrian and vehicular circulation ease and safety, minimize traffic congestion, and not substantially increase the congestion in the public streets?*

*Mrs. Owusu-Safo said again, there should be no change to the current conditions.*

*9a. Will the special use not preclude the normal and orderly development of improvement of surrounding properties due to the saturation or concentration of similar uses in the general area?*

*Mr. Cameron said it is a continuation of a previous use and is occurring because it needs to be attached to the City of Aurora in order to receive water.*

*9b. Is the special use in all other respects in conformance to the applicable regulations in the district in which it is located, except as such regulations may in each instance be modified by the City Council pursuant to the recommendations of the Plan Commission?*

*Mr. Chambers said yes it is.*

*Mr. Broadwell said this will next be heard at the Planning and Development Committee on Thursday, March 28, 2019, at 4:00 p.m. on the fifth floor of this building.*

*Aye: 10 At Large Cameron, Aurora Twnshp Representative Reynolds, At Large Anderson, Fox Metro Representative Divine, SD 204 Representative Duncan, Fox Valley Park District Representative Chambers, At Large Owusu-Safo, At Large Tidwell, At Large Gonzales and At Large Elsbree*

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