



Developer's proposed methadone clinic causes concern

By: Adam Bednar Daily Record Business Writer August 6, 2014

A group called Concerted Care Group Baltimore LLC wants to open a for-profit methadone clinic in the city's Harwood neighborhood, a proposition that doesn't sit well with residents, activists and elected officials who say the area already has enough addiction services.

Noah Nordheimer, who is listed as the senior vice president of the National Foundation for Affordable Housing Solutions Inc., is behind the effort to open the clinic at 424-428 E. 25th St., according to elected officials and a community task force member.

Nordheimer's partners in the venture include Greg Warren, former president and CEO of Baltimore Substar Systems Inc., and Silver Spring-based attorney James Peters. Politically connected real estate developer Al Nichols has served as the liaison for the project.

Those involved with Concerted Care Group Baltimore LLC did not respond to multiple requests for comment. A spokeswoman for Baltimore Housing confirmed the city issued a use and occupancy permit for the building at 28. Nordheimer applied for the permit on behalf of the buildings' owner Edgar Investments Inc.

Alan Mlinarchik, a co-chair of the Central Baltimore Partnership's Saturation of Metropolitan Service Agency Task Force, said that Nordheimer, Peters and Warren are the major equity partners in the venture, although he said the actual owners of Concerted Care Group Baltimore LLC are several different limited liability companies owned by individuals. State documents list Peters as the company's resident agent and his law office's address as the company's principal office.

Mlinarchik arranged to meet with Nordheimer and his partners through Nichols a few weeks ago. During the meeting he asked Nordheimer, who worked on the project converting the old Southern High School in Federal Hill into affordable apartments, why he was moving from low-income housing development into owning a methadone clinic.

"I asked [Nordheimer] straight up: How did you decide to get into health care? His response was, 'Well, we've been in the public housing thing for a long time and I asked Mr. Nichols, who has a background in public policy and real estate, to help me diversify my portfolio,'" Mlinarchik said.

Mlinarchik said there are already enough substance abuse clinics in the area, such as the Institute for Behavioral Health Resources Inc., located at 2104 Maryland Ave., and Man Alive Inc. at 2117 Maryland Ave. He said that having too many clinics in the area hurts the community.

"Our position is that it's just too much. We've reached a point of such saturation that it's detrimental to the community and to the patients themselves," Mlinarchik said.

Councilman Carl Stokes, a former board member of Man Alive Inc., also identified Nordheimer as the head of Concerted Care Group Baltimore LLC. He said the group reached out to inform him of their intention to open a methadone clinic. But when he asked them to meet with the community he was told the project developer didn't think that was necessary and that there was a need for the business. The group has since held at least two meetings to discuss the proposal.

Stokes and Councilwoman Mary Pat Clarke have since proposed an ordinance that would change the zoning for the property. The change in zoning would not prevent the clinic from opening but would make it a conditional use. The bill is scheduled for a hearing before the Planning Commission on Thursday. The bill was also scheduled for a hearing with the Baltimore City Council's Land Use and Transportation Committee on Friday, but that has since been canceled.

Del. Mary Washington said she backs community opposition to the proposed clinic, but said it isn't a "not in my back yard" issue. She said she supports making addiction treatment more available in Baltimore but that the Harwood area is not the best location.

and Old Goucher communities are being asked to shoulder too much of that responsibility. Washington also expressed concern about the business model being presented by Concerted Care Group Baltimore LLC.

"It seems to me they want to be the Wal-Mart for drug and behavioral health, and their intention is to basically what Wal-Mart does and run the other organizations that are providing these services out of business," Washington said.

Residents are also concerned about the impact the proposed clinic could have on their homes.

Charles Davis, 59, who lives at in the public housing development called The Brentwood across 25th Street where the clinic would be located, said the developers came to the building looking for signatures in support of the project and that he signed without paying close attention to what was in front of him. That's a decision he now regrets.

"It's an up and down neighborhood ... there's already different problems around here," Davis said. "That's what's bringing it down a whole lot more."



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