

To the Members of the Ann Arbor Planning Commission
 From: Andrea Parks Van Houweling, 920 Lincoln Avenue
 RE: Application for Special Exception Use filed by the Society of Jesus
 DATE: May 30, 2014

I have several thoughts and concerns that I would like to share with you.

Does this group meet Ann Arbor's functional family definition?

Ann Arbor's functional family definition does not permit any society, club, fraternity, sorority, association, lodge, organization or group of students or other individuals where the common living arrangement or basis for the establishment of the housekeeping unit is temporary.

The **Society of Jesus**, is a worldwide Roman Catholic religious order founded by Saint Ignatius of Loyola. The members are called **Jesuits**, The Jesuits form the largest men's single religious order of priests and brothers in the Catholic Church.

The argument that this group is a functional family is based in part on the fact that at least some of the occupants would be members of the Society of Jesus. On the face of it, this would seem to contradict the ordinance. Except for the religious nature of this group, how is that different from any other association or organization? Further, on page 3, the petition stipulates that the relationship between members of the order is permanent in that the members take lifelong vows of commitment to the order. While an individual's commitment to the Society of Jesus may be permanent, that does not indicate that this 6 man residential arrangement is permanent. The Society's acknowledgement that members may be reassigned and are obliged to go when that is requested by the order to do so, that some of the residents will be students who will not be permanent, and that the Society will have no difficulty in finding someone to cycle in when that happens, contradicts the ordinance definition.

The Planning Commission must specify what the "type" of a functional family a group is when granting the special exception permit to live in a single-family neighborhood.

The Ann Arbor zoning code, in section 5:7(5)(d), requires that a special exception use permit for a functional family "shall apply only to the **functional family type** which obtained the permit and shall be limited to the number of persons specified in the permit."

Defining the "type" of functional family this group is essential in this case, because approving this request will mean that other groups of five or more unrelated individuals that are of this same "type" are also a functional family and may also be permitted by right or may be eligible to petition for a Special Exception Permit.

Does the proposed group of residents really constitute a functional family? If so, what "type" of a functional family is a group from the Society of Jesus? Are Jesuits a type? Are religious organizations or societies a type? Would any group that calls itself a religious society constitute the same type?

Once this (or any group of more than 4 unrelated individuals) is determined to be a functional family, they can occupy any house in Ann Arbor with a special exception permit, where adequate parking would be the main requirement.

It is not necessary for the USA Midwest Province of the Society of Jesus' to get special permission from the City of AA for six of its members to live together "communally" in a house in AA.

There are several residential neighborhoods close to the University of Michigan and within easy walking distance from St. Mary's where The Society of Jesus would not need to get a special exception permit for six unrelated men to live together in a single family house. These residential areas are zoned R4C, and it is legal for six unrelated persons to live together as a single housekeeping unit in this district. There are a number of large older homes in these neighborhoods that would comfortably accommodate the six members of the Society. For instance, I recently talked to a friend who owns such a property that is currently for rent, available in August. This single-family house has six bedrooms, several bathrooms, a kitchen, dining room and living room on the ground floor and can park eight cars. The house is on Dewey Street in an area that has both single families and some student rentals. A real estate broker could probably identify a number of similar properties in the R4C that are currently for sale or for rent.

The Society of Jesus is petitioning to have a functional family of six unrelated men occupy in the house they propose to buy on Wayne. Who will be the members of this group? The petitioner's answer in their application is rather vague:

"They will *generally* be members of the religious order that serve at St Mary's Student Parish, a Catholic parish serving the University of Michigan, *and/or* will be pursuing degrees at the University of Michigan or other local institutions." (italics are mine) In other words, petitioners do not guarantee that all the members of the functional family will be members of the Society of Jesus and indicate some will be students. Their request for a special exception limits the number of residents to six but does not indicate how many of the residents must be members of the Society of Jesus and how many of the residents may be students. A special exception use recognizing the Society of Jesus group as a functional family that can move into the house at 1919 Wayne should specify the number of residents that must be Jesuits and the maximum number of student that may live there.