

COMMENTS

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Sober home likely to be approved Jan. 20
BY BRIAN MARSCHHAUSER

FILE PHOTO

Bob Davis, an attorney for Compass Westchester, said the plans are to open the facility by April.

It appears likely the Town Board will unanimously approve a special use permit to allow for the operation of a sober living residence at 482 Underhill Ave. when the board convenes on Tuesday, Jan. 20.

At last night's work session, Councilwoman Susan Siegel offered up a new resolution that would approve the special use permit for Compass Westchester with a list of 20 conditions. The conditions address things such as shrubbery and parking, as well as background checks and drug testing for residents and employees. Supervisor Michael Grace and Councilman Vishnu Patel seemed agreeable to most of the conditions, as did Bob Davis, an attorney representing applicants Tom McCrossan and Mark McGoldrick.

Siegel had previously proposed a resolution to deny the home for recovering addicts, but ultimately said it is in the Town's best interests to allow the facility and avoid a potential lawsuit.

"My decisions are based on fact and are based on law, and my change of decision is based on new information," Siegel said. "I am not afraid of a lawsuit. I want that made very clear. But, if there is a specter of a lawsuit out there, I want to feel confident the Town is on good ground and has a defensible case, and I don't think it does in this case."

Despite her change of heart, Siegel said she did not appreciate how the process was handled. Specifically, Siegel felt she was being "intimidated" and "bullied" into approving the special use permit by Grace and Town Attorney Jeannette Koster.

"I did not feel that from the Town attorney or from the supervisor that I was getting objective information," Siegel said.

Grace said he "took exception" to Siegel's comments and that he was only trying to prevent an expensive federal lawsuit.

"My obligation to the Town is to protect the Town," Grace said. "I've never intimidated or bullied you."

Compass Westchester hopes to open by April if approved next Tuesday, Davis said.



