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Drug Rehabilitation Center Gets Plan Board OK

By PAT BLANCHAT Herald-Tribune Reporter

Straight Inc. came a step closer Thursday to transforming an industrial warehouse on Cattleman Road into a drug rehabilitation center.

The Sarasota County Planning Commission voted unanimously to approve a special exception requested by Straight that will permit it to conduct its drug counselling programs in a vacant building that sits on property zoned for light industrial uses.

Just last month the Sarasota County Commission amended its zoning code to allow drug clinics in industrial and commercial zones by special exception.

Straight's plans, which still must go before the County Commission for a public hearing, call for using the vacant warehouse on Cattleman Road just south of Porter Road for its drug rehabilitation programs. The building can accommodate from 80 to 200 persons.

The clinic will operate during daylight hours with some evening session. There will be no facilities for overnight stays, according to the planning staff.

The Planning Commission turned down a request to rezone a 13,300 square-foot parcel off Beneva Road north of Clark Road for a restaurant.

The planning staff recommended against rezoning the property from OPI (office, professional, institutional) to CI (commercial intensive).

Darleen Kunkle had asked for the zoning change so she could convert a single family house on the property to an 80-seat restaurant.

Commission members felt the proposed restaurant would not be compatible with surrounding property which is zoned for office and residential uses.

The commission also voted unanimously to deny a rezoning request for a proposed restaurant that would have been located

north of Vamo Road about 250 east of U.S. 41.

The 2.7-acre parcel in question is zoned for one residential unit per two acres, and is outside the area designated by the Comprehensive Plan for urban development, according to the planning staff.

Commissioner Jim Pierce said he voted against proposal because if for some reason the restaurant failed, the property owners could turn around and build 13 units per acre under the RMF-3 (residential multiple family) zoning requested.

In other action, the commission recommended:

 That the County Commission approve a special exception that will allow a 120-bed nursing home on seven acres south of Tri-Par Drive and south of U.S. 301 on property zoned RMF-2 (residential multiple family, nine units per acre).