

Bampa's House group has eyes on East First Street property



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Bampa's House, a group seeking to create a non-profit comfort care home, is considering purchasing this property at 170 E. First St. from Guthrie. [JANA AIKEN/THE LEADER]

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CORNING - Bampa's House, a group seeking to create a non-profit comfort care home whose founders say they're determined to make the end-of-life care experience better for the community, may have finally found a home after years of work.

Joan Wilson, director of the Bampa's House Board of Directors, said the organization has made an offer to Guthrie to purchase 170 E. First St., a circa-1900 Queen Anne Eastlake style home that, with proper updating, could be a great comfort care home.

"The property has been offered to us by Guthrie Hospital for a nice price," Wilson recently told the Corning City Planning Commission. "We would like to convert (the building). It will be an awful amount of work, but we would like to do that."

Bampa's House, which was started after Jim Dugan died in 2016, unsuccessfully attempted to open its non-profit comfort care home on Brown Road in the Town of Corning. The plans were met with opposition from some residents in the neighborhood.

"I personally am disheartened that we didn't have a law that would facilitate the comfort care home coming here," said Corning Town Supervisor Kim Feehan. "I supported it."

The property doesn't have the private, natural setting, but the accessible location in downtown Corning more than makes up for that, according to Bampa's officials who have conducted checks on the First Street site.

Bampa's House officials have gone through the home with an architect, engineer and contractor, and decided to make an offer on the home.

Wilson told the Corning City Planning Commission Aug. 21 that the organization is excited to get the project started.

Joe Dubendorfer, Planning Commission chairman, asked Wilson to explain how the Bampa's House project works.

"Usually a person finds out from a physician that they have a terminal illness and they don't have much time left," Wilson said. "The Care First organization typically received the request for hospice care and people come to homes like ours asking if there is a bed available. That's typically the process."

Al Lewis, a planning board member, asked Wilson about the cost of the comfort care home.

"We don't charge the residents," Wilson said. "There are usually four components for our funding: one is grants, two is corporate sponsorship, three is benefits, and four is sometime residents are so grateful they make a (donation)."

Bampa's House officials said if they purchase the 170 E. First St. building, the plans are to keep the original charm and historic nature of the home while also modernizing it to meet the needs of a comfort care home.

The home would be completely rewired and the heating and cooling systems would be replaced, officials said. Water issues in the basement would be addressed and repaired, as would the stucco, sagging floors, porch and deck.

The interior of the home needs to be extensively refurbished to create two first-floor bedrooms and a bathroom for residents, officials said. A kitchen, laundry room, volunteer room, and director's office will need to be configured and a family bedroom and bath will also be added to the second floor.

Bampa's House officials said the home also needs to be updated to meet accessibility guidelines.

"We will stay focused on the plans to renovate the home and on raising the funds for the renovations and operating costs," officials said in a letter.

Information about Bampa's House and the group's ongoing fundraising is available online at www.bampashouse.org.