

SUSANVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

TUESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2023 – 5:30 PM

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Westbrook calls meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Rod DeBoer, Tony Ardito, Wayne Jambois, and Melanie Westbrook.
Absent: James Merchant.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Mr. Mumper added item 6A - Code Enforcement Updates and 6B-Planning Updates.

Motion by Wayne Jambois, seconded by Rod DeBoer to approve the amended agenda.

2. BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR: None

3. CONSENT ITEMS:

3.A Receive and file minutes from the January 10, 2023 meeting Receive and file minutes from the January 10, 2023 meeting

Item tabled to the Feb. 14, 2023, meeting due to absent members.

[PC Min. 1.10.23.pdf](#)

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

4.A Use Permit #2023-001. Community Evangelical Free Church of Susanville. Motion to approve Resolution No. 23-1129.

Mr. Mumper said Community Church is requesting a use permit to allow a 7-foot chain link with barbed wire fence to incorporate a 10,000 square foot drainage basin to prevent said area from becoming an attractive nuisance.

The project site is zoned R-1/DR which is Single Family Residential/Design Review and has a land use designation of single family. The proposed project site is 11.3 acres with an existing church at 1400 Numa. The reason we are here tonight is due to the height of the fence. Anything exceeding six feet requires a use permit and does not require a building permit. An 8-foot fence would require a building permit, Mr. Mumper explained.

He showed the church property site on the screen. Based on conversations with the applicant, there is a concern about the ditch being an attractive nuisance during business and non-business hours. He conducted a site visit and agreed this is a good pre-emptive measure to put in place. Property owners were notified within a 300-foot radius, and staff did not receive any comments.

The project is exempt from CEQA as it classifies as an infill project. Staff recommends approving the project with the stated conditions outlined in adopting Resolution 23-1129.

There was clarification that the proposed fence only encompassed the first portion of the ditch and not the entire ditch. Tom Neely, Community Church representative, explained

when the church was built, they were required to have drainage. The ditch was designed to leach out, but the soil isn't quality, and it retains water for a long period of time. The water can fill up to several feet deep and they are concerned about children getting in there. The small amount of water that goes into the remaining ditch evaporates quickly.

After the clarification, Mr. Mumper said he amends his 10,000 square feet to about 6,000 square feet.

Commissioner DeBoer said he doesn't have a problem with it. It is a safety factor, and he commends the people for thinking about it. It will also keep animals out, too.

Chair Westbrook asked about the barbed wire.

Mr. Neely explained that while they don't want it to look like a prison the barbed wire adds more of a deterrent for people wanting to climb over it.

Commissioner Ardito asked if there would be a gate in case someone does get inside.

Mr. Neely responded two gates would be installed on either end.

The public hearing opened at 5:41 p.m.

No comments received.

Public hearing closed at 5:42 p.m.

[Site Plan.pdf](#)

[Google Earth Map.jpg](#)

[UP#2023-001 Staff Report.docx](#)

[Resolution 23-1129.docx](#)

Moved by Rod DeBoer; seconded by Tony Ardito to Use Permit 2023-001.

Motion Carried: 4-0

Voting For: DeBoer, Ardito, Jambois and Westbrook

Voting Against: None

Absent: Merchant

4.B Use Permit #2023-003 for Grace Family Church.

Motion to approve Resolution No. 23-1130.

Public hearing opened at 5:43 p.m.

Mr. Mumper explained Grace Family Church is requesting a Use Permit to allow a church in the Uptown Business District (UBD) at 606 Main St.

He presented the site plan showing the slated improvements. He continued that there is a mixed-use occupancy on the building. Typically, on Main St., there is residential upstairs and commercial on the bottom. A church is an assembly type occupancy and the Fire Marshall and Building Official have attached conditions that the occupancy cannot exceed 49 at any given time. No comments were received from Public Works or the Police Department.

Mr. Mumper said staff did receive correspondence from Mr. Brad Croul, which was distributed to the Commissioners, and was the only correspondence received.

He explained that in 2000 when the zoning ordinance was overhauled, the City Council and Planning Commission were cognizant about not having churches all over the Uptown Business District, which is why they are required with a Use Permit. In addition, there are typically more than 49 people in most churches and for most of the buildings it wouldn't make sense to retrofit them to meet fire and building codes. An example would be the old Chicago Title building, which had to be retrofitted with sprinklers.

The project is an infill project and qualifies for a CEQA exemption. Staff's recommendation is to approve the project.

Chair Westbrook stated there are five churches within a three-block radius, and she is concerned about parking. She asked if they are required to have a certain number of parking spaces.

Mr. Mumper responded in UBD they would be relying on off-street parking and public parking lots to a large degree.

Pastor Marcus Petersen, applicant representative, explained the reason they are asking for a pro-vote is the occupancy would help create foot traffic in Uptown. They would primarily meet on Saturday evenings and Roop St. has a lot of parking around the corner that would be ample for 49 people. He also noted there are four empty business spaces in that building, so he didn't think space would be an issue.

He continued saying Saturday evening traffic would be a positive in that area. He's not trying to be in competition with other churches, but the goal is filling an unmet need. One part of his ministry is prison ministry, but the other question is who is making Main St. look better and he thought a church could help beautify Main St. Now they have the opportunity to move there. We are excited because we want to improve the look of the place. This is the first building people see when they come to town, we want it to be the best first impression for Susanville and we want our reputation on it.

Chris Gallagher, applicant representative, also explained the only church in Susanville that offers Saturday evening services is the Catholic church. There are a lot of people, who if they are working on Sunday, don't go to church. He also reiterated Saturday services will attract people to the Uptown area. We felt a non-empty building is better than an empty building. There will also be office hours during the week.

Public hearing closed at 5:57 p.m.

Moved by Rod DeBoer; seconded by Tony Ardito to approve Use Permit 2023-001.

Motion Carried: 4-0

Voting For: DeBoer, Ardito, Jambois and Westbrook

Voting Against: None

Absent: Merchant

[Church Site Plan 606 Main St..pdf](#)

[UP#2023-003 Staff Report.docx](#)

[Resolution 23-1130.docx](#)

5. NEW BUSINESS: None

6. GENERAL PLANNING UPDATES

6A. Code Enforcement Update Mr. Loflin provided an update regarding five nuisance abatements that are in violation. Regarding 560 Hospital Ln., Mr. Loflin said he received a call from a real estate agent and the owner trying to punt the property to a new owner. They are still under the appeal period which runs through Feb. 1, 2023.

City staff had contact with the owner of the Knight's Inn Motel at 1705 Main St., who indicated financial issues. The owner has the same due process rights where he can appeal the decision to the City Council, but effectively the fines are issued and become due within 45 days they were issued.

Mr. Loflin explained he has been in contact with the owner of 765 Shasta St., and he is still claiming not to be the property owner. If he is the rightful owner, he wants to work with the City to come up with a plan to work with the violation. The owner also said if it turns out he is the owner, he wants to work with City to come up with a plan to correct the violation. He was advised he has the ability to appeal until Feb. 1, 2023. Mr. Loflin stated what we really want to see is the building demolished and the public nuisance abated.

As far as 63 and 67 S. Weatherlow St. are concerned, Mr. Loflin said he has not received any word from the property owner and staff is actively pursuing the abatement of 63 S. Weatherlow.

For the February 14, 2023, meeting, he would be bringing back two properties - 10 Santa Paula and 509 Woodside - for assessment of civil penalties.

6B. Planning Update - Mr. Mumper said he received correspondence from the State Energy Commission, that the City has been moved up in the streamline status for EV charging stations. It was codified on January 27, 2023.

Last week the City Council adopted the Land Use Assessment Report. Now we are moving forward with the circulation and economic development updates.

Lastly, Mr. Mumper said Maverik Renewable Energies is scheduled to come to the February 15, 2023, City Council meeting to announce they are planning to come to the community should we welcome them.

Commissioner DeBoer asked about a house on Riverside Dr., that he said is vacant house and the door is wide open, it's an attraction.

Staff responded it would be added to the list.

7. CORRESPONDENCE:

8. COUNTY REFERRALS:

9. ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn at 6:12 p.m. by Rod Deboer, seconded by Tony Ardito.

Motion Carried: 4-0

Voting For: DeBoer, Ardito, Jambois and Westbrook

Voting Against: None

Absent: Merchant

Signed, Chair Wayne Jambois

Respectfully submitted by,

Ruth McElrath, Building Permit Technician

Heidi Whitlock, City Clerk

Approved On: February 14, 2023

