



**SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**  
County Government Center  
Covington Chambers  
385 N. Arrowhead Avenue, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
San Bernardino, CA 92415

**Thursday, January 23, 2020**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT**

Jonathan Weldy, Commissioner, First District  
Ray Allard, Vice Chair, Second District  
Michael Stoffel, Commissioner, Third District  
Gabriel Chavez, Chair, Fourth District  
Audrey Mathews, Commissioner, Fifth District

**STAFF PRESENT**

Heidi Duron, Planning Director, LUSD  
Jason Searles, Deputy County Counsel  
Tom Nieves, Contract Planner, LUSD  
Suzanne Peterson, Senior Planner, LUSD  
Chrystale Sonick, Executive Assistant, LUSD

The Planning Commission meeting of January 23, 2020, was called to order at 9:04 a.m. by Chair Chavez. Commissioner Weldy led the Invocation and Jason Searles led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**1. a. APPROVAL OF MINUTES-DECEMBER 5, 2019**

Commissioner Mathews made a motion to approve the minutes for December 5, 2019. Commissioner Weldy seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote.

**b. ADVANCE SCHEDULE**

The advanced schedule was presented by Chrystale Sonick, Executive Assistant.

**c. DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Heidi Duron, Planning Director, reminded the Commission of the Form 700 and its due date.

**d. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

There were no comments.

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**2. PUBLIC HEARING**

APPLICANT: Church of the Woods  
COMMUNITY: Rim Forest /2nd Supervisorial District  
PROJECT NO: P201700270  
LOCATION: North side of State Route 18, west of Daley Canyon Road  
STAFF: Tom Nieves, Contract Planner  
PROPOSAL: Conditional Use Permit to construct a religious facility consisting of a 27,364 square-foot, two-story Youth Center/ Gymnasium, recreational facilities, sports field, 41,037 square-foot, two-story assembly building with a maximum seating capacity of 600, and a 1,500 square-foot, two-story maintenance/ caretaker unit in two phases on a 13.6-acre portion of a 27.12-acre site.  
CEQA RECOMMENDATION: Certification of Environmental Impact Report (SCH No. 2004031114)  
EST. TIME: 3 hours

**STAFF PRESENTATION:**

Tom Nieves, Contract Planner, presented the staff report and memo to the Planning Commission which report is on file with the Land Use Services Department.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Planning Commission:

1. **CERTIFY** the Final Environmental Impact Report (SCH No. 2004031114) (collectively, Exhibits C, D, E, F, and I);
2. **ADOPT** the CEQA Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations (Exhibit H);
3. **ADOPT** the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (Exhibit I);
4. **ADOPT** the recommended Findings for approval of the Conditional Use Permit (Exhibit B);
5. **APPROVE** the Conditional Use Permit for the construction and operation of a religious facility, subject to the recommended Conditions of Approval (Exhibit J);
6. **DIRECT** staff to file the Notice of Determination.

**COMMISSION COMMENTS:**

Vice Chair Allard asked if the memo received by staff was referring to installing three traffic signals. Mr. Nieves confirmed that there would be installation of three traffic signals. Ms. Duron further clarified that there would be improvement plans.

**APPLICANT COMMENTS:**

Patrick Hopkins, Project Manager, spoke about their current location advising that the church has outgrown their current facility. He also presented a video, which is on file with the Land Use Services Department.

Rod Akins, Pastor of the Project, talked about the church's history and what they offered the community.

Vice Chair Allard asked how the parking spaces were calculated for the facilities. Mr. Nieves responded that it was based on the number and type of seats, stating that the parking was clearly adequate for the use. Vice Chair Allard asked if the street plans have been completed or

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approved. Ms. Duron responded that the plans would be submitted before issuing of permits and Caltrans would be included in a portion of the review.

Vice Chair Allard asked if the lights to the Project would have to adhere to the dark sky ordinance in regards to the ball field. Ms. Duron confirmed they would have to comply with the dark sky ordinance.

Vice Chair Allard confirmed that he visited the Project.

Mr. Hopkins spoke of the square footage and footprint of the Project.

Chair Chavez asked if there was known negative impacts from the high school. Mr. Hopkins stated they were not aware of negative impacts and that the school was allowed to have lights on at night but the Project has chosen not to have lights on at night.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

#### **Twin Peaks office:**

Shawn Devine, resident of Cedar Glen, spoke in opposition to the Project stating that he attended church and noticed slight conflict of interest in regards to psychology at the church. He requested that soil tests be taken before the Project is built.

Kelly Flint, resident of Twin Peaks, spoke in opposition to the Project stating she had been there over three years, and loved the community and scenery. She expressed concern with the aesthetics, the stop lights, stating it does not fit with the local community.

Peter Gaffney, resident of Twin Peaks, spoke in opposition to the Project, stating that the people were good but the location of the Project was bad. He expressed concerns with effects on the environment and water contamination.

Angela Hill, resident of Blue Jay, spoke in opposition to the Project, stating concerns with the traffic lights, the Project being located in the wildlife corridor, vegetation, effects to the stream and wildlife.

Karla Kellems, resident of Twin Peaks, spoke in opposition to the Project, stating concerns of the quality of life, safety, traffic lights, getting out of the area safely if a fire or natural disaster occurred, water quality, and that the fencing would hinder the path the animals move in the forest.

Trudie Blank, resident of Twin Peaks, spoke in opposition to the Project, stating concerns with traffic, destroying scenic resources, fencing, noise and evacuating safety.

Sharon Bailey, resident of Blue Jay, spoke in opposition to the Project, stating concerns of the topography of the property, water, animals and plants, traffic, evacuating safety, traffic lights, and the removal of trees.

Jennifer Alford, resident of Running Springs, spoke in opposition to the Project, stating concerns about the water being impacted by the Project, public health and the welfare and safety for the community.

Donald Fischer, resident of Running Springs, spoke in opposition to the Project, stating concerns that the community feels like the Project would be too big for the community, traffic, environmental impacts and requested that the Project choose another site.

Taylor Ramsey, resident of Lake Arrowhead, spoke in favor of the Project, stating they grew up in the church and everyone was welcomed and that the church would provide a safe place with amenities for the local youth in the community.

Rheanna Neidinger, resident of Crestline, spoke in opposition to the Project, stating concerns of environmental impacts, inconsistencies in the EIR and the traffic.

Ed Baumann, resident of Rim Forest, spoke in favor of the Project, stating that he lived and worked in Rim Forest for 71 years and the Project should be given opportunity for the local youth in the area. He referred to a local project that has a traffic light which has made it safer for the community.

Judy Weber, resident of Rim Forest, spoke in opposition to the Project stating she was not an environmental expert or a member of the church. She expressed concerns with noise, wildlife

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impacts and the serenity of the mountains changing. She stated she did not object to the Project just location.

Gary Bancroft, resident of Crestline, wished to register his opposition to the Project but did not wish to speak.

Karen Burton, resident of Lake Arrowhead, wished to register her support of the Project but was unable to stay.

### **San Bernardino office:**

Ginger Gabriel, resident of Crestline, spoke in support for the Project, stating she was a counselor and the Project would benefit the youth in the community that have addictions to drugs, cutting themselves and suicide. The Project would provide a safe environment with activities for the youth to participate in.

Jarrold Williams, resident of Twin Peaks, spoke in support for the Project, spoke about his background as a child and the treatment he endured. He stated that the church embraced him and he has raised his children and grandchildren in the church and they flourished as adults.

Travis Alexander, resident of Lake Arrowhead, spoke in support for the Project, stating he was a retired fire fighter. He stated that the Project would be logistical support that could serve on the rim, he also said that the Project could be a command post or staging area in case of an emergency. He concluded by saying the Project would be a benefit to the community.

Darla Sewell, resident of Lake Arrowhead, spoke in support for the Project, stating that the congregation loves people no matter what religion you are and would benefit the community.

Robert Sherman, resident of Lake Arrowhead, spoke in opposition to the Project, stating he was a retired wildland and wetlands biologist and spoke about his concerns with the EIR.

Orchid Black, resident of Blue Jay, spoke in opposition to the Project, stating he was part of the native plants society and expressed concerns with the many deficiencies in the EIR and requested a wetland survey be completed at an appropriate time.

Charles Nichols, resident of Crestline, spoke in favor of the Project, stating that the Project is needed for the youth in the community.

George Stephens, resident of Twin Peaks, spoke in favor of the Project, stating that he attend the Church of the Woods and compared attendance to other mega churches. He said the people were friendly, the facilities would provide opportunities for the youth and families in the area and the Project would offer opportunities for employment in the mountains.

Larry Lanzrath, resident of Blue Jay, spoke in favor of the Project, stating that the Project was in compliance and would help fulfill the needs of the community.

Dana Weaver, resident of Lake Arrowhead, spoke in favor of the Project, stating that she was on staff at the Church of the Woods and that the Project would benefit the community. The community would not have to pay a membership for community use. She spoke more in detail about the facilities the Project would offer.

Dane Nissen, resident of Crestline, spoke in favor of the Project, stating that he was raised in the church which assisted his mother in raising him.

Richard Miller Jr., resident of Lake Arrowhead, spoke in favor of the Project, stating that the Project would offer children to play together while parents were able to get together.

Ashely Miller, resident of Lake Arrowhead, spoke in favor of the Project, stating that she was raised on the mountain and when she was younger there was a lack of activities for her, the Project would provide free accessible resources for the community.

Chris Del Ross-Risher, resident of Lake Arrowhead, spoke in opposition to the Project, stating that the Project would impact the community and would only benefit a few in the community. She stated concerns with the removal of trees, impacts to species, the stream, the intersection, mitigation for traffic, several signals, no assurance that the improvements will be completed.

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Patricia Pagel, resident of Blue Jay, spoke in favor of the Project, stating that she volunteered at the Church of the Woods and the Project would provide children safety and would help the mountain traffic.

Manuel Veiga, resident of Lake Arrowhead, spoke in favor of the Project, stating that the Project would provide a safe place for recovering addicts and the trees and bugs are not more important than the people. He also noted that the Sky Park Project was said to have destroyed the mountain too.

Devina Horvath, resident of Crestline, spoke in opposition to the Project, stating concerns with the EIR, fires and impacts to the high school.

Chris Pratt, resident of Crestline, spoke in opposition to the Project, stating there were cumulative impacts of the EIR and the Project would impact the community,

Hugh Bialecki, resident of Lake Arrowhead, spoke in opposition to the Project, stating concerns about adverse impacts on the community, traffic impacts, the Project does not fit with the community plan, inconsistent with land use conservation and open space safety.

Lori Semeniuk, resident of Lake Arrowhead, spoke in opposition to the Project, stating concerns that the Project would hurt mature forest and wetlands, water pollution, destroying the forest, traffic signals, and unavoidable impacts.

William Mellinger, resident of Crestline, spoke in favor of the Project, pastor of a Baptist church, value of churches, named various ministries and support for the community, general plan is now under change, church has done their own studies,

Gilbert Lafebure, resident of Blue Jay, spoke in favor of the Project, stating that the people in the area needed recreation programs which do not exist.

Marsha Lafebure, resident of Blue Jay, spoke in favor of the Project, stated it was hard to raise children in the mountain community because of the lack of activities in the mountains. She stated that the Project would provide recreational activities in the mountains.

Katherine Richardson, resident of Blue Jay, spoke in favor of the Project, stated there was currently traffic in the area and that the Project has had two EIRs. She stated that facilities are severely lacking, the children need help, and the Project has property rights.

Scott Tibbitts, resident of Lake Arrowhead, spoke in favor of the Project, stated concerns for current excessive drug and addiction use as he serves in two hospitals and there is a lack of facilities in the mountains. He concluded that the Project would make a huge difference in the community.

Maureen Mann, resident of Cedar Pines Park, spoke in opposition of the Project, stated concerns of the location, and negative impacts on the forest and storm water issues.

Darlene Brage, resident of Lake Arrowhead, spoke in favor of the Project, stated she loves trees, nature and joined the Sierra Club and attends Church of the Woods. She stated she is a retired school teacher and there was a lot of at risk youth in the community, the schools are not a safe harbor, the Project would provide facilities and sports that are needed in the community.

Steven Ferrell, resident of Crestline, spoke in opposition to the Project, stated he was a member of the Sierra Club and expressed concerns that the timing with the release of the EIR was released and concerns for the habitat surveys, wildlife corridor, path that animals use will be impacted and water quality.

Clark Hahne, resident of Lake Arrowhead, spoke in favor of the Project, stated he has never attended the church and was a former teacher, the community has changed not for the best and the facilities would help the whole community. He stated that homes were built in the corridor.

Bob Geer, resident of Lake Arrowhead, spoke in favor of the Project, stated that children need places to play, the Project would be a light to the community of all ages, facilities to help with drug abuse and mental health issues.

Bruce Daniel, resident of, Running Springs, spoke in opposition of the Project, stated he submitted a letter to the County and offered his services to the Project and spoke to other projects he has worked on.

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Eric Vincent, resident of Crestline, spoke in opposition to the Project, did not wish to speak but wished to register his opposition to the Project.

Sandy Ellis, resident of Green Valley Lake, spoke in opposition to the Project, quoted The Lorax book from Dr. Seuss and expressed concerns for the trees that would be cut down, Lake Arrowhead community plan talks about protection of the nature and features, appreciates what the church does but the location is not the right place for the Project.

Michael Verlich, resident of Blue Jay, spoke in favor of the Project, stated he has been in law enforcement for 24 years and has seen the problems the mountains and the mountain need services which the Project could provide.

Professor Michael Broadway, resident of Blue Jay, spoke in opposition of the Project, stated he was a licensed architect and professor and the issue was the location of the Project. He expressed concerns of fire access and the assurance that the Project would be finished being built and requested a performance bond to ensure start to finish.

James Healey, resident of Running Springs, spoke in favor of the Project, stated he has been a Firefighter for the past 20 years and the Project would be a beneficial area for staging when there is a disaster.

Holly Young, resident of Rim Forest, spoke in opposition to the Project, stated the structure would be near her back yard. She expressed concerns for diesel trucks, disrupting land and animals, traffic and suggested that the facilities that are vacant should be used.

Franklin Ellis, resident of Green Valley Lake, spoke in opposition to the Project, stated he worked as a city planner and the County should follow the community plan and the values should be maintained, the Project would destroy the trees and cause erosions.

Alex Sotomayor, resident of Lake Arrowhead, spoke in opposition to the Project, stated he liked the small feel and wooden landscape and has concerns of leveling the mountain and pollution to the stream.

Steve Loe, resident of Yucaipa, spoke in opposition to the Project, stated he was a wildlife biologist and looked at the property which had environmental problems-it would impact the animals and the effort to respond to public comments in the EIR was inadequate.

Hailey Freeman, wished to register her opposition to the Project but did not stay to speak.

Peter Jorris, resident of Arrowbear, spoke in opposition to the Project, stated he was from the Audubon Society stating that the EIR still found that the Project would have unavoidable impacts, it doesn't fit with the County guidelines and requested that the overriding considerations be read.

Enrique Flores, resident of Crestline, spoke in opposition to the Project, stated that during the snow season there was traffic and that the Project would cause additional traffic and he does not want to see the forest altered.

Greg Morgan, resident of Lake Arrowhead, registered in favor of the Project but spoke in opposition, stating that the community connects at different events and the Project would create a significant impact to the community.

Kathryn Harris, wished to register her opposition to the Project but did not stay to speak.

Klays Meister, resident of Lake Arrowhead, spoke in opposition to the Project, stated that the community could use the schools for facility needs. He stated concerns for the traffic light and the potential for water runoff from the Project.

Carmen Gavton, wished to register her support for the Project but did not stay to speak.

Bridger Zadina, resident of Lake Arrowhead, spoke in opposition to the Project, asked how the children would get to the Project facilities and the Project was in the wrong location, she suggested that the empty facilities be used instead.

### **Additional Comments Applicant:**

No additional comments

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**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:**

Ms. Duron reminded the Commission that the consultant that prepared the EIR and technical experts were present for questions.

Tracy Zinn, consultant that prepared the draft and final EIR stated that their firm was retained by the County and looked at the Project objectively, times of services, building, traffic etc., just as they would any other land use. She stated that they worked with the County to prepare written responses and grouped some of the responses in topical sequence and that every environmental topic that was raised was responded to and she spoke to some of the specific concerns from the public comments.

Vice Chair Weldy asked if she had read the comments that were presented today. She responded that she had not. Mr. Nieves stated that staff reviewed the additional comments and there was no new information or data that would raise new concerns.

Vice Chair Allard asked about the fee calculation and Ms. Duron addressed his concerns.

Vice Chair Allard asked what the alternative analysis was, Ms. Zinn and Ms. Duron explained the original project and the current Project that was before the Commission.

Commissioner Mathews stated that she has not heard anything new that has been presented from the first proposal and the EIR and research has been more than adequate.

Vice Chair Allard asked how the community plans were adopted. Jason Searles, Deputy County Counsel, responded that it was similar to the General Plan approved by the Board of Supervisors and proceeded to read into the record the General Plan requirements.

Chair Weldy addressed the public speakers thanking them for attending and stating that the Project was the right use for the land, the impacts would still happen somewhere else as well.

Commissioner Chavez asked about performance bonds. Ms. Duron stated that the County does not require performance bonds and that legally it could not be required.

Vice Chair Allard asked about service times, parking and traffic concerns, staff responded to each of the Vice Chair's concerns.

**COMMISSION ACTION:**

Commissioner Weldy made a motion to approve staff's recommendation with modifications to the Conditions of Approval, as presented in the memo. Commissioner Stoffel seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote.

**COMMISSION VOTE**

MOTION: Wedly

SECOND: Stoffel

AYES: Weldy, Allard, Stoffel, Chavez, Mathews

NOES: None

RECUSED: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

**3. WORKSHOP**

Planning Commission Training

STAFF:

Jason Searles, Deputy County Counsel

The workshop was continued to the next Planning Commission hearing.

**4. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Chair Chavez opened the Public Comments at 3:04 p.m. Having no requests to speak, Chair Chavez closed the Public Comments at 3:04 p.m.

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**5. ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, Commissioner Mathews made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Weldy seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:04 p.m.

 Chair Chavez **Date** 4/9/20  
Chair Chavez, Planning Commission

 Heidi Duron **Date** 4/9/2020  
Planning Director, Land Use Services Department

 Chrystale Sonick **Date** 4-9-2020  
Chrystale Sonick  
Executive Assistant II, Land Use Services Department

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