

**SUMTER COUNTY  
SPECIAL MASTER PROCEEDING  
JUNE 5, 2023**

**CASE NUMBER:** S-23-007346

**LANDOWNER:** Family Church Sumter, Inc.

**REPRESENTATIVE:** Ashley Hunt, Esq.

**REQUESTED ACTION:** Major special use permit to allow a church within the Agriculture (A10C) zoning district.

**PARCEL NUMBER:** K19-060

**EXISTING ZONING:** A10C (Agriculture)

**EXISTING USE:** Vacant

**FUTURE LAND USE:** Agricultural

**PARCEL SIZE:** 9.57 acres MOL

**LOCATION:** Sumterville area – Southeast corner of S.R. 471 and C.R. 526

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Approval

**Background:**

As stated in the staff report, the applicant has requested a major special use permit for a new church.

The application site is located in Sumterville at the corner of S.R. 471 and C.R. 526. The parcel sits just outside the urban development boundary and joint planning area of Bushnell. This area has a mix of land uses consisting of Agriculture, Rural Residential, and Public/Institutional. Surrounding properties are zoned Residential, Rural Residential, and Agriculture (R2C, RR5C, A10C). The subject site sits directly east across S.R. 471 from the Lake Sumter Community College Campus and a large tract of Sumter County Public School owned land.

The application requests a 28900 sq ft building to be used for worship services, youth activities, meeting rooms, day care, and offices. The applicant reports they have a congregation of 400 people and are planning for up to 850 members. The proposed structure will house various functions under one roof. There will be multiple services on worship days. He anticipates a 500-seat capacity will meet their anticipated growth. There will be a large outdoor area for special events, sports, and outdoor activities. Access to the site will be on CR 526.

**Special Master Findings:**

After having heard from the applicant's representative and having received no public comments regarding the property, the Special Master agrees with the staff's finding that the application is sufficient and finds there is competent and substantial evidence that the requested major special use permit is consistent with the policies and standards of the Sumter County Land Development Code and Unified Comprehensive Plan.

Pursuant to Section 13-332, Sumter County Land Development Code, the proposed special use must meet the following requirements for approval.

- a. The use must be in harmony with the purpose and intent of this chapter.  
*Staff reported the church seeks to provide a place for gathering and worship in the community. the variety of proposed uses is consistent with the use by a church and is consistent with the intent of the Land Development Code.*
- b. The use must be compatible with surrounding existing and anticipated uses.  
*Staff reported the requested use is compatible with the surrounding area. It is close to an urban area as well as a large school campus.*
- c. The use must not adversely affect the public interest. Adequate traffic circulation, sanitary, utility, drainage, refuse management, emergency services, and similar necessary facilities and services shall be available for the use. A use shall not create hazardous vehicular or pedestrian traffic conditions, parking congestion, or generate traffic that exceeds the capability of roads and streets serving the use, or otherwise, affect public safety.  
*Staff reported the application has not specifically addressed traffic. Infrastructure shall include paved driving lanes at the entrance and throughout the parking lot with grass parking spots. The project site has indirect access to SR 47, a minor arterial roadway.*
- d. The site must be suitable for the proposed use, considering flood hazard, drainage, soils, and other conditions that may pose a danger to life, health, or property.  
*Staff reported the site is suited for the intended use. The concept plan provided places the proposed structure on what is the highest and driest point of the property. Any structures within the flood zone will be required to meet floodplain protection standards.*
- e. The development of the use shall have no more than a minimal adverse effect on the environment, public health, safety, and welfare.  
*Staff reported the proposed use will not have an adverse impact on the environment, public health, or public safety.*
- f. Proposed improvements and the level of cooperation by the developer shall be considered.  
*Staff reported the applicant has been very cooperative and responsive to staff questions.*
- g. Unless specifically provided otherwise, the use shall comply with this code.  
*Staff reported the request complies with the Land Development Code.*

The following additional requirements must be considered in reviewing special uses pursuant to Section 13-332(a)(2).

- a. The use must not be detrimental to the neighborhood environment or unduly infringe on the rights of surrounding property owners.  
*Staff reported the proposed special use will not unduly infringe on the rights of surrounding property owners or be detrimental to the area. The two busiest times at the church will be Sunday morning and Wednesday evening with worship services taking place indoors. The church looks to act as a community gathering place during all other times of the week for locals to utilize.*
- b. A vehicular parking or traffic problem must not be created, and the vehicular average daily traffic created on local roads must not be increased in such a manner as to degrade the established function of the roadway or create hazards to public health or safety. The commission and staff may rely on input from the Florida Department of Transportation, the Florida Highway Patrol and the sheriff's office in making this determination.  
*Staff reported as previously stated, there will be two peak times for traffic and those will be during worship services. The church concept plan shows ample parking to provide quick and efficient exit off the road. During the site plan review, traffic will be a reviewer in order to mitigate the potential for any negative impacts.*
- c. Screening and buffering sufficient to minimize interference with the enjoyment of surrounding properties may be required.  
*Staff reported per LDC requirements, screening and buffering will be required to mitigate the potential for any negative impacts to neighbors.*

The Special Master finds pursuant to 13-104 and in consideration of the conditions in 13-332 of the Sumter County Land Development Code, that the application is consistent with the assigned major special use and the policies of the Sumter County Unified Comprehensive Plan.

The Special Master finds that staff has satisfied the conditions for the major special use in its report and testimony and the record is otherwise complete.

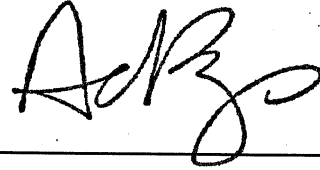
Therefore, the Special Master recommends, after balancing the rights of the applicant with the impact proposed changes may have on the public at large, Application TR-23-04285 for APPROVAL to the Board of County Commissioners at the commission meeting on June 27, 2023, subject to the following conditions:

1. Site development shall be generally as shown on the conceptual plan. The conceptual site plan includes a multipurpose building that does not exceed 30,000 sq. ft., parking, and open space. Expansion of the proposed building or the addition of other structures shall require a new special use permit.
2. A major site development permit must be issued, and improvements started within two years. Site development must be complete before the property can be utilized for the church.
3. Paved parking shall be required for handicap access and to support daily business needs.
4. Temporary uses of the property during and prior to construction require a public event permit. This includes fundraisers, church picnics, and revivals.

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5. Notwithstanding the previous expiration conditions, this special use permit may be suspended or revoked by the Board of County Commissioners consistent with Section 13-333(e), Sumter County Land Development Code.

**ORDERED** this 5th day of June, 2023.



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Amanda Boggus  
Special Master  
Fla. Bar No. 76849