



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

A COAST GUARD CITY

Planning and Community Development Department

AGENDA ITEM

Case No: CUP 22-22
Proposal: Community Center (food co-op operations)
Applicant: Rachel Jones
Owner: Brendan & Rachel Jones and Tripp & Sherry LaRose
Location: 505 Sawmill Creek Road
Legal: Lots 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14, Block 20, Sitka Townsite, US Survey 1474 Tract A
Zone: R-2 Multifamily residential district
Size: 35,678 SF
Parcel ID: 1-2920-000 and 1-2980-000
Existing Use: Church, residential
Adjacent Use: Single-family and duplex housing, education
Utilities: Existing
Access: Sawmill Creek Road

KEY POINTS AND CONCERNS

- Neighborhood is primarily residential including single-family and duplex dwellings.
- The property was previously the Presbyterian Church and is now being redeveloped for residential and community use.
- If approved, Sitka Food Co-op would use the space as a permanent location for distribution.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Aerial
Attachment B: Floor Plan & Parking Plan
Attachment C: Plat
Attachment D: Photos
Attachment E: Applicant Materials
Attachment F: Public Comment

BACKGROUND/PROJECT DESCRIPTION

As this property is redeveloped, the new owners would like to explore opportunities for mixed-uses including residential, short-term rental, and community center activities.

While not defined in the zoning code, community center is identified as a conditional use in the R-2 district. The American Planning Association Glossary of Zoning, Development, and Planning Terms offers a definition for community center, “*A building to be used as a place of meeting, recreation, or social activity and not operated for profit and in which neither alcoholic beverages or meals are normally dispensed or consumed.*” The key elements in this definition are that activities are social/recreational in nature, non-commercial, and do not include bar/restaurant type services.

The applicants would like the designation of community center to provide for a permanent location for the Sitka Food Co-op: While the Presbyterian Church was still active, the Sitka Food Co-op used this location as their distribution location. The activity generally includes the receipt of freight, sorting/packing of food, and pick-ups by co-op. Some incidental sales of extra items are available to non co-op members. The application states that during construction on the building, pick-ups would be approximately 4 times a month (once a week), and increase to 2 or 3 times per week once construction is complete.

The Commission will need to consider whether the food co-op use of this location is of an appropriate scale and type such as to be considered a social/community activity that does not rise to the level of commercial activity that would not be appropriate under the intent of both a community center as well as the R-2 district.

ANALYSIS

1. CRITERIA TO BE USED IN DETERMINING THE IMPACT OF CONDITIONAL USES.¹

a. Amount of vehicular traffic to be generated and impacts of the traffic on nearby land uses:

A total of 30 parking spaces are depicting in the parking plan with two as ADA accessible spaces. SGC 22.20.100(G) Parking Spaces Required for Particular Uses identifies “community buildings” as a particular use and requires one parking space for each ten seats or for each ten occupants, based on maximum seating occupancy. The basis of seating to determine parking requirements can be problematic in these kinds of cases wherein seating is not an integral element of the use. Food markets, which generally have high traffic demand, require one parking space for every 300 square feet of gross floor area – this would result in a parking requirement of approximately 7 spaces. While not necessarily a like requirement (food co-op operations should not have the same traffic

¹ § 22.24.010.E

intensity as a grocery store/food market), the applicant has agreed to ensure 7 spaces be available for the food co-op use.

The 16 dwelling units would require 24 parking spaces, requiring a total need of 31 parking spaces. While 30 are identified on the parking plan, the front parking lot adjacent to Sawmill Creek Road does have capacity for more parking to be added; this lot currently accommodates approximately fourteen parking spaces. A condition of approval has been added that the final parking plan submitted with the building permit for the multi-family development will provide for at least a total of 31 parking spaces unless otherwise altered through a parking variance request.

The plan overall is anticipated to increase traffic as the site has not been used consistently for several years, and multifamily use is likely going to generate more traffic than the church did (outside of peak service/event hours). The property will be accessed from Baranof Street, a municipal right-of-way.

b. Amount of noise to be generated and its impacts on surrounding land use: Noise associated with food co-op operations should be fairly minimal. Freight deliveries and traffic noise from pick-up will occur, but should be fairly short windows and take place during daytime hours.

c. Odors to be generated by the use and their impacts: Potential odor impacts are minimal. Garbage shall be disposed of in municipal containers and in accordance with Sitka General Code requirements.

d. Hours of operation: Available year-round.

e. Location along a major or collector street: Accessed from Baranof Street via Sawmill Creek Road.

f. Potential for users or clients to access the site through residential areas or substandard street creating a cut-through traffic scenario: It is possible that users could access Baranof Street via DeGroff Street instead of Sawmill Creek Road. The Co-op should encourage its members to utilize Sawmill Creek Road to access the property.

g. Effects on vehicular and pedestrian safety: From the Sawmill Creek Road side, this is a busy stretch of road that currently has heavy traffic use – this proposal is unlikely to generate significantly more/noticeably more traffic. A pedestrian improvement and resurfacing project is planned for this section of Sawmill Creek Road, construction to take place in the summer/fall of 2022. However, this proposal does represent more traffic entering on to Baranof Street than is currently the norm. While a smaller, more residential street, Baranof Street is flat, improved, and does not have particular issues with visibility.

h. Ability of the police, fire, and EMS personnel to respond to emergency calls on the site: Property is accessible to emergency response.

i. Logic of the internal traffic layout: Ten parking spaces are on the front lot that has access from both Sawmill Creek Road and Baranof Street. The back lot with 20 spaces is accessed from Baranof Street.

j. Effects of signage on nearby uses: No signage proposed. All signs shall comply with Sitka General Code.

k. Presence of existing or proposed buffers on the site or immediately adjacent the site: There is some fencing and landscaping along the street frontages which will be expanded as part of the project.

l. Relationship if the proposed conditional use is in a specific location to the goals, policies, and objectives of the comprehensive plan: The proposal does not appear to be contrary to any goals or objectives of the comprehensive plan.

m. Other criteria that surface through public comments or planning commission review: None at this time.

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Department recommends that the Planning Commission approve the conditional use permit application for a community center at 505 Sawmill Creek Road subject to the recommended conditions of approval, and on the basis that the Commission concludes that the food co-op is of an appropriate scale and use so as to be considered a social/community use rather than a commercial one.

RECOMMENDED MOTIONS

- 1) **“I move to approve the conditional use permit for a community center at 505 Sawmill Creek Road in the R-2 multifamily residential district subject to the attached conditions of approval. The property is also known as Lots 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14, Block 20, Sitka Townsite, US Survey 1474 Tract A. The request is filed by Rachel Jones. The owners of record are Brendan & Rachel Jones and Tripp & Sherry LaRose.**

Conditions of Approval

1. The facility shall be operated consistent with the application, narrative, and plans that were submitted with the request.
2. The Planning Commission, at its discretion, may schedule a public hearing at any time for the purpose of resolving issues with the request and mitigating adverse impacts on nearby properties upon receipt of meritorious complaint or evidence of violation of conditions of approval.
3. Failure to comply with all applicable tax laws shall be grounds for revocation of the

conditional use permit.

4. Any signs must comply with Sitka General Code 22.20.090.
5. Prior to operation of the facility, the Planning Department will be provided with a final parking plan that includes a minimum of 31 total of parking spaces on the property to provide 7 spaces for the community center and 24 spaces for the multi-family use unless otherwise altered through an approved parking variance.
6. Failure to comply with any of the above conditions may result in revocation of the conditional use permit.

2) “I move to adopt and approve the required findings for conditional use permits as listed in the staff report.”

The Planning Commission shall not approve a proposed development unless it first makes the following findings and conclusions:²

1. The city may use design standards and other elements in this code to modify the proposal. A conditional use permit may be approved only if all of the following findings can be made regarding the proposal and are supported by the record that the granting of the proposed conditional use permit will not:
 - a. Be detrimental to the public health, safety, and general welfare;
 - b. Adversely affect the established character of the surrounding vicinity; nor
 - c. Be injurious to the uses, property, or improvements adjacent to, and in the vicinity of, the site upon which the proposed use is to be located.
2. The granting of the proposed conditional use permit is consistent and compatible with the intent of the goals, objectives, and policies of the comprehensive plan and any implementing regulation,
3. All conditions necessary to lessen any impacts of the proposed use are conditions that can be monitored and enforced.
4. The proposed use will not introduce hazardous conditions at the site that cannot be mitigated to protect adjacent properties, the vicinity, and the public health, safety and welfare of the community from such hazard.
5. The conditional use will be supported by, and not adversely affect, adequate public facilities and services; or that conditions can be imposed to lessen any adverse impacts on such facilities and services.
6. Burden of Proof. The applicant has the burden of proving that the proposed conditional use meets all of the criteria in subsection B of this section.

² §22.30.160(C)—Required Findings for Conditional Use Permits