



## Planning Commission Staff Report

October 28, 2009  
Item 5.c.

**SUBJECT:** PCUP-259

**APPLICANT:** Kenneth Walton/New Beginnings Church

**PROPERTY OWNER:** David and Debbie Sell

**PURPOSE:** Application for a conditional use permit to establish a new church within an existing office building

**GENERAL PLAN:** Retail/Highway/Service Commercial, Business and Profession Offices

**ZONING:** Planned Unit Development-Industrial (PUD-I) District

**LOCATION:** 4455 Stoneridge Drive

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Exhibit A, Proposed Conditions of Approval
2. Exhibit B, Site Plan, Floor Plan, and Applicant's Statement of Operation
3. Exhibit C, Location Map
4. Exhibit D, Notification Map

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New Beginnings Church is proposing a 75-80 person church at one of the office buildings within the Santa Rita Office Center at Santa Rita Road and Stoneridge Drive.

### BACKGROUND

New Beginnings has applied to operate a church within an existing one-story building located at 4455 Stoneridge Drive, which had previously been used as the education building for the Pleasanton Community Church since the late 1980s. When the Pleasanton Community Church (now Fountain Community Church) held its worship services at the nearby 4439 Stoneridge Drive (a separate building in the same office center), many church-affiliated adult and children programs were held in this education building. As Fountain now holds its services and ancillary programs at 4439 Stoneridge Drive, the education building at 4455 Stoneridge Drive has become available for other

uses. New Beginning has filed an application to hold Sunday services and church-associated weekday functions at this building.

The office center where the proposed use is to be located is a Planned Unit Development (PUD-82-16) Industrial District that requires that a conditional use permit for churches and religious institutions.

## SITE DESCRIPTION

Santa Rita Office Center occupies an approximately 4.3-acre site on the southeast corner of Stoneridge Drive and Santa Rita Road. The office center contains nine buildings, totaling about 55,000 square feet of building area. Existing businesses within the office center are a mix of office uses, including medical clinics, as well as the Fountain Valley Community Church. The subject building, 4455 Stoneridge Drive, is at the southernmost end of the site. Access driveways to the office center are located off of Stoneridge Drive and Rheem Drive.



Project Location

The subject site is surrounded by commercial, office, and light industrial uses to the east and south, and residential uses to the north and west, across from Stoneridge Drive, Santa Rita Road, and Rheem Drive.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

New Beginning International Church proposes to occupy an approximately 4,608 square foot building located in the southeast corner of the office center. New Beginning states that it has been serving the Tri-Valley area for the past four years. It has had a steady membership of 75-80 people (both adults and children) and this membership is expected to remain constant in the upcoming years.

The primary activity of the church is its Sunday service which would be held at 10:30 a.m. The Sunday service typically has 35-40 adults, and those seats would be in the "Open Office" area, which would be converted to the sanctuary (see Exhibit A, Floor Plan). In addition to the Sunday service, the church would also have church related functions and activities at the proposed location, generally as follows:

- Small group meetings on Wednesday and Thursday from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m.
- Monthly women's meeting on Saturday
- Occasional small group gatherings on Sunday evening
- Office functions Monday - Friday

The proposed children's ministry is essentially a Sunday school. No daycare program or additional children-specific programs other than Sunday school would be held at the proposed location.

The tenant space is built in a standard office setting, i.e. offices, conference room, and a reception area. Within the tenant area, there is also a kitchen, two bathrooms, and a file area. The building has two entry points. One is located on the south side of the building, and the other is on the east side of the building. No interior improvements to the building are proposed at this time.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **Land Use and Noise**

The subject site is located in the Santa Rita Office Center and is zoned Planned Unit Development – Industrial (PUD-I) district. Churches and similar religious facilities are conditionally allowed uses in the Industrial Park District. Therefore, a Conditional Use Permit must be granted in order for the New Beginning to establish its church at this site.

One of the primary concerns in reviewing a conditional use permit application is the effect of the proposed use on surrounding uses. The nearest residential properties, located on Bowen Street, area approximately 280 feet to the southeast of the project site, separated by Rheem Drive. The adjoining business includes office, "light" industrial use, medical offices, and another church. Most of the businesses in the office complex as well as those businesses southeast on Rheem Drive operate between

7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Fountain Community Church is the only exception, as its worship service is on Sunday, also at 10:30 a.m.

Churches and religious facilities are a common use in and around residential and commercial/industrial areas, and they are typically regarded as “good neighbors” because their peak activity occurs at different times than regular office uses. Pleasanton Community Church started its service in this office center in late 1980s and now Fountain Community Church holds regular services and activities at this center. Staff is unaware of any land use problems associated with either church. Given that all of New Beginning's activities would be held inside the building, the proposed use is not expected to generate any significant impacts, such as noise, on the nearest residents, or on other businesses either in the same office center or in the surrounding areas.

In the unlikely event that New Beginnings does not operate as a "good neighbor", then to protect nearby residents and businesses, staff has included a “standard” use permit condition of approval that allows the City to review the project again to add mitigating conditions should any future complaints regarding noise levels occur. (Condition 3.) Such condition could include requiring soundproofing, reducing the number of occupants, etc.

### **Parking and Circulation**

The Santa Rita Office Center contains approximately 55,000 square feet in floor area; among which 12,000 square feet of building area are approved to be used as medical offices. As such, the office center provides a total of 223 on-site parking spaces, meeting the parking requirement for both standard office uses and medical uses.

Fountain Community Church is an existing tenant in the office center. The conditional use permit granted to Fountain Community Church, as successor to Pleasanton Community Church, allows for a congregation of 200 people. Sunday services for Fountain are held at 10:30 a.m., the same time as proposed by New Beginning.

With a combined attendance of 280 people (200 people from Fountain and 75-80 people from New Beginning) coming for the 10:30 a.m. Sunday services, staff has analyzed whether the existing 233-space parking lot would be adequate to support the parking and circulation demands of the simultaneous uses.

Sunday service is normally a group function. Instead of traveling individually, parishioners often attend services in a group and as a family. As such, carpooling to Sunday service is common. Assuming that one-fourth (on the conservative side) of the parishioners carpool on Sunday, there would be 210 vehicles arriving for services at both churches. Furthermore, the office, light industrial and medical offices are not expected to be operating on Sunday mornings, so those uses are not making simultaneous demands on parking. Thus, staff believes the existing 233 parking spaces are adequate to support the attendance from both churches on Sunday mornings.

With New Beginning's peak parking demand on Sunday morning, and only limited use during the normal 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday - Friday weekdays, the proposed New Beginnings use would not create a parking impact on the office center.

In terms of circulation, the existing parking spaces at the office center are spread in the front of, in back of, and between the buildings. Vehicles arriving for services are unlikely to be in a queue to wait for the car in the front to pull into a parking space before proceeding down the drive aisle. As Fountain's main entrance faces the west (Santa Rita Road), its parishioners would conveniently use the parking spaces between their building and the road. As the building for New Beginning is located in the back of the office center, its parishioners are expected to use the parking in the back (instead of the spaces in the front), and perhaps use the driveway off of Rheem Drive for easy access. Therefore, circulation in the parking lot appears to be appropriate even though both churches will hold Sunday services at the same time.



Aerial of the Project Site

If actual operations differ from staff's expectations, to ensure that adequate parking is provided at the project site, staff has included a condition of approval (Condition 4) requiring the applicant and/or the property owner to obtain additional parking or to modify Sunday service schedule should parking become an issue.

## **PUBLIC NOTICE**

Notices regarding the proposed conditional use permit application and related public hearing were mailed to property owners and tenants within 1,000 feet of the subject property. The Santa Rita Office Center Owners' Association has unanimously supported the proposed use. No other person has contacted staff at the time this report is being prepared.

## **FINDINGS**

The Planning Commission must make the following findings prior to granting a use permit:

**A. That the proposed location of the conditional use is in accordance with the objectives of the zoning ordinance and the purpose of the district in which the site is located.**

Some of the objectives of the zoning ordinance are to: foster a harmonious, convenient, workable relationship among land uses, to protect existing land use from inharmonious influences and harmful intrusions, and to insure that public and private lands ultimately are used for the purposes which are most appropriate and beneficial to the City as a whole. The subject building is located in the Santa Rita Office Center which has the characteristics of an industrial park district. One purpose of the Industrial Park District is to provide locations for uses that can operate in close proximity to commercial and residential uses with minimum mutual adverse impact. As proposed and conditioned, the proposed church use would be consistent with the zoning ordinance objectives and Industrial Park District purpose in that it would provide religious services to the community and would be conducted so as to not impact the surrounding uses because all activities are conducted indoors at times when the adjacent commercial businesses are generally not in operation. The applicant will also be required to mitigate any future nuisances that may occur as a result of the proposed use. Therefore, staff recommends that this finding be made.

**B. That the proposed location of the conditional use and the conditions under which it would be operated or maintained will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare, or materially injurious to the properties or improvements in the vicinity.**

Religious facilities are a common use within or near residential and commercial / industrial areas in Pleasanton. The City's past experience shows that these uses make "good neighbors". Religious facilities generally do not subject surrounding uses to heavy truck traffic, hazardous odors, or other objectionable influences. If the recommended conditions of approval are complied with, the proposed use will not detrimentally impact surrounding uses. All streets around the site are

designed per City standards to provide safe ingress and egress into and out of the site. In addition, staff believes the proposed use would have adequate on-site parking to meet the demand. Conditions have also been included that would require the applicant to mitigate any future nuisances as a result of the proposed use, including providing additional on-site parking. In summary, staff recommends that this finding be made.

**C. That the proposed conditional use will comply with each of the applicable provisions of the zoning ordinances.**

The Planned Unit Development (PUD) approval conditionally permits the establishment of a church. Granting a conditional use permit to the applicant would be consistent with the City's ability to regulate the PUD approval and related zoning regulations. Therefore, staff recommends that this finding be made.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

This project is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, Section 15301, Existing Facilities, Class 1, because the proposed use is in an existing building where no modifications are planned. Therefore, no environmental document accompanies this report.

## **CONCLUSION**

As proposed by the applicant and conditioned, staff believes that New Beginning International Church will be compatible with the surrounding businesses and will not detrimentally effect the surrounding commercial uses or residences. Conditions of approval have been included which will ensure that the safety and general welfare of the surrounding areas, and the City in general, is maintained. Staff believes that the church will fulfill a community need and that the proposed location is appropriate.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve Case PCUP-259 by taking the following actions:

1. Make the required conditional use findings as listed in the staff report; and,
2. Approve Case PCUP-259 subject to the conditions listed in Exhibit A.

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