Ponderay - City Planning

Special Use Permit Application

Site/Project Information

Brief Project Description: Construct a three story building 140' x 40' in size to include up to 48 housing units and up to 2 Director suites. Build a 45'x45' office/activity building and a 12'x24' storage shed, garden area and play ground for a Transitional Living Center for homeless and struggling people.

Project Representative: Toby L. Walrath / Barry Johnson

E-mail: walrathoutdoors@gmail.com

Phone #'s: (406) 369-5119 / (208) 290-7061

Location: Triangle Drive Ponderay, Idaho

Legal Description: SEC. 11, T57N, R2W, Schweitzer Plaza, BLK 2 Lot 8

Applicant/Owner Information

Name: Helping Hands Healing Hearts

Legal Owner: James Fenton Co. Inc.

Signature:

Mailing Address: 221 S. Division Ave. Sandpoint,

ID 83864

E -Mail: office@ghsandpoint.org

Phone #'s: (208) 263-6378

Ponderay Planning Department

File Number:

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Total \$1,195. -

Zoning:

Commercial

Received By: Date:

Comments:

RPP07660020080A

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PLANNING OFFICE CITY OF PONDERAY DocuSign Envelope ID: A50315E2-C8FB-4/C1-AA80-A2642C15B2F2

3 August 2021

KayLeigh Miller, Planning Director

CITY OF PONDERAY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

288 Fourth Street

Ponderay, Idaho 83852

Attn: Ponderay Planning Department

RE: Site Plan and Special Use Application

Lot 8, Block 2 of Schweitzer Plaza

Parcel # RPP07660020080A

As the current owner of the commercial parcel referenced as Lot 8, Block 2 of Schweitzer Plaza in Ponderay, I hereby authorize Helping Hands Healing Hearts, Inc. to apply for site plan and special use permit approval with the Ponderay Planning Department.

This parcel is currently in escrow from James Fenton Company, Inc. (seller) to Helping Hands Healing Hearts, Inc. (buyer).

Sincerely,

JAMES FENTON COMPANY, INC.

DocuSigned by:

Julie Meyer, President

08-03-2021 | 15:20 PDT

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PLANNING OFFICE CITY OF PONDERAY



Ponderay City Planning Special Use Permit Application

FOR a PROPOSED Transitional Living Center

Location: SEC. 11, T57N, R2W, Schweitzer Plaza, BLK 2 Lot 8 Ponderay, Idaho

PLANNING OFFICE CITY OF PONDERAY daho Revised

Requirement Verification

9-7-3: APPLICATIONS:

- A. In Writing This document is intended to satisfy the requirement to submit a special use permit request in writing to the planning and zoning commission and to provide information for any other applicable agencies or individuals requesting the information contained within this document.
- B. Required Information-
 - 1. A written Narrative statement addressing the following:
 - a. How the proposed use will, in fact, constitute a variance or special use.

The proposed transitional living center has been categorized as a mixed-use facility including multifamily dwellings (Greater than 6 units, Special use permit) with associated common area (laundry facilities and computer lab) and personal services (counselling, permitted outright).

The proposed building project includes the construction of a three story building. Current zoning codes allow for building heights of two stories.

b. Why the proposed variance or special use is necessary or desired.

In order to realize the full potential of the proposed use, Helping Hands Healing Hearts would strongly prefer to be allowed to construct a building that is three stories in height. By allowing this variance, more living quarters could be included in the building plans. This would provide the opportunity to help more people who are homeless or struggling.

> c. Whether the Proposed Variance or special use will be harmonious with and in accordance with the general objectives, or with any specific objective, of the comprehensive plan and/or this title.

The proposed variance will be located in an area where light industrial uses are permitted. Also a somewhat similar use: The Bonner Gospel Mission is in the vicinity although it is recognized that this organization has been in existence since before the current Ponderay planning and zoning codes took effect. The proposed layout of the buildings, parking areas, landscaping and lighting are harmonious with current and future uses because it will in effect be a commercial use with office spaces and daily visits from clients. The program envisioned by Helping Hands Healing Hearts will include a room dedicated to learning how to perform basic life skills. This may require teachers, consultants, or agencies to visit the site to perform evaluations or implement various curriculums.

However, the use will also include quality living accommodations that will provide a play ground area for children and a garden area that will provide an opportunity that is both therapeutic and practical in nature. The attached Site Design shows the well-planned layout that is highly functional, provides for human nurturing and yet serves as a commercial building with commercial curb appeal.

d. Whether the proposed variance or special use will be designed, constructed, operated and maintained to be a harmonious and appropriate with the existing or intended character of the general vicinity and that such use will not change the essential character of the same area.

The proposed special use will include modern buildings, fulltime staff, routine maintenance that will include the buildings and grounds in all seasons. The proposed use will not significantly increase noise or industrial activity. Existing trees located on the property will remain to whatever extent possible and the landscaping will not be extraordinary.

The construction materials will be modern and build to code with one notable and requested exception: a third story, that will accommodate 16 additional living units.

e. The effect of the proposed variance or special use on adjacent property and whether it will be hazardous or disturbing to existing neighboring uses.

The proposed use is unlikely to have any impact or effect on adjacent properties. The clients served will undergo pre-evaluations and will be referred to more appropriate programs if they are found to be violent, drug/alcohol addicted or otherwise unable to perform the requirements of program entry.

f. The identity of the owner or purchaser of the lot which is subject to the proposed variance or special use.

The identity of the purchaser of the lot which is subject to the proposed variance or special use is:

Helping Hands Healing Hearts Inc.

The current public service provided by Helping Hands Healing Hearts Inc.is performed in Sandpoint, Idaho and includes the provision of food, clothing, housewares, benevolence, spiritual and emotional support.

The future expansion of activities may continue to include the current services but will additionally include:

- 32-48 living units
- A day center with offices
 - Conference room
 - Computers
- Helping Hands Healing Hearts (continued ministry of giving)
 - Showers
 - Life Skills courses
- g. Whether the property will be served adequately by essential public services and utilities such as highways, streets, police and fire protection, drainage systems, refuse disposal, water and sewer, and schools; or that the persons or agencies responsible for the proposed variance or special use shall be able to provide adequately any such service or utility.

Utility, water and sewer services are available and agencies were contacted. SEE ATTACHMENT 1 for verification documents from agencies

h. Whether the proposed variance or special use will create excessive additional requirements at public cost for public services and utilities or will be detrimental to the economic welfare of the community.

The proposed use will be implemented with private funds and will not be dependent on any public services or utilities other than those paid for by the user. The use will be self-funded and not dependent on any governmental agency neither Federal, State, nor local municipal funds.

i. Whether the proposed variance or special use will lead to uses, activities, processes, materials, equipment and conditions of operation detrimental to any persons, property or the general welfare by reason of traffic, noise, smoke, fumes, glare or odor.

The uses from an industrial or environmental perspective are relatively benign in comparison to the existing and recently approved light industrial uses in the area.

j. Whether the property under the proposed variance or special use will have vehicular approaches which shall be so designed as not to create an interference with traffic on surrounding public roads.

The vehicular approaches have been so designed as to not create an interference with traffic on surrounding public roads. SEE ATTACHMENT 2 SITE DESIGN.

k. Whether the proposed variance or special use will result in the destruction, loss or damage of the natural, scenic or historic features of major importance.

The site design and location of proposed use will not result in the destruction, loss or damage of the natural, scenic or historic features of major importance.

 A description of the previous use of the property and the intended use, including hours of operation or use, number of employees or occupants, the system for delivery of materials, and the general nature of the business or occupancy.

The Lot is and has always been a vacant and undeveloped Lot.

2. The name, address and telephone number of applicant.

Helping Hands Healing Hearts Inc. 221 S. Division Ave Sandpoint, ID 83864 (208) 263-6378

Project Point of Contact: Toby Walrath - Chairman (406) 369-5119

3. The legal description of property.

Location: SEC. 11, T57N, R2W, Schweitzer Plaza, BLK 2 Lot 8 Ponderay, Idaho

4. A copy of the recorded deed showing proof of ownership.

SEE ATTACHMENT 3 Deed

5. The signature of the legal title holder, if different from the applicant, signifying approval of the application.

SEE ATTACHMENT 4 Signed Memo

6. The names and addresses of all adjoining property owners, provided on a separate sheet of paper.

SEE ATTACHMENT 5 Names and Addresses or Adjoining Property Owners

7. A vicinity map at the scale of one hundred feet to the inch (1" = 100') showing the current zone classifications and existing land use of adjoining property.

SEE ATTACHEMENT 6 Vicinity Map

8. Ten (10) copies of the following plans (suggested scale: 1" = 20')

SEE ATACHEMENTS 2 and 7

Overview and History of Helping Hands Healing Hearts (QH) and the Proposed Expansion to Include a <u>Transitional Living Center – "The Good Samaritan Inn"</u>

Helping Hands Healing Hearts (QH) began providing food, clothing and toiletry items to individuals and families in the Sandpoint, Idaho area four years ago and have already helped 1,730 individuals including 1071 adults and 659 dependents and 3,476 client visits.

Through this experience we have heard dozens of stories about homelessness and realized that the network of supporting organizations we already interface with on a daily basis makes us best suited to provide a solution to homelessness in our community.

In order to establish a base line for homelessness we collected data from state, local area agencies and our own statistics to compile the most comprehensive report regarding the issue of homelessness in the Panhandle region of Idaho.

The report's findings prompted further examination into potential solutions which included visits to other areas of the country to see firsthand the impacts that practical solutions have had on communities and individuals. It was during this evaluative process that The Good Samaritan Inn concept was born.

The concept is simple: Community Centered Help and Housing for People in Need.

There is currently no housing solution like the Good Samaritan Inn available in our local area. Our model utilizes a multi-faceted approach toward homelessness including a building with housing units and oversight by a full time ministry manager, day center, classrooms, computers, laundry and conversation area combined with resources to help clients learn how to manage their finances and behaviors after completing the program.

Trained teachers will provide education for life skills in conjunction with area health facilities and church-based ministries already committed to support our experiential center. This approach is holistic in nature and deals not only with symptoms of homelessness but also the root cause of it.

By focusing on life skills, mental, physical and spiritual health for the future instead of providing only a place to live and food, clients will be equipped to become productive citizens of our community. A community that has already rallied around those in need with 16 partnering churches, three partnering Ministries and 20 dedicated volunteers.

"There is a pressing need for housing for the homeless in our community that includes singles, couples, and families who do not fit into the guidelines of currently existing facilities."

Hearing strong expressions from the community for the need of a similar ministry to fill the void, the SCOG Church Council decided to resurrect the ministry under a new name and with a renewed focus. After a listening tour of three months with numerous Pastors and agency leaders throughout the community, Helping Hands Healing Hearts was established.

Several months of reorganizing and preparing in partnership with many other churches and agencies QH allowed us to offer material, mental, emotional and spiritual needs for people within our community.

It was through this ministry that QH discovered the true faces of homelessness in and around the Sandpoint area. In order to evaluate the seriousness of the issue, QH began a researching effort and what we discovered was profound.

Research and Data Collection

In order to portray the issue of homelessness in the Idaho Panhandle region accurately and objectively required the evaluation of data collected from various sources including State associations: Idaho Housing and Finance Association (IHFA) and local agencies: Bonner Gospel Mission (BGM), Life Choices Pregnancy Center (LCPC), Bonner County Homeless Transitions (BCHT), Sandpoint Community Resource Center (SCRC), Health and Welfare Navigation (HWN).

The research and data collected to assess the area-wide issue of homelessness can be most easily evaluated by identifying each data source separately and then coalescing the viewpoints with those volunteers who have witnessed the struggle first hand.

This point by point assessment was found to paint the most accurate picture and as the data continues to be collected and evaluated more clarity about the current state of this issue is being realized.

The current best research and evaluation performed regarding this issue is shown as follows:

Point-in-Time Homelessness Count

The Point-in-time data collection is performed annually through an effort coordinated by the IHFA. This data is generated by taking a snapshot of homelessness in Idaho each year on one night in January and then compiling the figures by regions. The greater Sandpoint, Idaho area includes Boundary, Bonner, Kootenai, Benewah, and Shoshone counties all of which are referred to collectively as "Region 1".

According to the 2019 Point-in Time- Homelessness-Count report for 2019 there were 173 homeless people counted in Region 1. Of those people 71 were found to be unsheltered and categorized into groups including those living in vehicles (14), those with inside non-housing (42) and those living outside (15).

The remaining 102 persons counted were either staying in emergency shelters (31) or in transitional housing facilities (71).

These numbers are representative of those experiencing homelessness in the region but data collection is difficult especially when collecting unsheltered counts and for identifying age and sex distribution. Although the methodology for counting is limited and cannot be used for actual numbers of homeless people these numbers do compliment the more verifiable data which demonstrates the fact of homelessness throughout the region.

Helping Hands Healing Hearts Client Data

The experience of dealing directly with homelessness in our community gets us closer to accurately quantifying the need of housing for individuals within the area.

However, these numbers are only representative of those individuals who utilize the services provided by one organization (QH) as there are other organizations and agencies that provide services for the needy which have also observed homelessness apart from those measured by QH. The other organizations will be discussed later in this section.

Lake Pend Oreille School District

The School Counselor for the Lake Pend Oreille School District (LPOSD) reported that the 2019 monthly average of homeless students enrolled in the district is 80.

While this data does not account for the remainder of family members who are not enrolled in a public school within the district it does demonstrate the occurrence of homelessness and the difficulty faced in finding housing. It can be safely assumed that there is at least one homeless adult (or a sibling) per homeless child and therefore that number is in actuality at least double. However, for the sake of taking data at face value and not surmising numbers we include this number only at its reported actual value.

When compared to the data points shown thus far from the IFHA, QH, and LPOSD these numbers are consistent with respect to the order of magnitude: 173, 157 and 80 respectively.

Other Sources of Data Collection

Noting the lack of availability of homelessness figures in the local area of Sandpoint, Idaho QH organizers requested support from other agencies and organizations to track the numbers of homeless people who come through their systems as patients and/or clients.

Efforts to combine the cooperation of six agencies, including QH, Bonner Gospel Mission, Life Choices Pregnancy Center, Bonner County Homeless Transitions, Sandpoint Community Resource Center, and Health and Welfare Navigation homeless statistics are being tracked by recording those individuals unable to be helped due to over whelming numbers, ill-suited programs, or other reasons. These numbers will be used to demonstrate a total number of homeless people in the Sandpoint area.

The results for January 2020 show that there were 58 total persons including 24 singles, 12 family units and 1 couple who did not have a dignified place to live.

This cooperative data collection effort will be calculated on a month to month basis. The reasoning behind identifying those individuals who are unable to be helped by existing programs is because that populous is the target population of the Good Samaritan Inn.

Alternative Facilities for Low Income People

Looking at raw housing numbers by contrasting the number of available housing units in Sandpoint to the number of people in need of housing there is a demonstrable deficiency in available housing.

While the aim of the Good Samaritan Inn is not to house people long term but rather to make available a program with direct oversight aimed at offering a place to stay temporarily and providing course work in living skills, spiritual well being and job searching, among others, it is important to assess the currently existing alternatives that may be available for people in need of housing.

Research into the housing crunch for people at or below the poverty level was conducted by seeking out the managers of the primary low housing entities in the area. What we found is that low income housing units available in Sandpoint are run by two primary entities: Whitewater Inc. and Syringa Property Management. Whitewater Inc. owns 6 complexes with 230 units, and Syringa owns 8 complexes with 186 units for a total of 416 housing units.

By interviewing three apartment managers, the Overseer of Syringa Property Management from the Boise, Idaho Office and the Idaho Housing and Finance Association Office in Coeur d' Alene we determined that:

Of the 230 units managed by Whitewater Inc. the annual income of any individual or family must be \$21,750 or below to qualify.

Of the 186 units managed by Syringa Property Management the annual income must be 50% of the area median which as of March 2020 is \$23,096.

One bedroom apartments represent the greatest needed housing unit type with a current waiting list of between 1-2 years. The waiting list for two bedroom units is 3-6 months and the waiting list for three bedroom housing units is 30-45 days.

In light of this information it is important to note that 77% of the clients serviced by Helping Hands Healing Hearts fall within a \$0-14,000 per year income bracket, 20% fall within a \$15-29,000 per year income bracket, 2.5% fall within a \$33-44,0000per year income bracket and .5% fall within a \$44-59,0000 per year income bracket.

The long waiting lists especially for single housing units exceeding reasonable timeframes (up to two years) to stay in housing such as motels, local shelters or with willing local families is indicative of a housing deficiency.

This deficiency combined with a need for practical living skills, health care and well being shows an apparent need for some type of quality housing that provides such services.

Local Shelters

There are local shelters with specific target groups that are providing some relief for the areas homeless but it is not enough to alleviate the problem completely. In order to provide a clearer picture of the shelter types available a brief overview of each is provided here.

<u>Bonner Gospel Mission (BGM)</u> is for men only and has certain requirements that must be met for entry. The program requires completion of daily chores and strict adherence to rules. This is a faith based program that is helping a small portion of men in need.

<u>Bonner Homeless Transitions (BHT)</u> is an organization designed for women and men with children that currently have two residential sites in the Sandpoint area consisting of nine units with the capacity to house up to 14 adults and 18 children, including single parents and families.

Another facility located just outside of Sandpoint in Hope, Idaho provides four single family homes and a fifth residence with four units for single women.

After residents acquire a job they are required to pay 30% of their income to BHT.

<u>Freedom House</u> has two facilities for those recently released from jail: Sweet Magnolia for women and Bethesda House for men. Sweet Magnolia can house 11 women and charges \$400/mo program fee after the first month, and the Bethesda House can house 8 men and charges \$300/mo program fee after first month.

<u>Priest River Ministries</u> primarily provides ongoing support for women and children of domestic violence, sexual assault and trafficking. They offer services at no initial cost to clients but may charge a fee after one month. Although they are faith-based, they use federal funding.

Helping Hands Healing Hearts- Our Ministry

Helping Hands Healing Hearts is not officially a shelter at this time but is well positioned to build and operate the Good Samaritan Inn.

To run a ministry like Helping Hands Healing Hearts takes exactly the attributes of its name sake – hands and hearts. With so many dedicated volunteers and organizations staged to help us launch this program we are confident that it will be successful.

Concluding Summary of Need

An objective view of the data regarding the state of homelessness in Boundary and Bonner Counties shows a need for some type of additional services. There are far more people without a place to live than there are homes or programs to provide meaningful housing assistance for them.

Additionally, there is currently no housing solution like the Good Samaritan Inn available in the local area. Our model utilizes a multi-faceted approach to the issue of homelessness including a three story building with 18 studio apartments, a full time ministry manager day center, classrooms, computers, laundry and conversation area combined with resources to help clients learn how to manage their finances and behaviors after completing the program. This approach is holistic in nature and deals not only with symptoms of homelessness but also the root cause of it. This is described in detail in the next section (Goals and Objectives).

By focusing on life skills, mental, physical and spiritual health for the future instead of providing only a place to live and food, clients will be equipped to become productive citizens of our community. A community that has already rallied around those in need with 16 partnering churches, three partnering Ministries and 20 dedicated volunteers.

Because there is a strong need for such a program as GSI and because of the support we have seen by our community this project will serve a growing need that can turn the disparity of people into a productive, life changing reality.

Goals and Objectives

First and foremost, our mission is to address the pressing need for housing in Boundary and Bonner Counties by providing housing for the homeless (singles, couples, families) and help them learn of and possibly grow in faith in Jesus Christ to become independent and productive citizens in our community.

Outcomes: Reduce homelessness

Objectives: Establish a long term program to affect as many people in our community as possible