

21 May 2013

City Council Members,

In five minutes I'm suppose to tell you all the reasons why a permit should not be given to the New Life Christian Center and Academy. That's impossible. Fortunately, the major reasons I've already given you in my report. In addition, you know this. Permits are required to have a garage sell, put in a new water heater or make a modification to our home. The Pastor did not obtain a permit for a shelter until 22 Nov 2012. By his own admittance, he has been running a shelter for over a year. This by a man who is familiar with the workings of the city. If anyone should know that a permit is required for a shelter, he would. Yet he did not obtain one until after we complained about the homeless showing up. That shows a total disrespect for the rules of the city. In addition, not once did the Pastor come to us and ask us what we thought about having a shelter in our neighborhood. That shows a total disrespect for us. When we met with him before the first Planning Commission meeting, he would not answer our questions about why he was doing this without asking us. This alone should be reason enough to deny a permit.

Since the last Planning Commission meeting, I've also sent the Pastor's emails and called asking him to meet with me to go over our concerns. He did not answer any of my emails or return my calls.

But there is more. He violates the City of Lompoc Municipal Codes by changing the status of his church to a hotel by charging the homeless to stay there, and endangering our lives with potentially dangerous homeless as I showed you in the KCOY/KKFX News Alert I sent you last Wednesday. He admits he checks Megan list for each of the homeless before allowing them to stay there. That is proof that someone from Megan's list could in fact come into the neighborhood because they want to use the shelter.

In addition, how can the property values be protected with a shelter in the neighborhood when realtors, mortgage lenders, and bankers all tells us our property values will decrease when there is a shelter nearby. Even business owners have usage clauses which prevent leasers from using their buildings as shelters. Reason: Shelters are bad for business. And if you approve the permit for a shelter, you have just opened the door to place a shelter in any neighborhood where there is a church. How many people will want to buy a house near a church when they find out that church can turn into a shelter? I know I would not. And then Realtors will have to announce that to perspective buyers.

Another reason: the Pastor breaks his own rules in the running of the shelter. He has allowed homeless to come into the shelter after 9:00 p.m. and leave after 6:30 a.m. which I documented and submitted to Lucille Breese. He doesn't do drug testing when it was even obvious to me that something was wrong with one of the homeless during one of my 16 visits. I gave you the details on this in my report.

I've also pointed out to you that the Bridge House has more than enough room for all the homeless who have been staying at the church. In fact, the church has been housing from 7 to 10 individuals since February. This shows that there is not a need for a shelter at the church since the Bridge House will hold not only the ones they now have but also have plenty of room for those at the church. So, why is it we need this very limited particular shelter in a residential area?

I also knew the Pastor would get as many people here to support his position as possible. That is why I did the Survey at Walmart. I didn't know whether the people of Lompoc were for or against a shelter in a residential area. The Survey showed the people of Lompoc are 2 to 1 against a shelter in a residential area. I hope the voting majority of Lompoc has some influence on your decision. For we could have provided just a many signatures against a shelter as he did for. But we've tried to keep the emotion out of this and base the permit decision on facts.

Finally, I showed you the police report on our neighborhood. You saw how police responses have gone from 4 to 8 to 22 for last year and this year's rate is on track for 28 to 32 responses. The only change, we have a shelter in the neighborhood. We've lived in our home for 36 years and we have been visited by Jehovah Witnesses, Mormons, girl scouts, boy scouts and others solicitors but never until the church became a shelter have we had to deal with homeless coming to our home. Just last week, a young man on drugs came to my home. The police arrested him in front of Mr. Pope's house. Before that, a drunk from the shelter knocked on my neighbors home at 6:30 in the morning. In another case, another called the police to take away a drunk from her door. And just last week a man wanted by the police was at the shelter. Do you now see how our peace and safety has been shattered by the presence of a shelter in our neighborhood. Regardless of how safe the Pastor says the Homeless he is housing are, they are still homeless and the word "homeless" carries a very negative connotation. Based upon all this and the information I gave you, I must ask you to deny a permit for a shelter at the New Life Christian Center and Academy. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,
Marlin Panther

Marlin Panther

*P.S. Two people arrived before 9:30 Today,
which is against the rules*