

STAFF REPORT

HEARINGS: Planning & Zoning Commission: May 12, 2025

APPLICANT: Unitarian Universalist Church in the Pines

FILE NUMBER: SE-24-14

PURPOSE: Special Exception Use Permit for a Place of Public Assembly, namely a community center

GENERAL LOCATION: West Side of Keye Drive, approximately 450' from Toucan Trail

PARCEL KEY NUMBER: 185622

APPLICANT'S REQUEST:

The petitioner is requesting a Special Exception Use Permit to establish a place of Public Assembly, namely a community center. The proposal involves the construction of a one-story, 3,475-square-foot neighborhood community center. The center will operate seven days a week with 1-3 staff members, from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Congregational meetings will occur up to 1-3 times per week, including Sunday services, with attendance ranging from small groups of 4-8 people to larger groups of up to 80 people on Sundays, should the church grow. On Sundays and during special events like Christmas, operating hours may extend until 9:00 PM or 10:00 PM. Parking requirements are based on seating capacity, with a maximum of 80 seats, which necessitates 24 regular parking spaces plus one handicap-accessible space.

SITE CHARACTERISTICS:

Site Size: .90 acres

**Surrounding Zoning;
Land Uses:** North: R1A (Residential): Developed
South: R1A (Residential): Developed
East: R1A (Residential): Right of Way/Single Family: Developed
West: R1A (Residential): Developed

Current Zoning: R1A (Residential)

**Future Land Use
Map Designation:** Residential

Flood Zone: X

UTILITIES REVIEW:

The Hernando County Utilities Department (HCUD) does not currently supply water or sewer service to this parcel. Water and sewer are not available to this parcel. HCUD has no objection to the requested Special Exception use permit to construct a 3,475 GSF one story building for a place of public assembly, subject to Health Department approval of an appropriate onsite sewage treatment and disposal system for this parcel. Parcel Key # 185622

ENGINEERING REVIEW:

This project is located within the Oman Quarry watershed, with a Base Flood Elevation (BFE) of 28.5' NAVD 88. The lot itself sits at an elevation of approximately 34'. The driveway connections, parking spaces, and overall parking lot layout must adhere to the Hernando County Facility Design Guideline Standards.

LAND USE REVIEW:

The subject property is located in the Weeki Wachee Acres Subdivision and was designated R1A/ Residential Single Family and Mobile Homes. The surrounding properties have been developed as Single Family/ Mobile home.

In accordance with County LDRs, if a developer fails to obtain a building permit for the vertical construction of the principal or primary building within a period of not more than two (2) years from the approval date or the special exception use is not established during this period, then the special exception use permit shall be null and void.

SETBACKS

Minimum Building Setbacks:

North (Side):	10'
South (Side):	10'
East (front):	25'
West (Rear):	20'

PARKING

The minimum land development regulations (LDRs) would require 0.3 parking spaces per seat based on maximum occupancy. The LDRs indicate that places of public assembly may have up to fifty percent of the required parking spaces (including aisles) surfaced with grass, lawn or other materials as designated in the County parking lot standards; however, if parking demand is such that said grass, lawn or other material is caused to be damaged or destroyed to the extent that said grass or lawn ceases to grow, or the other material otherwise causes a nuisance to the neighborhood, then paving may be required by the Zoning Administrator

Comments: Parking requirements are calculated for a place of public assembly at a rate of 0.3 spaces per seat. With a maximum seating capacity of 80, this will require 24 parking

spaces. The master plan indicates seventeen (17) paved parking spaces including one (1) ADA space as well as seven (7) grass parking spaces.

LIGHTING

The petitioner has not indicated any provisions for lighting of the subject property. If approved, the petitioner must provide full cutoff fixtures to retain all light on-site and prevent any light spillage onto neighboring residential uses.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW:

The subject property is located within the Residential Future Land Use classification on the adopted Future Land Use map. The Hernando County 2040 Comprehensive Growth Strategy Plan provides the principles for guiding land development activities in the County and describes the related programs and strategies that provide the overall guidance for implementing the Plan.

Residential Category of the adopted Comprehensive Plan states:

Objective 1.04B The Residential Category allows primarily single family, duplex, resort and multi-family housing and associated ancillary uses such as recreational and institutional. Office and certain commercial uses may be allowed subject to the locational criteria and performance standards of this Plan. Residential density shall not exceed 22 dwelling units per gross acre.

Strategy 1.04B(1) Commercial and institutional uses within the Residential Category are generally associated with medium and high-density residential development and may include neighborhood commercial, office professional, recreational, schools, and hospitals. Minor public facilities that do not unduly disturb the peaceful enjoyment of residential use may also be allowed.

Comments: A place of public assembly namely a community center is permitted in all zoning districts as a special exception use.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The request for a Special Exception Use Permit for a Place of Public Assembly, namely a Community Center, is appropriate based on the following conclusions:

1. The subject location is in a medium density residential neighborhood

2. The proposed request is consistent with the County's adopted Comprehensive Plan and is compatible with the surrounding land uses subject to compliance with all performance conditions.
3. The proposed project shall require a commercial review.

NOTICE OF APPLICANT RESPONSIBILITY:

The special exception process is a land use determination and does not constitute a permit for either construction on, or use of, the property, or a Certificate of Concurrency. Prior to use of, or construction on, the property, the petitioner must receive approval from the appropriate County department(s) for the proposed use.

The granting of this land use determination does not protect the owner from civil liability for recorded deed restrictions which may exceed any county land use ordinances. Homeowners' associations or architectural review committees require submission of plans for review and approval. The applicant for this land use request should contact the local association or the Public Records for all restrictions applicable to this property.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Planning and Zoning Commission approve the petitioner's request for a Special Exception Use Permit for a Place of Public Assembly namely a Community Center, with the following performance conditions:

1. The petitioner shall obtain all permits from Hernando County and other applicable regulatory agencies and meet all applicable land development regulations, for either construction or use of the property, and complete all applicable development review processes.
2. The proposed project shall require a commercial review.
3. Minimum Building Setbacks:
North (Side): 10'
South (Side): 10'
East (front): 25'
West (Rear): 20'
4. The driveway connections, parking spaces, and overall parking lot layout shall adhere to the Hernando County Facility Design Guideline Standards.
5. The petitioner shall provide full cutoff fixtures, in order to retain all light on-site and prevent any light spillage onto neighboring residential uses.
6. Parking requirements are calculated for a place of public assembly at a rate of 0.3 spaces per seat. With a maximum seating capacity of 80, this will require 24 parking spaces.

7. The site shall be developed in accordance with the site plan as provided by the applicant and attached to this application.
8. If the petitioner fails to obtain a building permit for the vertical construction of the principal or primary building within a period of not more than two (2) years from the approval date or the special exception use is not established during this period, then the special exception use permit shall be null and void.