

Galassini, Janis L

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**From:** Alferd Knepper <alferdknepper@att.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 15, 2023 8:28 PM  
**To:** Galassini, Janis L  
**Subject:** County Commission Meeting 10-17-23

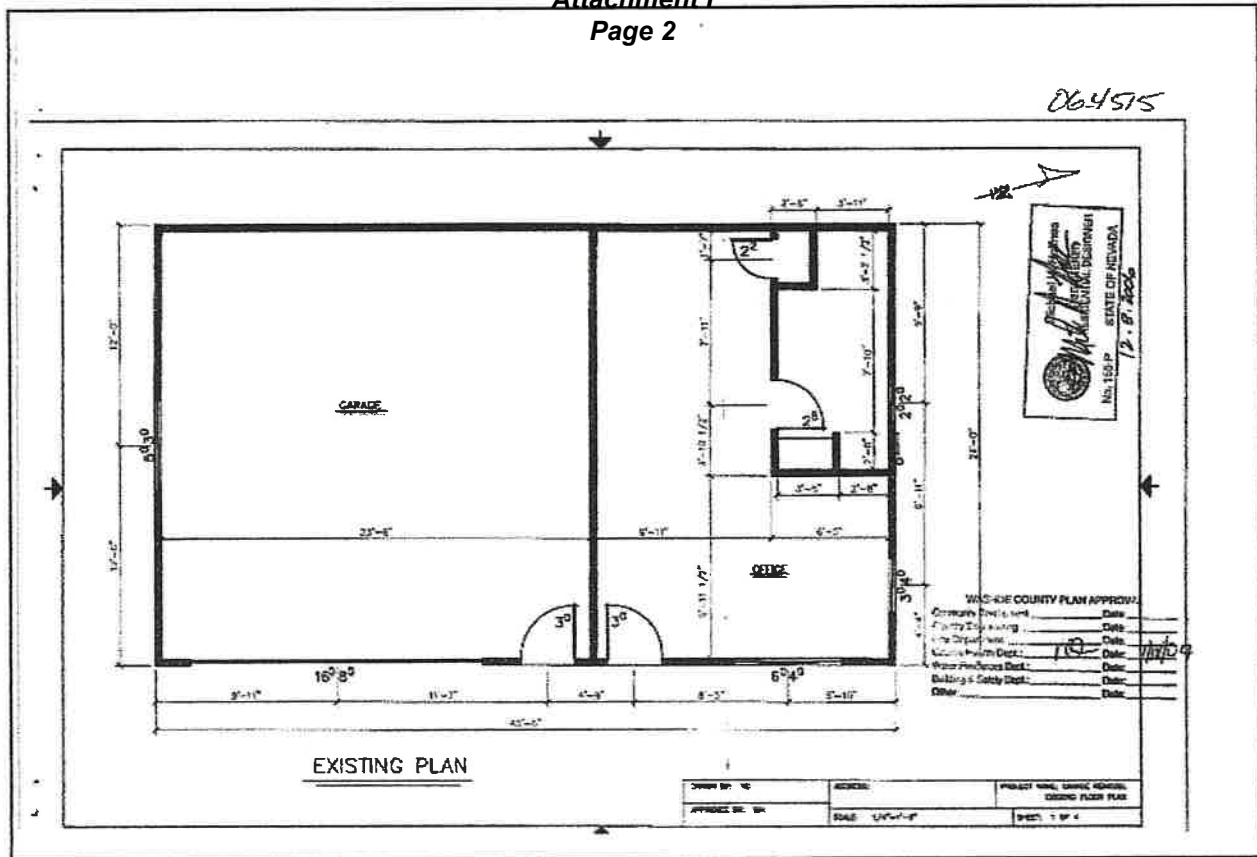
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Good morning

My husband and I will be attending the County Commission meeting on Tuesday and would like to speak during the initial public comments and then again on Agenda Item 18 - WSUP 22-0019 Safe Embrace. As at prior meetings I would like to read his prepared statements per ADA modification and assume this will not be an issue. I will read his statement first and then mine.

Thank you again for your help.

Katie & Alferd Knepper



wave oven circuit?

- 29) >Associated but not directly related issue. Sheet A-1.0 show the detached "existing computer lab" this structure show no permit for the conversion from a storage (un-heated) room to the habitable computer room. History of permits shows 02-5209 constructing/converting a portion of the building consisting of a bathroom (toilet & sink) and an office room. With 24' x 24' garage remaining. Permit 06-4515 converted the 570 sqft garage to an unheated storage room with no garage door. A permit submittal is needed to address the change of use of the structure/room. The heating system needs to be included as well as energy code. Compliance. Floor insulation will be needed to be compliant with 2012 IECC.

End of Building plan review comments

Steve Le Cam 775-328-2035

slecam@washoecounty.us

Please note:

- a) If emailing questions, please include your permit number in the *subject line* or it may not be read.

3

10-17-23

ELC

#4

Alfred Knepper

Corrections # 18-104678 Review (1st)

3-6-18

**2023 Board of Directors**

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Suzanne Hendery

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Meredith Williams

Ann Silver- CEO

November 14, 2023

Good morning Chair Hill and Washoe County Commissioners:

My name is Ann Silver and I'm here today as a resident of Washoe County and the CEO of the Reno + Sparks Chamber of Commerce.

Dissatisfaction with one's neighbors is a time-honored tradition. When we rent or purchase a place to live, we don't often know who lives next door, their lifestyles, challenges, domestic issues or barking dogs.

Safe Embrace, a member of our Chamber, continues to house women and children determined to leave situations of domestic abuse and terror and provides them short-term shelter and transition assistance.

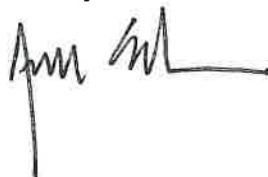
These women are brave and resolute in their efforts to change the trajectory of their lives.

I respect the concerns of neighbors who don't appreciate the Safe Embrace residence located in the quiet neighborhood of their homes, but we have foster homes, drug and alcohol treatment facilities, urgent care centers and residences for distressed youth and adults located throughout our community.

We are living in a time of indignation, lack of respect for others, and diminishing compassion for those who have less than we do and need our help. I encourage this Board to permit an increase to the number of beds at Safe Embrace for the sake of the women and children determined to emerge invigorated and ready to live independently.

The Reno + Sparks Chamber of Commerce offers to serve as a mediator between Safe Embrace and the concerned neighbors. We believe that common sense and constructive dialogue will lead to resolution of this dispute.

Thank you.



10-17-23 ELC #4  
Ann Silver

October 17, 2023

Washoe County Board of Commissioners  
1001 E. 9<sup>th</sup> Street  
Reno, NV 89512

Board of Commissioners,

I am Elizabeth Abdur-Raheem, the Executive Director of the Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence. First I want to thank you all for the opportunity to speak before you today. It is incredibly timely that we come together to discuss this important issue in October, Domestic Violence Awareness Month. What better way to stand with victim-survivors and make a positive community impact than by approving the special use permit application for Safe Embrace?

Safe Embrace proudly serves victim-survivors in Washoe County through the provision of lifesaving advocacy services. Safe Embrace's advocates are with individuals during the worst moments of their lives, assisting them to leave life-threatening situations and walking alongside them as they regain safety and self-sufficiency. This tireless advocacy depends on being able to safely house victim-survivors during their transitions in order to keep them safe and healthy. Safe Embrace's shelter is one of only two emergency shelters for victim-survivors of domestic violence in Washoe County. As such it is vitally important that it be able to operate at full capacity.

Domestic violence is unfortunately prevalent in our nation, our state, and Washoe County. Nationally, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men will experience domestic violence at some point in their life. <sup>1</sup> Sadly, these statistics are increased here in our community as Nevada currently ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in the nation for domestic violence per capita. <sup>2</sup> Additionally, Nevada has ranked in the top 10 states for 23 out of the past 25 years for the rates of women murdered by men. <sup>3</sup> In just one 24-hour period last September, 571 victim-survivors of domestic violence were served across Nevada. Of those served, 354 of them (or 62%) found safety in emergency shelters. On that same day, our agencies could not meet the needs of 33 victim-

<sup>1</sup> National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. *Statistics*. Retrieved from: <https://ncadv.org/statistics>

<sup>2</sup> World Population Review. 2023. *Violence Against Women*. Retrieved from: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/domestic-violence-by-state>

<sup>3</sup> Violence Policy Center. October 2023. *When Murder Women: A Review of 25 Years of Female Homicide Victimization in the United States*. Retrieved from: <https://www.strangulationtraininginstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/wmmw2023.pdf>

survivors, 23 of whom were seeking safe shelter.<sup>4</sup> Had all of Safe Embrace's shelter beds been available it's possible we could have helped these victim-survivors. These statistics alone should speak volumes to the necessity of having safe shelter readily available in Washoe County.

Beyond the rates of violence, we also know that Nevada ranks 10th in the country for prevalence of homelessness, with Washoe County having the highest rates in the State.<sup>5</sup> Domestic violence continues to be the leading cause of homelessness among women. When we limit the safe shelter that is readily available in Washoe County, we truly are forcing victim-survivors to choose between staying with an abuser and homelessness. I would like each of us here today to think about how difficult being forced to make that decision would be. Far too often when confronted by the reality of domestic violence we respond by saying "why didn't they just leave?" Today I am here to tell you that one of the many reasons people don't leave is that they don't have a place to go and staying often seems safer than the comparative options. By denying Safe Embrace their special use permit, you are causing an increased number of victim-survivors, your constituents, to make that deadly calculus.

Before I close, I want to make sure we take a moment to actually focus on those who have been thus far voiceless in this process and those too fearful to come forward. Throughout this entire application process, there have been highly negative narratives painted of domestic violence victim-survivors, full of hurtful language and biased assumptions. The reality is domestic violence does not discriminate and affects every community. I would venture to say that all of us in this room know, are related to, have worked with or continue to be a victim-survivor of domestic violence. Far from the stereotypes, victim-survivors look like each one of us in this room. Even those who leave with considerable resources and support networks often wind up seeking support in a shelter first as a safe place to make phone calls and plan away from the constant surveillance of their abuser. Just as we each know a victim-survivor, in a community such as Washoe County it is also likely that each of us knows someone who has benefited from Safe Embrace services including their emergency safe shelter, whether we realize it or not. When Safe Embrace is prevented from providing the full capacity of safe shelter to the our community it is not nameless, faceless

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<sup>4</sup> National Network to End Domestic Violence. 2023. *Domestic Violence County Report: Nevada Summary*. Retrieved from: <https://nnedv.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/17th-Annual-Domestic-Violence-Counts-Report-NV-Summary.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> This is Reno. October 2022. *Washoe County has highest rate of homelessness in Nevada*. Retrieved from: <https://thisisreno.com/2022/10/washoe-county-has-highest-rate-of-homelessness-in-nevada/>

people who are turned away but it is us, and our relatives, friends and neighbors. Domestic violence is never the fault of the person being abused but by reducing the number of available shelter beds in our community, we are telling victim-survivors that they do not deserve help. Domestic violence is never convenient or pretty, but turning our backs on our most vulnerable community members is atrocious and not in the true spirit of Washoe County.

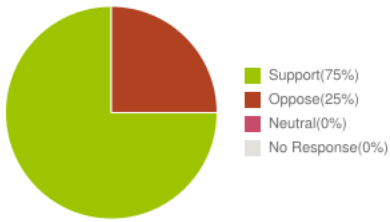
Safe Embrace is an exceptional program and operates its shelter with the care and dignity that all of us deserve when we find ourselves in points of crisis. We urge this Board to stand with victim-survivors and allow the shelter to operate at full capacity. The wellbeing and safety of our community depends on it.

Agenda Item: eComments for 18. Public hearing: Appeal of the Washoe County Board of Adjustment's inability to approve Special Use Permit Case Number WSUP22-0019 (Safe Embrace). The applicant requests approval of a special use permit to allow a group care facility for up to 25 occupants if connected to city sewer, or up to 18 occupants if utilizing the existing septic system. The regulatory zone of the parcel is Low Density Suburban (LDS) and a special use permit is required per Washoe County Code Table 110.302.05.2. The proposal also requests to modify the parking requirements in Washoe County Development Code Article 410 by not requiring any additional paved parking spaces or additional lighting in the parking area.

The applicant and property owner is Safe Embrace. The address is 1995 Ponderosa Drive in Sparks. The Assessor's Parcel Number is 026-422-14.

The Board of County Commissioners shall consider the appeal based on the record and any testimony and materials submitted at the public hearing. The Board of County Commissioners may approve or deny the special use permit. Community Services. (Commission District 3.) FOR POSSIBLE ACTION

#### Overall Sentiment



#### Vickie DiMambro

Location:

Submitted At: 3:47pm 10-16-23

I have been associated with Safe Embrace since 2010. I have seen the tremendous need for services for Domestic Violence in this community. I have heard so many horrible stories of abuse and murder in this area. Many years ago I was a victim of DV, and unless you have experienced it yourself, you cannot imagine how it affects you, your family, your children, friends. If you are in an abusive relationship, you may have only one chance to escape. It is terrifying to the victims, but sometimes it is the only chance they will have to survive! Safe Embrace, especially the crisis shelter provides an extremely important resource for the clients, and will allow them to become survivors. The organization uses the time in the shelter to provide needed help for safety and planning, to give the survivors the opportunity to move ahead with their life, to become productive citizens instead of statistics.

How many times have we read or seen in the news about victims of domestic violence being murdered by their spouse or partner? Sometimes the children too.

If Safe Embrace isn't allowed to increase the number of residents, it may mean the difference of a mother or father and their children escaping a violent situation, or remaining victims.

Safe Embrace has made great efforts to improve the landscaping, fences, security and more, to make the shelter a good neighbor to the neighborhood. The interior has been updated to be a peaceful and beautiful refuge for those going through a very difficult time.

Some people may never be content to be located near the shelter, but it provides a vital resource to all of the Reno Sparks area.

Please vote to allow this vital asset to Washoe County to serve the survivors, be part of the solution, and allow them to contribute to the betterment of the community.

#### Ryan Wittich

Location:

Submitted At: 3:35pm 10-16-23

This type of facility isn't allowed by code in a residential neighborhood. A group home is allowed but a group care facility with that number of people is not. That makes it a commercial use building and is not allowed in a residential neighborhood. The basic idea of Safe Embrace is a good idea, but it should not be allowed to go against Washoe County's own code and a group care facility be allowed in a residential neighborhood. The security issues with such a facility around people raising their kids and trying to live in a quiet neighborhood does



not equate with them doing right by their community. They have been operating in our area for years and can continue to do their mission, but they must follow the rules just like everyone else and this type of facility shouldn't be allowed in a residential neighborhood. The County Code's were created to help everyone and just because a group has good intentions doesn't mean it can go against the code. Please do not approve this special use permit.

**Rachel Wright**

Location:

Submitted At: 3:34pm 10-16-23

I am a resident of Sparks and find it shameful that anyone in this community would try to hinder one of the few domestic violence resources in our county. Safe Embrace should be allowed to provide group care to more than the 18-25 occupants listed in this agenda item, as I'm sure there are many more adults and children fleeing dangerous living conditions in Reno-Sparks. Please vote to allow Safe Embrace to serve more members of our community as soon as possible – lives are literally in your hands.

**Tami Wittich**

Location:

Submitted At: 3:16pm 10-16-23

My husband and I own a home 2 doors down from 1995 Ponderosa Drive. We purchased the property as it was on a quiet, dead end, private street & we hoped to retire & make this our forever home. When we moved into the neighborhood we knew there was a group home but after checking into the zoning on the property (it was E1 at the time) a small group home was not an issue for us. When construction started we never got any notice of zoning changes or use permits & understood that any major changes made to the property regarding zoning, etc. required it. We were not notified and the outcome is not right.

The house has changed over the years & the pictures included in the SUP do not accurately reflect the condition of the property. It was upsetting when they cut down most of the trees on the property but it is now worse with the weeds growing & nothing being done about it. They just recently trimmed them but they are still there & a fire hazard especially parking a car on that dry brush. It is frustrating that Safe Embrace does nothing to make the property look like a neighborhood residence. They have no concern for the neighbors and many of the people who stay there have no concern for the property & are rude to the neighbors. I have been to the property on numerous occasions for various reasons & they never answer the door - even when staff is there.

They destroyed our private road with all the construction & promised to fix it. That never happened and it forced the neighbors to get enough money together to at least do a fix on the road so we could drive on it. We had friends refuse to come visit because they didn't want to drive down the road it was so bad. Safe Embrace has done nothing to help the neighborhood & has only made it worse.

This "company" is not a good neighbor & should not be allowed in a residential neighborhood. The code violations should be enough to reject the Special Use Permit besides the fact that this type of Group Care Facility isn't allowed in a residential neighborhood per Washoe County's own code & should not be allowed in a residential neighborhood. It operated for years as a quiet group home & took care of the property. I don't think anyone would want it in their neighborhood either.

**Gina Billino**

Location:

Submitted At: 2:49pm 10-16-23

As a community, we all need to support the victims of domestic, and sexual violence, in every way possible. For those in abusive relationships, they have no where to go, and their abuser knows this, and counts on this to maintain control, and to continue to abuse them. Safe Embrace provides that refuge, and escape for victims, and their children they wouldn't otherwise have, and is vital for their survival. Victims are often abused physically, but also mentally, and emotionally. They are made to believe, that they deserve the abuse, and there is no escape for them. That is part of the control, and manipulation abusers inflict on their victims, to keep them from even trying to get away.

By not having a safe place to go, many victims are trapped in the abusive environment, and are often murdered, by their abuser. Safe Embrace not only gives victims a way to get away from their abuser, but it also helps to rebuild their identity, and their lives by providing much needed education, and resources. It takes an incredible amount of courage, and strength for a victim, to even reach out for help. Through their program, victims go



through the process, to become survivors, and reclaim their lives. This is a vital service for everyone in our community, as well as compassion for the victims, as they run for their lives.

The common community response is, "It doesn't affect me, so why should I have to live near their safe house." My belief is, you shouldn't have to a victim of violence, for you to care about, and support the survivors. There is a growing population in our community who are victims of abuse. According to Safe Embrace, last year alone, their 24 hour hotline was contacted by over 300 victims seeking emergency shelter. They need more resources, and support, not less for those in our community, trapped in dangerous, and abusive situations. For the safety of everyone Safe Embrace serves, please approve their special use permit, to serve as many victims of abuse in our community as possible, and help to them to become survivors, instead of victims. Thank you.

**Richard Stockton**

Location:

Submitted At: 12:41pm 10-16-23

I request that the Board Approve the requested special use permit. Other property owners in the neighborhood have requested that the Board enforce old 'deed restrictions' in order to prevent Safe Embrace from continuing to use using THEIR their property as a small-scale temporary care facility in support of of the Reno/Sparks community. In modern times, the validity of many such restrictions (which, in the past, often required that only 'Caucasian' persons occupy or be sold an interest in the property) is often denied - as matter against the public interest, or as matter of discrimination against various groups of persons by economic class or social 'advantage'. The goals and needs of the of the Reno/Sparks Community certainly outweigh the "rights" of the adjacent land owners to demand that buildings on property they DON'T OWN must be constructed only of brick. And the goals and needs of the community for planned and well controlled growth do justify zoning changes from time to time.

Safe Embrace should assure that the pets of the sheltered persons are no longer a nuisance at night, and their fences should be made more attractive. Most of the remaining neighbor complaints sound like whines of 'NIMBY', with regard to persons in need. The nature of the small buildings is not dramatically different than other building in the neighborhood, and there are other business near by,.

Please approve the request for a special permit by Safe Embrace, with the conditons recommended in the staff report.

**Loralee Rae**

Location:

Submitted At: 7:49am 10-16-23

Safe Embrace has been in our community for twenty years and is one of only two shelters. It is reported that of homeless women, domestic violence is often reported as the immediate cause of their homelessness. We as a community need to help stop this. Domestic violence victim/survivors must have a safe place to go when they leave a violent situation and they will have this with Safe Embrace. By approving the special use permit you are giving victim/survivors a safe place to stay to begin their life without violence.

**Shane Taylor**

Location:

Submitted At: 4:00pm 10-13-23

Please approve to address limited shelter space for Washoe county residents experiencing homelessness and Domestic Violence. Limited access strains the community and puts vulnerable residents at risk. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.