



Development Services

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Cochise County Planning and Zoning Commission
FROM: Matthew Taylor, AICP, Planner II
FOR: Christine McLachlan, AICP, Planning Division Manager
SUBJECT: SU24-23 (Moson Road Cemetery)
DATE: February 12, 2025

Docket SU24-23 (Moson Road Cemetery)

A Special Use Authorization request for a cemetery.

I. DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECT PARCEL AND SURROUNDING USES

Applicant: Desert Rose Christian Fellowship c/o Clyde Martin
Location: 4684 S. Moson Road
APN: 107-63-007B
Property Size: 4 acres
Zoning: RU-4 (Rural District, one dwelling per 4 acres)
Plan Designation: Rural Residential
Growth Area: D – Rural Areas
Existing Use: Church
Proposed Use: Church with Cemetery

Surrounding Zoning and Uses

North	RU-4	Single Family Residence
South	RU-4	Undeveloped
East	RU-4	Single Family Residence
West	RU-4	Undeveloped

II. SITE HISTORY

- Building, well, septic, and right-of-way permits for a church (2022-2023)
- No active code compliance actions

III. SPECIAL USE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST

The applicant requests special use approval for a cemetery for church members. 70 burial plots are proposed within a 5,000 square foot area near the southwest corner of the property.

IV. ANALYSIS OF IMPACTS – COMPLIANCE WITH SPECIAL USE FACTORS

Section 2.48.160 of the Zoning Regulations identifies ten (10) factors to evaluate Special Use applications. These factors determine the suitability of a special use request, whether to recommend approval, and to determine if conditions and/or modifications are needed to mitigate potentially negative impacts on surrounding properties. With the information provided, nine (9) factors apply to this special use request with all factors complying:

1. Compliance with Duly Adopted Plans: Complies

Comprehensive Plan designations for the property are Rural and Growth Area D (Rural Areas). These land use categories are characterized by sparsely populated areas with large lot sizes and large expanses of private and public lands. Agricultural uses are common as are developed or undeveloped recreational resources. This area, generally located east of the City of Sierra Vista and west of the San Pedro river valley, has developed significantly with single family residences. The applicant is not requesting a rezone or Comprehensive Plan amendment, preserving existing land use designations and zoning classification. The area is characterized by substantial low density residential development on parcels averaging more than 4 acres with approximately 30 residences within 1000' of the subject property.

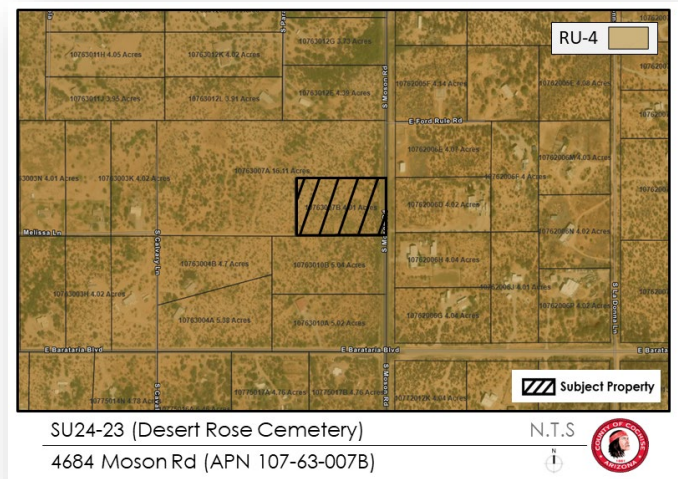
2. Compliance with the Zoning District Purpose: Complies

Rural districts allow non-residential activities that provide services serving local needs, recreational support services, and are compatible with rural living. These zoning districts, which range in site area from 2 acres to 36 acres, allow residential and non-residential uses compatible with an area’s rural character. Uses that preserve agricultural character and provide recreational support services are consistent with rural zoning as are more intense uses if they are, or through conditions can be, sensitive to the general character of rural districts, natural environment, and harmonious with existing development. Places of religious worship are allowed by right in all rural and residential zoning districts with cemeteries requiring special use authorization approval.

3. Development Along Major Streets: Complies

The intent of this factor is to consider limiting the number of access points on major thoroughfares, arterials, or collectors by using frontage roads, shared access, and no access easements. Incorporating such measures promotes fewer road cuts to avoid potentially unsafe traffic conflicts, hazardous traffic congestion, and roadway obstruction caused by traffic.

Desert Rose Christian Fellowship has existing legal access to Moson Road, an improved Rural Major Collector maintained by the county. New driveways are not proposed by the applicant, as the existing driveway supporting worship services will accommodate similar vehicle traffic potentially generated by the cemetery.



4. Traffic Circulation: Complies

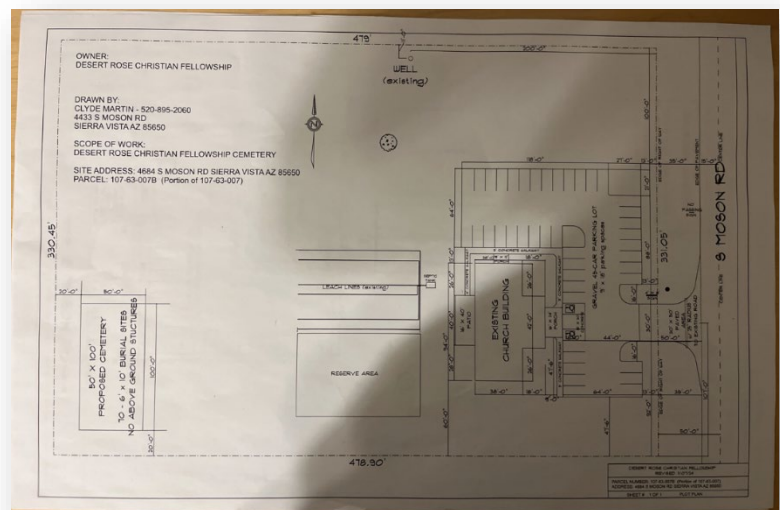
This Special Use Authorization factor stipulates:

1. The request is consistent with the preservation of the functions of surrounding streets as defined in the County Comprehensive Plan.
2. The request does not result in the use of any residential street for non-residential traffic.
3. Consideration of future circulation needs in the surrounding area has been considered through right-of-way dedication and off-site improvements if warranted.

As a subordinate use to the existing church, a cemetery will not require a re-classification of Moson Road or off-site improvements. Further, the requested special use will not result in the use of residential streets for access since the property only abuts one roadway, Moson Road.

5. Adequate Services and Infrastructure: Complies

Power to the subject property is provided by Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative (SSVEC) and the property is served by private well and septic system. The nearest fire station is located about one mile west (Fry Fire District Station #3). The proposed special use does not require the establishment of new or an expansion of existing services or infrastructure.



6. Significant Site Development Standards: Complies

Applicable development standards identified in Section 2.15 (*RU Districts*) apply to this property, including building setbacks, structure height, and site coverage as well as other site development standards related to floodplain management and stormwater mitigation. Section 2.51.180 of the zoning regulations imposes some development standards unique to cemeteries, including a 20' standoff distance which is proposed by the applicant (20' from the west and south property lines). No structures within cemetery boundaries are not proposed. Two residences are within 500' feet of the proposed cemetery's location (4652 S. Moson Road and 7551 E. Barataria Boulevard). The property to the south, and potentially most impacted by the proposed new use, is currently undeveloped.

7. Public Input: Complies

Section 2.48.160 of the Zoning Regulations states, "If public concerns have been raised, it is fair to ask if the applicant has made a reasonable effort to address these concerns through the Citizen Review Process." The applicant sent letters to property owners within 500' on November 14, 2024, receiving no responses in opposition.

8. Hazardous Materials: Not Applicable

Hazardous or dangerous materials are not proposed for this special use.

9. Off-Site Impacts: Complies

This factor is intended to ensure adequate measures have been taken to mitigate off-site impacts such as noise, outdoor lighting, odors, smoke, traffic, and dust. See also Section 6 (Significant Site Development Standards):

- Parking: Cemetery parking will be limited to existing church parking areas. If a new parking area is created specifically for the cemetery, it will require the same compaction and surface material used in existing parking areas. The property is located in Growth Area D which does not require internal driveway improvements though the applicant proposes watering to reduce dust.
- Noise: Burial preparation requiring equipment will occur only during daylight hours. Prep times are estimated at 2-hours per service.
- Lighting and Signs: Lighting, signage, and other permanent structures are not proposed for the cemetery.
- Landscaping: Landscaping is not required for properties located in Growth Area D.
- Odors and Smoke: Odors and smoke will not be generated by the proposed special use.
- Traffic: Burial service traffic will be generated mostly by church members. Trip counts are likely to be similar to those generated during regular church services.



10. Water Conservation: Complies

County water conservation requirements apply to non-residential uses and properties. Section 2.51.170 of the zoning regulations requires water saving strategies and applicable water conservation regulations and policies identified in the zoning regulations and comprehensive plan are typically identified at permitting. The property is located the Sierra Vista Sub-Watershed and required water conservation measures were previously evaluated during the building permit process for the existing church in 2022. Additional water conservation measures are not required for the proposed cemetery.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

Staff published legal notice, mailed notification letters, and posted the property between 9 and 22 January 2025.

VI. WAIVERS

None.

VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The applicant requests special use authorization approval for a 5,000 square foot cemetery on a 4-acre property with an existing church building (Desert Rose Christian Fellowship). The proposed special use is a low impact subordinate use that does not require new or an expansion of services or infrastructure. The 70 proposed burial plots will be available to church members.

Factors in Favor of Approval

1. Complies with all nine (9) applicable factors.
2. A subordinate use to an existing principal use that creates minimal off-site impacts.
3. Support from nearby property owners.

Factors Against Approval

1. Opposition from nearby property owners.

VIII. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the factors in favor of approval, staff recommends approval of Docket SU24-23 to allow a cemetery subject to the following conditions*:

1. The cemetery must comply with Section 2.51.180 of the zoning regulations, including recording a cemetery survey as a perpetual easement and filing a cemetery Preservation Plan with the county.
2. New parking areas or driveways for the cemetery shall use the same surface material used in existing parking areas.
3. The cemetery shall not conflict with grading and drainage plans approved by the county for the church building or other applicable requirements of the Floodplain Regulations.

**Standard conditions related to condition acceptance, permitting timeframes, and special use modifications apply and have not been modified by this request.*

Sample Motion

Madam Chair, I move to approve Docket SU24-23 with conditions recommended by staff, the factors in favor of approval constituting the findings of fact.
