



CITY OF LABELLE, FLORIDA

**Planning Staff Report
For
140 Jaycee-Lions Drive Special Exception**

TYPE OF CASE: Special Exception

STAFF REVIEWER: Patty Kulak

DATE: January 8, 2026

APPLICANT: Lequia, LLC

AGENT: Javier Figueroa

REQUEST: Allow for a religious assembly/church in the B-1 zoning district for the 1+/- acre property located at 140 Jaycee-Lions Drive.

LOCATION: 140 Jaycee-Lions Drive

PROPERTY SIZE: 1.112+/-acres

FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION, CURRENT ZONING AND LAND USE:

Existing Future Land Use Designation: Commercial

Existing Zoning: B-1 (Business Professional)

Land Use: Commercial (Clubhouse)

SURROUNDING LAND USE:

North: FLU – Residential
Zoning – Light Industrial (I-1 A)
Land Use – RV Park

South: FLU – Outlying Mixed Use
Zoning - PUD
Land Use – Residential – Apartment Complex

East: FLU – Commercial
Zoning – Business Professional (B-1)
Land Use – Municipal DMV

West: FLU – Commercial

Zoning – Business Professional (B-1)
Land Use – Club/Lodge

STAFF NARRATIVE:

Lequia, LLC (“Applicant”) is requesting approval of a Special Exception to allow for a religious facility/church to be located on the 1.112±-acre subject property located at 140 Jaycee Lions Drive within the Business Professional (B-1) zoning district. The church proposes to occupy an existing commercial building currently utilized as an events hall, totaling approximately 4,481 square feet. The proposed use will allow the Applicant to continue utilizing the existing structure for religious assembly purposes consistent with the standards and review criteria for Special Exceptions under the City of LaBelle Land Development Code.

BACKGROUND/EXISTING CONDITIONS:

The subject property is within the Commercial future land use designation and is zoned Commercial. The property was developed in 1975 with a 4,481 SF building used for different commercial uses and most recently an event hall. Access to the site is from Jaycee-Lions Drive via a paved driveway approximately 630 feet to the west of S. Main Street and a secondary unpaved driveway 150’ west of the paved entrance. There is an existing paved parking lot immediately west of the building and additional unimproved/grass parking and open space on the remainder of the site.

To the north of the subject property is an unimproved right-of-way. To the south of Jaycee-Lions Drive is multi-residential housing known as Pollywog Creek Commons. To the east of the site is unimproved right-of-way and a parcel owned by the City of the LaBelle (former Department of Motor Vehicles). To the west of the site is the Moose Lodge.

SPECIAL EXCEPTION REQUEST:

The Applicant is requesting approval of a Special Exception to allow a religious facility/church to occupy the existing commercial building.

The proposed hours of operation are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., and Sundays from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. No daycare services or K-12 school uses are proposed as part of this request.

No site improvements are proposed other than interior modifications necessary to repurpose the existing commercial space for church use. Due to the absence of any proposed horizontal or exterior improvements, Staff is recommending a Site Construction Permit be required to evaluate on-site parking and landscaping and appropriate alternatives. In addition a Certificate of Occupancy and Business Tax License will be required to ensure the building and any improvements are reviewed by the Building Official and Fire Inspector.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE:

The Subject Property’s underlying future land use designation is “Commercial” per City of Labelle Future Land Use Map.

Policy 1.3.4 of the City’s Comprehensive Plan states *“The Commercial Land Use Category applies predominantly to lands located along the street frontages of State Roads 80 and 29 South. This*

land use category accommodates commercial, retail and office uses that are more auto oriented due to scale and typology, while respecting the pedestrian and alternative transportation modes through land development code design standards.

The Commercial future land use category allows for a variety of non-residential uses. While churches are not expressly listed, this use exists in the Commercial category elsewhere in the City and is not inconsistent with the intent of this category to accommodate a range of commercial uses along the City's main thoroughfare, and direct more intensive, traffic generating uses to the arterial roadway network.

SPECIAL EXCEPTION REVIEW CRITERIA:

The following is Staff's analysis of the Applicant's request in relation to LDC Section 4-41(5), which sets forth the review criteria for special exceptions.

- a. Ingress and egress to property and proposed structures thereon with particular reference to automotive and pedestrian safety and convenience, traffic flow and control, and access in case of fire or catastrophe;***

The site has two (2) points of ingress/egress from Jaycee-Lions Drive. No proposed modifications to access were noted in the application materials. The access will allow for multiple points of ingress/egress from a paved, city-maintained roadway. Due to the limitation on hours of operation and prohibition on school and daycare uses, the use is not anticipated to negatively impact automotive or pedestrian safety.

- b. Off-street parking and loading areas where required, with particular attention to the items in (1) above and the economic, noise, glare, or odor effects of the special exception on adjoining properties and properties generally in the district;***

Off-street parking for the proposed use will be required to comply with the Land Development Code. The existing parking area is currently unstriped paved and unpaved/gravel spaces and will be reviewed in detail during the Site Construction permitting process. At that time, parking layout, circulation, and alternative surfaces will be evaluated to ensure compliance with LDC standards and intent.

- c. Refuse and service areas, with particular reference to the items preceding;***

Refuse service is provided by City of LaBelle waste services.

- d. Utilities, with reference to locations, availability, and compatibility;***

The site is served by City of LaBelle for both potable water and sanitary sewer services.

- e. Screening and buffering with reference to type, dimensions, and character;***

Screening and buffering will be required to comply with the Land Development Code and will be reviewed at the time of Site Construction permitting, or allow for an alternative betterment plan. There are several trees long the Jaycee-Lions Drive and western property line to meet the street tree standards. No buffers are required where B-1 uses

abut other B-1 uses, which is the case on the western property line abutting the Moose Lodge.

f. *Signs, if any, and proposed exterior lighting with reference to glare, traffic safety, economic effect, and compatibility and harmony with properties in the district;*

All signs will comply with the LDC sign code Signs will be required to obtain a building permit.

g. *Required yards and other open space;*

Required yards and open space currently comply with the the Land Development Code based upon the location of the existing building. If the building is proposed for expansion or redevelopment in the future, a new special exception will be required, along with a site construction permit and building permit.

h. *General compatibility with adjacent properties and other property in the district.*

The proposed special exception is compatible with adjacent properties and other properties within the immediate rea, as it involves the reuse of existing commercial space as a church with limited hours of operation. The Applicant is not proposing high traffic generating uses that are commonly accessory to church uses, such as schools or daycares. Compatibility with surrounding uses will be further ensured through compliance with all applicable Land Development Code requirements at the time of Site Construction and Building Permitting.

CONCLUSION

Based on the information provided by the Applicant and the analysis above, the proposed Special Exception to allow a religious facility within an existing commercial building is consistent with the intent of the City's Land Development Code subject to the below conditions of approval. The request involves the reuse of vacant commercial space, proposes limited hours of operation, and does not include building expansion or significant alteration. The site has adequate access and is served by the public roadway network and municipal services, including water, sewer and solid waste disposal. Compliance with all applicable site development, parking, landscaping, buffering, and building code requirements will be required at the time of Site Construction and Building Permitting. Subject to these considerations and any conditions imposed by the approval body, Staff finds the request appropriate for consideration.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends APPROVAL subject to the following conditions:

1. The special exception is limited to 140 Jaycee-Lions Drive described in Exhibit 'A'.
2. Hours of operation for church services is limited to Sundays from 7 AM to 9 PM and Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5 PM to 9 PM.
3. Daycare and school uses ancillary to the church are not permitted. If these

uses are proposed a new special exception will be required.

4. No expansion of the existing building footprint is permitted via this special exception. If improvements are proposed, other than interior remodeling activities, a new special exception will be required.
5. No outdoor piped/amplified music or speaker system is permitted, except as permitted by LDC Section 4-83.
6. All signs must comply with the LDC and receive a building permit prior to installation.
7. A site construction permit and building inspection by the Building Official and Fire Inspector is required prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy and/or business tax license.
8. Required parking spaces may be constructed of alternative materials including crushed shell or gravel, subject to review and approval at the time of site construction permit review.
9. Existing vegetation may be utilized to meet required streetscape landscaping requirements.

SUGGESTED MOTION(S):

APPROVAL:

I make a motion to approve the 140 Jaycee-Lions Drive Church Special Exception.

APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS:

I make a motion to approve the 140 Jaycee-Lions Drive Church Special Exception, with the following condition(s):

1) as outlined in the staff report;

OR

2) as outlined in the staff report and amended as follows;

OR

3) with the following conditions:

DENIAL:

I make a motion to deny the 140 Jaycee-Lions Drive Church Special Exception. The request does not meet the Special Exception criteria:

LOCATION MAP

