

June 26, 2009

**Barrow County Commission
233 East Broad Street
Winder, GA 30680**

Dear Commissioner,

***Calvary Chapel Stone Mountain* is a non-denominational Christian church that began in 1980 (www.calvarycsm.com). Our main campus is located in Lilburn, GA. Over the last several years we have had families relocate to the Highway 316 corridor between Lawrenceville and Athens. In the fall of 2007 we started an extension campus called *Calvary 316* in Barrow County. Our first year was spent meeting at the Yargo Elementary School. We appreciate the Barrow County School System for their cooperation.**

Our plan to help and serve the Barrow community is to eventually purchase property and construct a church building. In the meantime we need a facility where we can continue to grow and save.

This spring we located a warehouse/office space at 1023 Barrow Industrial Parkway, Auburn, GA. Assuming, the property was zoned commercial we signed a multi-year lease and occupied the building at the end of March. We immediately went to work on our renovation plans in hopes of getting the appropriate permits and having the HVAC installed before summer. Both Planning Department Director Lyn Clement and Fire Marshal Dana Thornton have looked at the building and see no major problems with our plans. The building is on sewer not septic, there is ample parking, and there are no residential neighbors to consider. The landlord, Mr. Dusty Greer, has been extremely cooperative and happy to have a tenant in tough economic times.

The obstacle to our plans is with zoning. The site is zoned "M1" for Light Industrial; the one zoning in Barrow County that prohibits churches. The Barrow Unified Development Code does not even allow for churches to seek Special Use Permits in this type of zoning.

We are requesting that the Board of Commissioners amend the Barrow County UDC to allow for churches in M1 zoning. The code allows for a wide array of uses in M1, including language schools, art studios, clinics, medical offices, banks and credit unions, funeral homes, driving schools, libraries, performing art theaters,

auction houses, emission inspection stations, sound recording studios, etc. We do not see how a church would disrupt the parameters of this zoning classification.

Our research has found that both *Clarke County* and *Rockdale County* does allow for churches in M1 zoning. A change in the Barrow County UDC would not be without precedent among neighboring counties.

If this is not possible, we would request that the Commissioners amend the code to at least allow for the issuance of a Special Use Permit for churches in M1 Industrial zoning. Once the Board amends the code, we will apply for a Special Use Permit for 1023 Barrow Industrial Parkway. Again this is not without precedent. The *Gwinnett County* UDC allows for a "church, temple, or synagogue" to apply for a Special Use Permit in M1 Industrial zoning.

Thank you for considering our request. Our church has a good reputation in South Gwinnett County for being a responsible and helpful partner in the community. We want to bring that spirit of service with us to Barrow County. Faith based communities are vital components in the development of a growing county. We hope to be part of the good things that are happening in Barrow County.

Please be aware of one final consideration. The summer heat has arrived and we are meeting without air-conditioning. It limits our prospects. It is our hope that the commissioners will take action in a favorable and timely manner, so we can install our air-conditioning. Thanks again for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Sandy Adams, senior pastor

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