



July 30, 2018

Salinas Planning Commission
Salinas City Council
200 Lincoln Ave
Salinas, CA 93901-2639

SUBJECT: Chamber Supports Current Policy Regarding Clubs, Lodges, and Places of Religious Assembly.

Dear Members of the Salinas Planning Commission,

As the voice for business in the Salinas Valley with about 700 members and as an active supporter of the Downtown Vibrancy Plan, the Chamber supports the City's current policy regarding clubs, lodges, and places of religious assembly on the ground floor of buildings facing Main Street in the Downtown area.

Section 37-40.310(a)(2) of the Salinas Municipal Code reads "clubs, lodges, places of religious assembly, and similar assembly uses shall only be permitted above the ground floor of buildings facing Main Street within the downtown core area." Main Street should be a continuous sequence of commercial activity during business hours on most days of the week. We believe that gaps in commercial activity on Main Street interrupt continuity, discourage customers (especially pedestrians) from patronizing stores on the other side of those gaps, and contribute to physical impacts such as urban deterioration, decay, and blight.

The Chamber notes that the proposal to change Section 37-40.310(a)(2) of the Salinas Municipal Code is related to the desire of New Harvest Church to establish ground floor religious assembly at 344 South Main Street, the former location of Beverly's Fabric and Crafts. We encourage the church to support some reasonable conditions to address concerns about ground floor buildings that are closed up most of the time, creating a dead zone just like a vacant building.

For these reasons, we urge the Planning Commission to support the City's current policy prohibiting clubs, lodges, and places of religious assembly on the ground floor of Salinas' downtown area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul J. Farmer".

Paul J. Farmer

President & CEO, Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce

www.SalinasChamber.com

cc: Megan Hunter, Courtney Grossman, Christopher Callihan

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