

**AT A SPECIAL CODE ENFORCEMENT HEARING HELD IN  
AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA ON AUGUST 8,  
2024 AT 11:00 A.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING  
WAS HAD, VIZ:**

**Present:**       **Paul Arnold, Magistrate**  
                  **David Israel, Code Enforcement Office**  
                  **Ellen Andrews, Growth Management Director**  
                  **Adriana Quijada, Deputy Clerk**

Magistrate Paul Arnold appeared. The respondent is Alicia Bopp and he was going to hear from the county first.

David Israel appeared and stated he was here concerning zoning issues with Alicia Bopp. They contacted Ms. Bopp and she came in to speak with the zoning department. She refused their recommendations. Mr. Arnold asked what days he reached out to Ms. Bopp Mr. Israel stated February 26, 2024 and personally went to the property on May 30, 2024. She stated she was tired of being harassed by the county. A violation was sent on June 25, 2024.

Ellen Andrews appeared to give her testimony as a county witness. She first met with Ms. Bopp in response to the initial notice and they spoke about the location of her rescue. It was in a residential subdivision. She had the opportunity to apply for a special exception use. She is running an animal rescue from her home and has outside kennels.

Mr. Israel stated for the record, the violation code is under chapter 4, subsection 4202, D5 under commercial uses class II.

Alicia Bopp appeared and provided her opening statement. She stated she would like to address the special use exception. They were told by the county, in their own words, that they would never be permitted a special exception use. That was why they did not pursue that avenue.

Ms. Bopp gave a background on Champs Chance. She started it 2 and a half years ago and up until 5 months ago, the county never knew they existed. There was a personal issue with a neighbor who did not have any issues with their dog rescue until recently. Her closest neighbor was the first one to write a letter of support for them. She mentioned that they do not host events on their property. On May 10, they took a hit from a tornado and had to foster their dogs. They continue to plead for fosters.

Ms. Bopp mentioned the violation code and stated they are not classified as a veterinary hospital. She stated 2 weeks was not enough to prepare for a life changing hearing. They are thousands in debt and everyone is a volunteer. This is a non-profit rescue. They have tried numerous to work with the county.

Susan Evans, testimony witness appeared. She stated she was a volunteer but had to stop due to her health. Ms. Bopp was helping Gadsden County and they should give her a chance and help her.

Cheryl Sadler appeared. She stated Champs Chance did not qualify under the state definitions of the violation code. From her understanding, Ms. Bopp has asked numerous times what she needed to do to prepare. Several of the notices that the county left for her were illegally insufficient and it did not even have the code violation.

Mr. Arnold stated if Ms. Sadler was an attorney, she could talk about law and procedure but if not, she could not represent Ms. Bopp in that way. He asked to keep her testimony personal and just include her opinions.

Alexis Hilbury appeared and stated she was a volunteer. She stated she felt like she was doing something right in the community.

Bonnie Foschi appeared. She did not think Ms. Bopp was breaking any rules. Dawn Holland appeared and gave her testimony as a witness. Mr. Ramos appeared and explained how Champs Chance helped his mental health.

Shelby Culberson appeared and stated she was a volunteer. She did not understand how this rescue could be classified as an animal hospital considering all the medical bills. She asked to allow the rescue to remain open. Trisha Brooks appeared and stated she rescued a dog from Champs Chance. She has got more involved with Champs Chance.

Mr. Arnold stated they are operating as a business. They were clearly providing valuable services to the community and it sounded like their main argument was that they are not a veterinary office or animal hospital. It does say with outside kennels and that was what he will be considering when looking at his ruling. He suggested for Ms. Bopp to find an attorney and to submit a brief to address permissible use. Mr. Arnold asked if she has applied for a special exception and Ms. Bopp stated she did not. Ms. Bopp stated she asked and asked what she needed to do to prepare for today.

Mr. Israel stated he would like for Ms. Bopp to discontinue business at her residence until they can resolve it with the Zoning department.

Mr. Arnold asked if the county advised them of the special exception use and Ms. Andrews stated yes, she gave her a copy of special exception use application.

Mary Lansley stated it was clear they were running a business. She stated there was noise and dogs roaming neighborhoods. Another neighbor appeared and stated issues with loose dogs. Ms. Bopp stated they need time to find somewhere else. She stated she has asked Commissioners to help with finding land. She was requesting a denial of cease-and-desist letter.

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Mr. Arnold stated he will make a written ruling. He asked Ms. Bopp to create a brief outlining their request. He stated it was imperative to apply for a special exception use. He will allow 45 days to make the final ruling and 10 days for a brief. He asked the county to provide a proposed order.

Mr. Arnold adjourned the hearing at 12:17 p.m.