

SAINT JOSEPH'S CULTURAL CENTER

REASON FOR INVESTIGATION

A question was presented to the to the Grand Jury pertaining to the overall safety at St. Joseph's Cultural Center.

PROCEDURE FOLLOWED

The Grand Jury made a physical inspection of the facility, and interviewed representatives of both the Grass Valley Fire Department (GVFD), and the Grass Valley Building Department (GVBD).

FINDINGS

1. Saint Joseph's Cultural Center (SJCC) is listed as a historical building.
2. Certain exemptions exist for historical buildings.
3. SJCC is operated by a non-profit group.
4. There are multiple "permanent" tenants within SJCC.
5. The SJCC chapel, a wood building, is being used as an assembly area.
6. GVFD, GVBD and NCGJ found the following non-code conditions:
 - A. Non-operating emergency exit lights. (Note: the lights were to be repaired the same day.)
 - B. The stairs to the balcony are too narrow.
 - C. Two means of egress are required from the balcony area, for ten or more people in the balcony.
 - D. There is no emergency exit hardware on exterior doors.
 - E. Occupancy signage is not readily visible.
 - F. Hand rails are missing from stairways.
 - G. Multiple areas of dry rot were found, most of which had been painted over.
 - H. Much of the wood decking was in an unsafe condition. (Note: This repair is underway.)
 - I. The assembly area walls are separating from the masonry section of the center.
 - J. The roof is in such poor condition that the structural integrity of the entire building may be in jeopardy.

CONCLUSIONS

1. SJCC is a historical building of value to the community.
2. SJCC is badly in need of repairs and upgrades.
3. SJCC has been and continues to be out of compliance with both the building and fire codes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. SJCC needs to follow through with all recommendations issued by the GVFD and GVBD.
2. SJCC needs to advise all groups intending to use the assembly area that a permit is required from the GVFD, and cease allowing groups to occupy the area without a valid permit in possession from the GVFD for the given date.
3. The director in charge of SJCC and the owners of the building are urged to keep the safety of the public first and foremost in their minds when making all future decisions regarding SJCC.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Grass Valley Fire Department by September 30, 2000

Grass Valley Building Department by September 30, 2000

Director, St. Joseph's Cultural Center by September 30, 2000

City of Grass Valley

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Building Division (530) 274-4340
Planning Division (530) 274-4330
Economic Development
Division (530) 274-4320

Honorable Carl Bryan
Presiding Judge of the Nevada County Courts
201 Church Street
Nevada City, CA. 95959

July 12, 2000

RE: Response to the 1999-2000 Grand Jury Report involving the St. Joseph's Cultural Center

Your Honor,

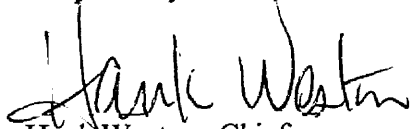
This is to respond to the 1999-2000 Grand Jury Report as it pertains to the St. Joseph's Cultural Center. We concur in general with the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Grand Jury in this matter and assure you that the City will continue to monitor conditions and use of the facility so as to ensure the public safety.

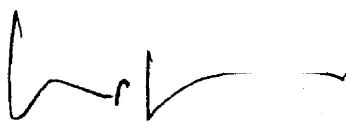
As an incidental note, it may be of interest that, earlier this year, the City secured a Technical Assistance Grant through the federal Community Development Block Grant Program for the specific purpose of having the St. Joseph's Cultural Center facilities professionally evaluated for their structural deficiencies and rehabilitation potential. This study is in progress and is being performed by an architectural/engineering firm which will produce a report cataloging improvements needed (and cost estimates) to render the facility compliant with current building and fire codes.

When completed (in about 2 months), said report should provide a framework for fundraising by the Center to pursue necessary facility restoration.

If you have questions concerning the foregoing, please contact us at your convenience. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully Yours,


Hank Weston, Chief
Grass Valley Fire Department


Kyle Kollar, Director
Grass Valley Community
Development Department

City of Grass Valley

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October 25, 2000

David Janison, Foreman
Nevada County Grand Jury
950 Maidu Avenue
Nevada City, Ca 95959

CITY COUNCIL
BILL HULLENDER, MAYOR
LINDA STEVENS, VICE MAYOR
PATTI INGRAM
GERARD TASSONE
JOHN A. TAYLOR

GENE HAROLDSEN
CITY ADMINISTRATOR

125 EAST MAIN STREET
GRASS VALLEY, CA 95945
(530) 274-4310 FAX: 274-4399

Dear Mr. Janison,

In regards to your letter of October 3, 2000 requesting response from the City of Grass Valley Fire and Building Department relative to St. Joseph's Cultural Center, we believe our response complied with Penal Code Section 933.05. Nevertheless, we will respond to the items as identified.

1. The Grass Valley Fire and Building Departments agree with this finding.
2. The Grass Valley Fire and Building Departments agree with this finding.
3. The Grass Valley Fire and Building Departments agree with this finding.
4. The Grass Valley Fire and Building Departments agree with this finding.
5. The Grass Valley Fire and Building Departments agree with this finding.
6. The Grass Valley Fire and Building Departments agree with this finding except we partially disagree with the following findings:
 - a) Some hand rails were missing on stairways (#A).
 - b) There was emergency exit hardware on exterior doors (#D).
 - c) Some of the emergency exit lights were not operable (#F).

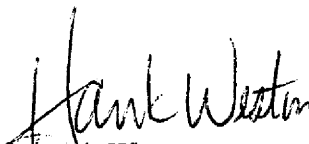
Regarding the recommendations listed under the overall safety of the St. Joseph's Cultural Center (p. 31) in the Grand Jury final report:

1. This recommendation has been implemented. The Fire and Life Safety corrections have been made and follow-up inspections are occurring. The recommendations from the Grass Valley Building Department are being followed up by Saint Joseph's Cultural Center as funding is available to the center to undertake needed repairs and remodeling.
2. This recommendation has been implemented.
3. The City of Grass Valley Fire and Building Departments will not implement this recommendation as it is the responsibility of the Board and Administration of the St. Joseph's Cultural Center.

Hopefully, this letter addresses your issues.

Sincerely,


Kyle Kollar
Director of Community Development


Hank Weston
Fire Chief