



County of San Diego

WALTER F. EKARD
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
(619) 531-6226
FAX: (619) 557-4060

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

HELEN N. ROBBINS-MEYER
ASST. CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
(619) 531-4940
FAX: (619) 557-4000

1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, STE. 209, SAN DIEGO, CA 92101-2422

June 3, 2009

Pastor David Jones
3264 Holly Way
Chula Vista, CA 91910

Dear Pastor Jones:

I want to offer my apology to you, your wife and your congregation for the unfortunate events of the past several weeks. My review of the situation shows that no Administrative Citation Warning should have been issued and that a major use permit is not required for the Bible Study you have in your home.

Regretfully, our Code Enforcement Officer incorrectly made the finding based in no small measure on unclear language in the zoning ordinance. In searching for ways we might improve the policies and procedures we use to respond to land use related complaints, I have already issued several directives to County staff. First, I have asked the Department of Planning and Land Use and our County Counsel to conduct a thorough review of ordinances regarding all assemblies to clarify that meetings such as you are holding in your home may continue without regulation by the County. In addition, the department will develop measures to improve internal code enforcement procedures including a supervisor's review of assembly related cases prior to issuance of any notices. Lastly, training will be updated and conducted for all code enforcement officers. You have my personal assurance that these actions will be undertaken immediately.

I want to reassure you that this matter, however perceived by you or by others, was in fact a land use matter stemming from a complaint. It was in no way an attempt by San Diego County to infringe upon your religious freedoms. If you knew me personally and were familiar with my background, I think you would be satisfied that as the Chief Executive of San Diego County government, I would never condone a deliberate attack on religious activity. Indeed, it is important for me to communicate very clearly and definitively that County government does not condone and will never condone discrimination under any circumstances on the basis of one's religious beliefs. To do so would not only violate the law, but would violate a principle that I personally treasure.

I would be happy to speak to you personally about this matter should you so desire.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Walter Ekard".

Walter F. Ekard
Chief Administrative Officer

cc: Dean R. Broyles, Esq.