



CANYON COUNTY HEARING EXAMINER
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING HELD
Thursday, September 24, 2026
1:30 P.M.

1ST FLOOR PUBLIC MEETING ROOM SUITE 130, CANYON COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

Hearing Examiner Present: Jerome Mapp

Staff Members Present: Josh Johnson, Assistant Director of Development Services
Amber Lewter, Associate Planner
Elias Sandoval Clarimon, Associate Planner
Pam Dilbeck, Sr. Administrative Specialist
Caitlin Ross, Hearing Specialist

Hearing Examiner Jerome Mapp called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m., and reviewed the testimony guidelines.

Hearing Specialist Caitlin Ross called the roll for the Hearing Examiner and Development Services staff.

Hearing Specialist Caitlin Ross administered the oath of affirmation to staff and witnesses signed up on the witness list.

Hearing Examiner Jerome Mapp proceeded to the first business item on the agenda.

Item 1: Consent agenda – Action Items

Hearing Examiner Jerome Mapp approved both the August 10, 2026 Hearing Examiner Minutes and the FCOs for Case CU2025-0025 – Toll.

Item 2A:

Case No. CU2026-0007 – Woods: The applicants, Justin and Sarah Woods, are requesting a Conditional Use Permit for a special events facility to host weddings on approximately 10.99 acres in an "A" (Agricultural) zone. The request is to operate from April to October, with the hours of operation being 8 am – 11 pm, Thursday through Sunday, with a maximum of 150 guests. The proposal includes a bridal and groom suite, each with a restroom, and a reception tent. The subject property is located at 14297 Oasis Rd, Caldwell, also referenced as Parcel R37642013, a portion of the NE quarter of Section 3, T5N, R3W, BM, Canyon County, Idaho.

Hearing Examiner Mapp called the applicant to testify.

Sarah Woods – (Applicant) IN FAVOR – 14297 Oasis Rd, Caldwell, ID 83607

Ms. Woods stated that she appreciates the opportunity to present their proposal for the wedding venue and the chance to address any concerns that her neighbors and the surrounding community may have, so that they can find solutions that work for everyone.

Her two children are at the heart of why they want to create this business. She wants them to understand

the importance of working hard, responsibility, service and being involved in the community. Also, running a business is about more than making money but is about treating people well, taking care of what you have and contributing something positive to the community around you. The property has been in the family since 1966 and because of that, they understand and appreciate the area and the people who live there. The extended family has owned businesses for three generations and they would love the opportunity to continue the family tradition to create another locally owned business that serves the community.

Ms. Woods understands that there may be concerns that come with their desire to create this wedding venue. She knows people are concerned about noise, lighting, traffic, parking and safety and she wants to address these concerns. She plans to address both noise and lighting through the design of the property itself by constructing landscaped earthen mounds and strategic areas around the venue and parking areas in combination with trees, shrubs, and other landscaping. They will create a substantial natural buffer between venue activities and surrounding properties with natural screening.

Ms. Woods stated that exterior lighting will be designed to provide only the amount of light necessary for guest safety without lighting surrounding properties. The lighting will be downward facing and shielded whenever possible, with no use of bright floodlights. Weddings are primarily held during months of the year when the daylight hours are much longer, and lighting is not necessary for much of the event. Noise reduction is planned by positioning the venue so that sound is directed inward rather than toward neighboring homes. There will be clear expectations regarding music and event hours and someone representing the venue will be present during events to ensure those expectations are met.

Ms. Woods stated they plan to install cameras throughout the venue, including the entrance and exit and parking lots so that they can monitor activities and provide security when events are not taking place. There will also be fencing around the parking area, which will clearly define where vehicles and guests should be. If any concern comes up, there will be someone there onsite who can address it immediately.

Ms. Woods concluded that her family has a personal interest in taking care of the property and wants her children to be proud of this business and deserve the trust from the neighbors that the venue will operate in a responsible manner. They are willing to listen, have conversations, and find solutions to any concerns her neighbors might have.

Hearing Examiner Mapp confirmed with Ms. Woods that she would have a contract with her clients and that a typical day would be determined by whether a wedding or just a rehearsal was taking place. The hours of operation were broad to accommodate these fluctuations. The venue would be available Thursday-Sunday. The Woods' plan is to work with emergency services to identify a layout that would work for the fire department to turn around without cars blocking access.

Ms. Woods confirmed that they would have only one employee and that she and her husband had spoken with Southwest District Health about the need for porta potties. Hearing Examiner Mapp inquired about limiting the application for the venue to weddings only from the different functions mentioned in the original application. Ms. Woods said it would be primarily weddings. Hearing Examiner Mapp asked Mr. Woods to come up to answer questions about Southwest District Health.

Justin Woods – (Co-applicant) IN FAVOR – 14297 Oasis Rd, Caldwell, ID 83607

Mr. Woods confirmed that once approval was granted for the Conditional Use Permit, they would be meeting to confirm a plan with Southwest District Health and their flow rate specialist to determine exactly what would be needed for the venue to be able to accommodate 150 guests.

Planner Amber Lewter reviewed the Staff Report for the record.

Hearing Examiner Mapp recalled Ms. Woods to the lectern to confirm that she had read all the proposed

conditions for the permit's approval and had no issues with them.

Testimony:

Shandell Urizar – IN OPPOSITION – 14157 Oasis Rd, Caldwell, ID 83607

Ms. Urizar expressed her concerns about safety. The proposed venue is on a dead-end dirt road that is poorly maintained. Additional traffic on this road is a major concern. Additionally, with only one proposed employee, Ms. Urizar is concerned for the safety of the neighborhood. Managing up to 150 guests and making sure they don't wander off the property and on to a neighbor's property is a major concern. Ms. Urizar cited an earlier case before Canyon County for a proposed special event facility in a similar area that had even more stringent proposed restrictions on operating hours, number of guests, and days of operation that was denied due to the conclusion that impacts to the neighborhood character, noise, and traffic could not be adequately mitigated through conditions. She re-stated that this proposed site was right in the middle of the dirt road and that there are a total of 24 residences that use the road with it being the only access to their homes.

Pamela Smart – IN OPPOSITION – 29821 Chadwick Ln, Caldwell, ID 83607

Ms. Smart stated that she has lived in the area for 26 years and her recently deceased husband had been crucial in keeping the road in good condition. Currently, the road has been terribly neglected and weeds grow all along, even in front of the Woods' property. The road is very narrow with no shoulder and no more than 20 feet across. She believes that for any wedding guests, the road would be dangerous to use in its current condition and especially to those unfamiliar with its conditions and the necessary precautions that the residents are used to, such as blind spots. Additionally, Ms. Smart stated that there have been a couple of fires in the area and access on the road gets backed up with emergency vehicles, because the road isn't wide enough to pass. She has very high concerns for safety.

Vicki Leavitt – IN OPPOSITION – 14219 Oasis Rd, Caldwell, ID 83607

Ms. Leavitt expressed concern about a wedding venue changing the rural lifestyle of the area. She is also concerned about the promises of beautification of the property because she has seen that nobody takes care of the land currently and it is in poor condition and a fire hazard. With 150 cars added to the area, she is very concerned that with Oasis Road being a dead-end dirt road, a fire would mean that the residents would be trapped with no way to escape. There is one way in and one way out. This is not a safe place to have a wedding venue. She invited Hearing Examiner Mapp to visit the site before approving the permit so he could see what is being described firsthand. Hearing Examiner Mapp responded that he is not allowed under state law to go out and visit a site. The Development Services staff assigned to the case makes a site visit and prepares photos as part of their presentation. He also relies on testimony from the applicant and the site plan and maps of the area.

Chade Leavitt – IN OPPOSITION – 14219 Oasis Rd, Caldwell, ID 83607

Mr. Leavitt stated that his property borders the applicants. He clarified that there are no local businesses out in the area, other than a tree farm owned by the Woods' family members. The next closest local business is three miles away and is a gas station. Mr. Leavitt also said that the claim by the Woods' that they want to take care of the property and make it beautiful does not happen currently. The property is dead with overgrown weeds and dry grass. The few trees they have planted are now dead and the property is not maintained at all. Starting a wedding venue business would make the work needed in maintenance to increase 10 times and they do not maintain what they have now. Their site plan is just some hand drawings on a piece of paper; the property has not been surveyed. They don't know how many cars they can fit in or how wide the roads are.

Mr. Leavitt continued to emphasize that his concerns are safety, emergency services, traffic, and the ingress and egress of traffic. He has measured the road personally and found it is 18 feet wide. He

anticipates that wedding guests will park on the side of the road even though they are asked not to and this will block access to the residents. There are 24 homes that take access off Oasis Road and approving this venue will make unsafe conditions.

Hearing Examiner Mapp inquired of Planner Amber Lewter what the highway district comments were for this proposed use. Ms. Lewter read Exhibit E3 from the staff report. She confirmed that the road's width was not mentioned in their comments.

Hearing Examiner Mapp recalled Ms. Woods for questions and any rebuttal.

Sarah Woods – REBUTTAL – 14297 Oasis Rd, Caldwell, ID 83607

Ms. Woods used Exhibit C3 from the staff report to show a small portion of Oasis Rd that they will utilize for their guests entering the proposed parking lot. There is pavement and then 30 feet of the road that leads into the parking lot area, so they will only be using 30 feet of the dirt road. Planner Amber Lewter confirmed the layout of the roads in the area by using page 81 of the staff report.

Deliberation:

Hearing Examiner Mapp has concerns about emergency vehicle access and before moving any further with the case, needs answers. He requested that staff check with the highway district regarding the existing width and condition of the private road. Also, he would like to know from the fire department regarding their access to the site. He cannot make a decision without answers to these concerns. Testimony is still open.

MOTION: Hearing Examiner Mapp moved to continue case no. CU2026-0007 to a date certain of October 8th, 2026, to allow staff and the applicant to obtain additional information about emergency access and road conditions. Testimony that day will be based upon the private road width and conditions and the emergency access to the site. No additional testimony will be heard.

Item 2B:

Case No. CR2025-0017 – Westensee: Evan Westensee is requesting a Conditional Rezone of approximately 6.05 acres from an "A" (Agricultural) zone to a "CR-R-R" (Conditional Rezone – Rural Residential) zone. The request includes a Development Agreement to limit residential development to 3 residential lots. The subject property is located at 13864 Hidden Canyon Ln, Caldwell, also referenced as Parcel R34462, a portion of the NW ¼ of Section 2, T4N, R3W, BM, Canyon County, Idaho.

Hearing Examiner Mapp called the applicant to testify.

Evan Westensee – (Applicant) IN FAVOR – 13464 Hidden Canyon Ln, Caldwell, ID 83607

Mr. Westensee used several slides from his own prepared presentation to show the layout of the area and the surrounding parcels. He is seeking to change the zoning from Agricultural to Rural Residential and proposed two new parcels for his property. He emphasized that the surrounding properties are rural residential and in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, his property is designated residential.

Mr. Westensee highlighted comments from the Highway District, who does not oppose the zoning change with conditions placed. Also, Southwest District Health had no concerns with the request for rezoning if all requirements were met. Additionally, he has been in contact with the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality and Black Canyon Irrigation District and plans to fully comply with whatever they put forward as conditions.

Hearing Examiner Mapp had no questions for the applicant.

Planner Amber Lewter reviewed the Staff Report for the record.

Testimony:

Tamra Card – IN OPPOSITION – 23774 Canyon Ln, Caldwell, ID 83607

Ms. Card is concerned about inconsistencies with what was presented at the neighborhood meeting versus what is being presented today. Originally, four lots were suggested and that the additional lots would be for the applicants' children to build on. Things appear to have changed.

Ms. Card's concern is one of safety. The road is very narrow and not maintained currently. There is no turnaround area for emergency vehicles. All the neighbors are opposed to adding more residences and having more traffic on this unmaintained, narrow road.

Hearing Examiner Mapp used Exhibit B9 from the staff report to confirm access to the area. Canyon Lane is partially paved. Where the pavement ends, it is a private road that turns on to Hidden Canyon Springs, which is a dead end. There is one way in and one way out. Ms. Card expressed again her concerns about additional traffic and EMS getting in there and being able to turn around.

Rachel Sontag – IN OPPOSITION – 13987 Hidden Canyon Ln, Caldwell, ID 83607

Ms. Sontag had similar concerns about the width of the road and the ability for emergency vehicles to access the residences. Because it is a private road, the maintenance falls to the homeowners, and they are not all contributing to the effort. Her and her husband have dumped several yards of chip rock on the road to improve it, as people often get stuck in the snow and mud during the year. She is concerned that putting more homes on the road will make things worse. Lastly, she stated that one of the neighbor's pastures caught fire and the fire trucks blocked the road where no one could exit their property.

Hearing Examiner Mapp used Exhibit B9 to have Ms. Sontag confirm where her property is in relation to the applicant's and to state that she was aware there is an easement for use of the road and a maintenance agreement in place. She confirmed that seven homes use the road and any additional homes would push the already difficult road conditions too far. The only drivable width of the road is 12 feet with goat heads and other weeds on the shoulder.

Planner Amber Lewter pointed out that Exhibit B8 of the staff report shows an easement and a RUMA for the private road access portion that specifies the roadway shall be maintained, repaired, replaced, and/or improved at equal expense of the owners that take access.

Jessica McClafferty – IN OPPOSITION – 23729 Canyon Ln, Caldwell, ID 83607

Ms. McClafferty lives on Canyon Lane immediately where the private road begins. The traffic comes through Canyon Lane to access the seven homes on the private road. Two additional households will add to this traffic. Additionally, there is a home-based business operating off the private road, which creates traffic, and all that traffic ultimately comes through Canyon Lane. She is concerned about the people already living there having to absorb the additional traffic and changing the rural character of the area.

Ms. McClafferty stated that Mr. Westensee is listed as an owner, resident, or seller, along with his wife, on 14 properties and is interested in increasing the development potential of the subject property primarily to benefit himself, while the surrounding residents absorb the consequences. Additionally, she pointed out that the original proposal mentioned four additional parcels be added, rather than two. She is confused as to the specifics of his request. She requested a denial of the conditional rezone.

Planner Amber Lewter clarified that the applicant was originally looking at doing four total parcels. During

the process, he has agreed to the condition of a total of three, so two additional lots.

Evan Westensee – REBUTTAL – 13464 Hidden Canyon Ln, Caldwell, ID 83607

Mr. Westensee clarified that they had originally wanted four total parcels instead of the three they are asking for and they had originally wanted to conditionally rezone to R1 instead of Rural Residential, but they made these adjustments based on the neighbor's concerns expressed during the neighborhood meeting. They desire to remain on this property long-term with their family. The future land use in the 2030 comprehensive plan is fully in line with rural residential zoning.

Using the map previously brought up, Mr. Westensee addressed the concerns about a turnaround in the road. He stated that his driveway is being used by the garbage truck as the turnaround on this dead-end road. He passes cars on the road frequently and it is wide enough for two cars to pass. He has never felt in any danger on that road. He also stated that he made it clear at the neighborhood meeting that he is willing to work with all his neighbors to be involved in the maintenance of the road and he was met with no comments at that time.

Mr. Westensee reiterated that in every circumstance, he will comply 100% with all agencies and departments. Everything he does will be done safely and with respect to those around him. He intends to be a great neighbor, a great steward of the community and to develop the property safely.

Hearing Examiner Mapp had some follow up questions for the applicant about the road. He inquired about Canyon Lane and whether it could be expanded past the corner with Hidden Canyon Lane and be extended to allow for further access to the area. Mr. Westensee responded that there is a grade of dirt that would prevent Canyon Lane from being extended. Planner Amber Lewter confirmed that access to Hidden Canyon Lane would not come from the east side but would be south of the property.

Hearing Examiner Mapp asked the applicant what his understanding of the road user's maintenance agreement was. Mr. Westensee stated that he isn't aware of the details. There doesn't seem to be any structure around the agreement or any consistent plan in place currently. Planner Amber Lewter stated that, if in the future a building permit was issued for any additional development where Hidden Canyon Lane was being used for access, a new RUMA would have to be recorded.

Hearing Examiner Mapp asked the applicant if he would be willing to continue to allow a portion of his property to be used for a turnaround and to make that permanent. Mr. Westensee confirmed that it would be fine, as there needs to be a turnaround anyway and the end of his driveway that is being used is far enough away from his house, he has no concerns with it being used in this manner.

Deliberation:

Hearing Examiner Mapp stated that he will continue this case to the next scheduled meeting because he still has some questions regarding road access. He wants staff to look at a couple of areas of concern and access is one of them. Access to the site is the main issue. He wants staff to get some clarification about possible extension of the road that allows for better access to the area.

MOTION: Hearing Examiner Mapp moved to **continue** Case No. CR2025-0017 to a date certain of October 8, 2026, with a recommendation to conduct and provide a traffic impact study if possible, or at least more information from the highway district, and a plan for noise mitigation and a turnaround plan.

2. DIRECTOR, PLANNER, COMMISSION COMMENTS:

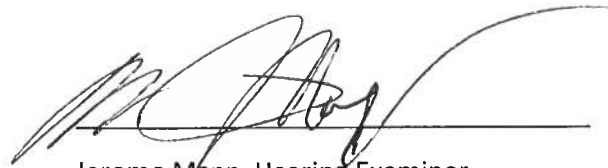
None.

3. ADJOURNMENT:

Hearing Examiner Mapp adjourned the hearing at 3:21 P.M.

An audio recording is on file in the Development Services Departments' office.

Approved this 22nd day of October, 2026

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Mapp", is written over a horizontal line.

Jerome Mapp, Hearing Examiner

ATTEST

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pam Dilbeck", is written over a horizontal line.

Pam Dilbeck, Sr. Administrative Specialist