

The Trinity Journal: January 28, 2026

Article by Josh Cozine

Citizens group pushback on treatment home Questions linger, lack of notice upsetting Trinity Center group over proposed drug recovery home

Trinity Center residents are still searching for answers to a proposed residential treatment home in their neighborhood for treating people with drug or alcohol addiction.

A town hall meeting Jan. 8 saw at least 100 people turn out in the small community mostly speaking out against the idea of such a treatment home in Trinity Center (“Community concerned over addiction treatment home,” Jan. 14). Safety concerns were raised by many, a few asked for others to keep an open mind, but mostly it was put forward that no matter the concerns, there was nothing anyone could do to change anything.

Immediately following the meeting, and after being told by their district supervisor and planning commissioner of there being no local mechanisms to stop such a treatment home, residents came together and started forming the group “Trinity Center Citizens for a Safe Community” in response.

Since then, the group has been growing and organizing. Representatives within the group were quick to deny allegations of opposing the treatment home based on unfounded arguments over neighborhood safety, but instead cited potential safety issues for anyone seeking addiction treatment in such a remote location as Trinity Center.

Other complaints center around what looks to them as a lack of transparency by both the county and the owner of the proposed treatment property with many feeling blindsided at the way such a treatment home can come into a community with little to no announcement, and still others contest the intent behind the rules and codes governing such treatment homes could be open for interpretation in such specific, remote, small towns as Trinity Center.

Misrepresented

Tom Dinsmore lives just over and across the street from the home on Airport Road that has been proposed as a residential treatment facility to treat people with addiction to drugs or alcohol.

He took issue with some of the statements released two weeks ago in The Trinity Journal article “Community concerned over addiction treatment home,” which covered the standing-room-only town hall meeting at the International Order of Odd Fellows building on the proposed home. Specifically, the owner of the proposed treatment home, Anita Clark, was quoted saying her neighbors were in favor of the operation.

“Well, we’re not in favor,” he said, also referring to his wife, Karen Dinsmore, who recorded the meeting on Facebook which has since garnered hundreds of more views in such a small community it seems everyone must have watched it by now.

Aside from feeling misrepresented as a neighbor, Tom shared similar concerns raised by Trinity Center Citizens for a Safe Community that no one can get any questions answered about safety or how the house will operate. According to information provided by their district supervisor, so long as such a treatment home keeps six or fewer clients, there is no further local control over such a home being set up.

He said he wished Clark would have been at the town hall meeting to answer questions the community had, and to him it seems like someone is just trying to make money off people struggling with addiction.

“It feels like hollering at a wall,” Tom said.

“I think she should have been more up front,” he said, referring to Clark. “I don’t know that she actually cares for the patients.”

Late notices

The Jan. 8 town hall at the IOOF started around 6 p.m., and lasted roughly two hours, but many stayed behind after, feeling like their concerns didn’t matter and there was nothing that could be done. Others started a sign-up sheet to keep each other informed, eventually forming it and anyone interested into Trinity Center Citizens for a Safe Community.

“Citizens for a Safe Community plans to monitor developments on related issues and will keep local residents abreast of the process as it works its way through a state licensing protocol,” the group stated in their press release a week after the town hall, announcing their formation.

Sam Sacco sends out most of the group's emails. He lives in Trinity Center and says he was surprised as was most everyone in the community to learn about a home there being proposed as an addiction recovery treatment home.

"About a week or so before the meeting is when we really figured out what was going to happen," Sacco said, "nobody was telling anybody."

What has been told at the town hall wasn't much either, Sacco said, leaving people with just as many questions on what the treatment home might end up looking like.

Far from help

"There's four different levels and we still don't know which it could be," Sacco said. The different levels he referred to are the different levels of care different residential treatment homes can be licensed to give.

The higher levels of care, he, and the rest of Trinity Center citizens group argue, are simply not appropriate in Trinity Center so far from access to medical services in an emergency.

Not only is Trinity Center too far from the nearest hospital in Weaverville, sometimes it is all but inaccessible for days at a time.

"A major concern is safety," an FAQ from Trinity Center Citizens for a Safe Community stated. "Not just the safety of local residents — but the safety of patients, too.

"Trinity Center's remote location produces serious challenges for those residing here, specifically wildfires, health threatening smoke inhalation and severe winter weather can disrupt — or prevent — life-saving medical operations."

Different interpretations

Scott White is a Lewiston resident but made the trip to Trinity Center to be at the Jan. 8 town hall. He announced that he would be running for supervisor of District 1 (read more about his candidacy in next week's issue), but more than that, he brought with him a different interpretation to some code section that oversees drug abuse recovery or treatment facilities.

Copies of Health and Safety Code 11834.23 provided at the town hall had to be shared with such a large turnout. The code section covers drug and alcohol recovery facilities

and states very specific governing criteria when facilities have six or fewer people, saying that for purposes of local ordinances the facilities cannot “differ in any other way from a single-family residence,” and that the only restrictions that can be placed on them must be “identical to those applied to other single-family residences.”

The way the code is written leads to a much more abbreviated process in setting up such facilities and eliminates the need for any normal oversights that might be performed locally, needing instead only a fire inspection and then being signed off on by the state health department.

Farther back in the code, however White points out, section 11834.20, contains a caveat that mentions local needs:

“Each county and city shall permit and encourage the development of sufficient numbers and types of alcohol or other drug recovery or treatment facilities as are commensurate with local need,” the Health and Safety code reads.

“They could have put the period right there and not added that,” White said, pointing to the above section of code after the word facilities, “but it’s there.”

“Is Trinity Center so small, that ‘commensurate with local need’ can come into play?” he asked.

“If they had no intent to ever have a floor, or some size that it might not apply to, why did they add those words?” White asked further. As written, any number of homes could be bought and attempted to be converted to residential treatment homes, something many rumored at the town hall meeting to already be taking place — although no proof of such claims could be provided as of Monday.

White said the county isn’t particularly wrong in its interpretation of the law, as far as the implementation section is concerned, but when it comes to sections governing the legislative intent, he feels there is room for local considerations already there, but it might take pushing higher up, possibly to the courts.

“If the plain language leads you to a ridiculous outcome, you have a right to go back in and look at that,” he said. “And that’s a question for the courts.”