

Zoning board grants drug rehab permit

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The creation of a new state chemical dependency center in Uptown Butte cleared one more hurdle at Thursday's zoning board meeting.

The six board members present voted to approve a special use permit for the proposed 32-bed, three-building center, which will be built at Mercury and Oklahoma by Community, Counseling and Correctional Services.

The board approved the permit with 10 standard conditions.

Now, according to Mike Thatcher, chief operating officer of CCCS, the organization is waiting on final approval by the state, which will lease the building for 19 years. He said the state should have an answer in early October.

Thatcher said the project would be completely privately funded and may cost as much as \$6 million to build.

The new treatment center will replace the aging facility at 2500 Continental Dr., which no longer meets state licensing regulations. Thatcher said keeping the center in Butte would retain about 40 jobs and would continue to provide treatment for Butte residents.

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Two people voiced support at the meeting, including Butte-Silver Bow Commissioner Bill Anderson, who said he talked to the sheriff, an assistant county attorney, and others about drug and crime problems in Butte. He said it's a worthwhile project that would help Butte residents who struggle with addictions.

"I feel anything we can do as a community to help ... is something we need to take a very strong look at," Anderson said.

Zoning board member John Habeger said the project would provide good infill in an area that's rapidly improving.

"This just is another facet of that improvement," Habeger said.