

Witch denied use of home as church

Lady Sintana vows to ignore county's ruling

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Is Lady Sintana a practitioner of voodoo, a bad influence on children and a detriment to her southwest DeKalb County neighborhood? Or is she a law-abiding witch who treasures nature, privacy and her right to worship like most everybody else?

Lady Sintana says she's the latter. Many DeKalb residents say she's the former.

Both views came out Wednesday at a meeting of the DeKalb Board of Appeals, which voted unanimously to forbid Lady Sintana from operating a church at her home on Rainbow Drive because of concerns over parking. Lady Sintana says she will ignore the ruling, since she doesn't think of her home as a church, and may wind up taking the county to court.

"People don't understand



MARLENE KARAS / Staff

Nature lover or black magic woman? Self-proclaimed witch Lady Sintana stands in a circle of stones in her DeKalb back yard. One neighbor called the circle a cemetery, but Lady Sintana denied that accusation.

what I do, and I have been trying to debunk the typical witchy-poo stuff from the beginning," said Lady Sintana, a former burlesque dancer and the granddaughter of a Baptist minister. "I don't call what I have at my house a church; it's more like a coven."

Even though Lady Sintana has lived on Rainbow Drive for more than four years, the county told her only in June that she must seek a variance to use her property as a place of religious worship. She turned in an application for one, but then changed her mind, keeping away from

the meeting and claiming she only uses her house for private gatherings.

"It ain't nobody's business what goes on behind closed doors," said Harry Smith, president of Parents Against Crack Inc. and the only person who spoke in support of Lady Sintana at Wednesday's meeting. State Sen. John Parrish, speaking for about 100 residents who cheered him on at the meeting, said he was told by Lady Sintana that her home was a church, and that she made a doll to represent him. Lady Sintana denied this.

Lady Sintana doesn't understand the opposition. As the high priestess of the House of Ravenwood, Atlanta's best-known institution of Wicca, she says that all public meetings of the church are held monthly on Hammond Drive in Fulton County, and that only her witches come to her home on Rainbow Drive.

"Eight times a year, we meet at my house on high holy days, and we meet once a month for the full moon," Lady Sintana said. "It's just like when Christians meet in their homes on Christmas and Easter."