

Tulsa pastor charged in child sexual abuse case

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AMANDA BLAND World Staff Writer | 0 comments

Almost a decade after taking over his slain brother's ministry, a Tulsa pastor accused of impregnating a 15-year-old was charged Wednesday in district court with several felony sex abuse counts.

Tulsa County prosecutors charged Gregory Ivan Hawkins, 54, with six counts of child sexual abuse, records show.

Gregory Ivan Hawkins: The pastor at Zion Fellowship Living Waters Church was arrested in connection with the alleged sexual abuse of a girl who is now 15, police say. The girl says she is pregnant with his child.

He was jailed on June 24 after a pregnant 15-year-old told police Hawkins had been sexually abusing her since April 2012. She alleged Hawkins fathered her unborn child.

He posted bail on \$50,000 bond and was released within hours of his arrest.

The charges were filed almost 10 years to the day after Hawkins' brother, Neaco Padillow, was slain in his car outside a Tulsa elementary school.

After Padillow was shot and killed at the age of 35, Hawkins ministered Padillow's Zion Fellowship Living Waters Church and took ownership of the Zion Community Economic Development Corp., which received \$100,000 in Community Development Block Grants to renovate the Zion Plaza shopping center at 542 E. 46th Street North a year before Padillow's death on July 3, 2003.

Hawkins was quoted by the Tulsa World frequently in the months following his brother's shooting. He admonished gun violence in north Tulsa, spoke lovingly of his brother and expressed hope for the resolution of the unsolved homicide case.

Padillow hoped to use Zion Plaza to house a community theater, music room, cafeteria and neighborhood store, the Tulsa World previously reported. He was found dead outside of Burroughs Elementary School, 1924 N. Cincinnati Ave., where he was waiting to pick up his niece.

The Tulsa Police Department's Homicide Unit re-examined the case in 2011 and have

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"We are currently, and still, trying to locate somebody that can corroborate the information that we were given," he said.

In the years since Padillow's murder, Zion Fellowship Living Waters Church moved from 5920 N. Owasso Ave. into the Zion Plaza center and became Zion Fellowship Ministries, referred to by police as Zion Plaza Church in Hawkins' arrest report.

In addition to Zion Fellowship Ministries, the shopping center contains Zion Child Care & Learning Center, which was licensed by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services at the Zion Plaza center in 2006. The child care center's file contains a previous application license listing the same address as Zion Fellowship Living Waters Church and signed by Padillow in 1998.

DHS visited Zion Child Care the day after Hawkins' arrest. Licensing staff noted that "effective immediately, Gregory Hawkins will be restricted from the child care facility."

DHS workers and employees of the center apparently discussed voluntarily ceasing care, but an attorney representing Zion Child Care told DHS the facility "will not voluntarily cease care at this time."

Licensing staff have visited the facility 13 times since July 2012. They observed noncompliance issues such as unlocked doors to other units in the shopping center, repeated staff-child ratio violations while in the facility and during transportation as well as a malfunctioning heater on Jan. 11. At the time of the January visit, the center's thermostat read 62 degrees. The heater was later repaired.

In December, the facility's director, Cathryn Collins, was reportedly the only qualified staff member caring for 11 children with the assistance of five volunteers, who appeared to be performing duties as qualified staff. Background checks had not been conducted on the volunteers.

DHS requires child care facilities obtain "a completed criminal history investigation for person who have unsupervised access to children," including volunteers.

Anyone with information regarding Padillow's death can contact the Tulsa Police Department's Homicide Unit at 918-798-8477 or by email at homicide@cityoftulsa.org.

Tipsters wishing to remain anonymous can call Crime Stoppers at 918-596-COPS (2677) or submit information online at tulsaworld.com/crimestoppers

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