



ALBEMARLE COUNTY PLANNING
STAFF REPORT SUMMARY

Project Name: SP202000001 Little Explorers Discovery School (Crozet Baptist Church)	Staff: Andy Reitelbach, Senior Planner
Planning Commission Public Hearing: May 12, 2020	Board of Supervisors Hearing: To be determined
Owner(s): Crozet Baptist Church	Applicant(s): Christi Gillette, Little Explorers Discovery School
Acreage: 2.25 acres	Special Use Permit for: Request to amend existing special use permit SP201800006 for a child day center under Section 14.2.2.7 of the Zoning Ordinance
TMP: 056A1-01-00-08200 Location: 5804 St. George Avenue, Crozet, VA 22932	Zoning/by-right use: R-2 Residential, which allows 2 dwelling units per acre
Magisterial District: White Hall	Conditions: Yes EC: No
School Districts: Western Albemarle High School, Henley Middle School, Crozet Elementary School	
Proposal: Request to amend existing special use permit SP201800006 to allow an increase in attendance at an existing child day center to a maximum of 50 students present at one time. No new buildings proposed. Child day center proposed to expand into other areas of existing church building.	Requested # of Dwelling Units/Lots: No dwelling units proposed.
DA (Development Area): Crozet	Comp. Plan Designation: Neighborhood Density Residential – residential (3-6 units/acre); supporting uses such as religious institutions, schools, and other small-scale non-residential uses
Character of Property: Existing church building, house, parking area, and back yard. Child day center operates within the church building.	Use of Surrounding Properties: Residential in an existing single-family detached neighborhood. Non-residential uses along St. George Ave. include another church and a funeral home.
Factors Favorable: 1. The proposed use is consistent with the Crozet Master Plan. 2. The proposed use is located within the Development Areas and is consistent with the uses identified for areas designated as Neighborhood Density Residential.	Factors Unfavorable: 1. The use will generate additional vehicular trips on St. George Avenue; however, a staggered drop off period and pick-up period will be used to better distribute traffic, and the use of a “park-and-walk” system for students and their parents will ensure traffic does not back up onto St. George Avenue.
Recommendation: Special Use Permit: Staff recommends approval of SP202000001, Little Explorers Discovery School (Crozet Baptist Church), with conditions.	

STAFF CONTACT:
PLANNING COMMISSION:
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Andy Reitelbach, Senior Planner
May 12, 2020
TBD

PETITION

PROJECT: SP202000001 Little Explorers Discovery School (Crozet Baptist Church)

MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT: White Hall

TAX MAP/PARCEL: 056A1010008200

LOCATION: 5804 St. George Avenue, Crozet, VA 22932

PROPOSAL: Request to amend existing special use permit SP201800006 to allow an increase in attendance at an existing child day center to a maximum of 50 students present at one time. No new buildings proposed.

PETITION: Special Use Permit request for a child day center in accordance with Section 14.2.2.7 of the Zoning Ordinance on a 2.25-acre parcel. No dwelling units proposed.

ZONING: R-2 Residential, which allows 2 dwelling units per acre and institutional and public uses.

OVERLAY DISTRICT(S): Steep Slopes - Managed

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: Neighborhood Density Residential – residential (3-6 units/acre); supporting uses such as religious institutions, schools, and other small-scale non-residential uses; in the Community of Crozet Master Plan area.

CHARACTER OF SURROUNDING AREA

The 2.25-acre property of the church is on the north side of St. George Avenue in Crozet, approximately 1,000 feet west of its intersection with Crozet Avenue. (See Attachment 1 – Location Map.) Adjacent properties to the north, east, west, and southwest are single family-detached houses. A parking lot for the church is directly across the street to the south. The neighborhood contains single family-detached housing, a funeral home, another church, and another small business. The surrounding neighborhood and property are all zoned R-2 Residential, with a few scattered parcels that are zoned R-4 and R-6 residential. (See Attachment 2 – Zoning Map.) Crozet Elementary School is located approximately ½ mile away to the northeast on Crozet Avenue.

PLANNING AND ZONING HISTORY

The property is zoned R2 Residential.

- **SDP1979-00052** - Approval of a site development plan to construct a 9,000 square-foot auditorium addition to the existing church. This plan was approved; however, construction did not occur, and the plan expired in 1981.
- **SDP1982-00045** - Approval of a site development plan to construct a 3,043 square foot addition to the existing church, increasing the overall size of the church to 10,601 square feet, and to expand the parking lot. This plan was submitted and approved, and replaced the 1979 plan, as that plan from 1979 had been approved, but expired on March 27, 1981, without construction commencing.
- **SUB1993-00074** - Approval of a subdivision plat to vacated property lines, showing the combining of three separate parcels into one larger parcel, which is the current parcel that the main building of Crozet Baptist Church is situated on, to the north of St. George Avenue.
- **SP1999-00064** - Approval of a special use permit to allow two houses on church property to be used for church education and group meeting space (youth group) on the first floor.
- **SP2003-00058** - Approval of a special use permit to allow office use on the first floor of the houses, in addition to church education and group meeting space.
- **SP2018-00006** – Approval of a special use permit to establish a child day center at Crozet Baptist Church with a maximum permitted enrollment of 40 students and a limit of no more than 25 students in

attendance at one time.

DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

The applicant has requested an amendment to the previously-approved special use permit (SP2018-00006) to allow for increased attendance at the child day center and to increase the permitted hours of operation of the child day center. (See Attachment 3 – Project Narrative.) Currently, enrollment is capped at a maximum of 40 students, with no more than 25 students permitted to be present at one time. The applicant has requested that the number of students permitted to be in attendance on site at one time be increased to no more than 50 students, along with no maximum cap on enrollment. The request for no maximum cap on enrollment would allow flexibility for the various situations and needs of the students and their parents. As a child day center, there are various groups and age ranges of students who may be attending the center at different times of the day and week. These include half-day or full-day pre-school aged children, as well as older after-school children, who may attend only after elementary school has been dismissed for the day. In addition, there are students who may attend only 2-3 days a week, while others attend five days a week. The applicant's request would permit only 50 students to be present at the child care facility at one time, while allowing the make-up of the age ranges and duration of care of the students to fluctuate throughout the day and week.

In addition, the applicant has requested that the days and hours of operation be expanded. This expansion includes operating Monday through Friday, 7:30am to 6:00pm, instead of what is currently permitted from 7:30am to 5:30pm. Occasional events related to the child day center would continue to be permitted in the evenings after 6:00pm.

The morning drop-off period would continue to be offered from 7:30am to 9:00am to allow for a staggered situation, and the afternoon pick-up period would be extended from one hour to one and a half hours, from 4:30pm to 6:00pm to allow for a similarly staggered situation. In addition, instead of using a car line for dropping off and picking up children, the applicant proposes to have parents or guardians park in the church's parking lot and walk their children to the building. (See Attachment 4 – Concept Map.)

The child day center would continue to utilize Crozet Baptist Church's existing church building, as well as their parking lot, backyard, and play equipment. No additional construction is proposed, other than potential additional recreational equipment in the future.

COMMUNITY MEETING

A community meeting for this proposal was held on Wednesday, March 11, 2020, at the Crozet Community Advisory Committee (CCAC) meeting at the Crozet Library. The applicant presented her proposal for expanding enrollment at the child day center. Several CAC members remarked on the need for additional capacity at child day centers in the Crozet community. There were no community members who raised any concerns with the proposal or spoke in opposition to it.

ANALYSIS OF THE SPECIAL USE PERMIT REQUEST

Section 33.39(B) of the Zoning Ordinance states that the Planning Commission, in making its recommendation, shall consider the same factors found in Section 33.40(B):

- 1. No substantial detriment.*** Whether the proposed special use will be a substantial detriment to adjacent parcels.

The church has been in operation at this location since 1951, without problems to the neighborhood. The Little Explorers Discovery School has been in operation at the church property since January 2019, and there have been no zoning complaints submitted about the child day center during that time.

The applicant has indicated that the number of children permitted to be playing outside at one time will continue to be limited in order to help minimize noise generated by outdoor activity. In addition, the continued use of staggered drop-off and pick-up times, along with the elimination of the car line in favor of parking, will help to reduce the traffic along St. George Avenue at any given time and ensure that a line of cars does not back up onto the street. These traffic management techniques should minimize disruption to neighboring parcels and others who travel along St. George Avenue. VDOT and the County's Transportation Planning team have reviewed this SP amendment request and have no objections to the proposed increase in attendance to 50 students present at one time.

2. Character of the nearby area is unchanged. Whether the character of the adjacent parcels and the nearby area will be changed by the proposed special use.

The property and its surroundings are zoned R2, which is a low-density single family residential district. Religious institutions, child day centers, and schools frequently locate in residential areas because they help support residents. The proposed use is primarily within an existing building, and no building changes are needed. The child day center proposes to expand into a currently unused space within the church's existing main building. Outdoors, the applicant has indicated that the children must be supervised at all times, and there are separate play areas in the back yard for the different age ranges, reducing the impact of outdoor activity on any one part of the churchyard. In addition, the traffic management techniques mentioned in the previous section will help to reduce the amount of traffic travelling along St. George Avenue and ensure congestion does not affect the neighborhood road. The increase in permitted attendance is not expected to change the character of the nearby area.

3. Harmony. Whether the proposed special use will be in harmony with the purpose and intent of this chapter,

The purpose of Chapter 18 of the Zoning Ordinance is *to promote the public health, safety, convenience, and welfare and to accomplish the objectives of Virginia Code §§ 15.2-2200 and 15.2-2283. To these ends, this chapter is intended to:*

- A. *Provide for adequate light, air, convenience of access, and safety from fire, flood, impounding structure failure, crime and other dangers;*
- B. *Reduce or prevent congestion in the public streets;*
- C. *Facilitate creating a convenient, attractive and harmonious community;*
- D. *Facilitate providing adequate police and fire protection, disaster evacuation, civil defense, transportation, water, sewerage, flood protection, schools, parks, forests, playgrounds, recreational facilities, airports and other public requirements;...*

Staff believes that the proposed use will not affect light, air, convenience of access, or any of the other items in A. above. Congestion in the public streets is not expected, and as mentioned above, neither VDOT nor the County's Transportation Planning team has expressed concern about traffic related to the use with the proposed mitigation techniques of staggered drop-off/pick-up times and the elimination of the car line in favor of parking and walking. The proposed use is not expected to cause any conflicts or damage that would prevent items C. or D. above from happening. There are not expected to be significant impacts to community services like police or fire protection or utility provisions. Albemarle County Fire-Rescue and the Albemarle County Service Authority have reviewed this proposal and have expressed no objections.

The purpose and intent of the R2 zoning district is: *to establish a plan implementation zone that:*

- *Provides a potential transition density between higher and lower density areas established through previous development and/or zoning in community areas and the urban area; and*
- *Provides incentives for clustering of development and provision of locational, environmental and development amenities.*
- *R-2 districts may be permitted within community and urban area locations designated on the comprehensive plan.*

The proposed use does not affect the intent of the R2 zoning district.

a. with the uses permitted by right in the district,

The proposed amendment to the previously-approved special use permit will not restrict the current uses or other by-right uses available at this property or adjacent properties.

b. with the regulations provided in Section 5 as applicable,

The supplementary regulations in Section 5 require that a child day center acquire and maintain licensure from the state department of Social Services and pass inspection by the fire marshal. The applicant is subject to these requirements before being given a zoning clearance to operate.

c. and with the public health, safety, and general welfare.

Public health, safety, and general welfare are typically assessed by analyzing impacts from land disturbance, traffic, and other activities, such as noise, vibration, smells, and the like. No land disturbance is proposed. The main issue of concern is the potential traffic impacts from the increased student attendance that could affect safety. As mentioned previously, VDOT and the County's Transportation Planning team have reviewed this request and have expressed no objections to the proposal. The proposed use is not expected to have a negative impact on the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

4. Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Whether the proposed special use will be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

The Crozet Master Plan designates this property as Neighborhood Density Residential, which allows residential uses as primary uses, as well as supporting uses such as places of worship, schools, public and institutional uses, and small-scale neighborhood serving retail and commercial uses. As a child day center located in a building that is also used as a place of worship, this use is consistent with the Crozet Master Plan and Albemarle County Comprehensive Plan, and no change in the type of use on the site is proposed.

Consistency of special use permit requests is also evaluated against master plans and, in this case, the 2010 Crozet Master Plan. The property under review is recommended for Neighborhood Density residential use.

In addition, staff also notes that the Crozet Master Plan anticipates that child day centers will be located in areas designated for Neighborhood Density Residential:

This designation represents residential areas with a desired density of 3 – 6 residential units per acre. It also represents existing residential areas within or below this range. Housing in this area is primarily single-family detached with some single-family attached/townhouses. Non-residential uses include institutional uses, such as places of worship, public and private schools, and early childhood education centers (daycare centers and preschools).

SUMMARY

Staff finds the following factors favorable to this request:

1. The proposed use is consistent with the Crozet Master Plan.
2. The proposed use is located within the Development Areas and is consistent with the uses identified for areas designated as Neighborhood Density Residential.

Staff finds the following factors unfavorable to this request:

1. The use will generate additional vehicular trips on St. George Avenue; however, a staggered drop off period and pick-up period will be used to better distribute traffic, and the use of a “park-and-walk” system for students and their parents will ensure traffic does not back up onto St. George Avenue.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Based on the findings described in this staff report and factors identified as favorable, **staff recommends approval of special use permit application SP202000001, Little Explorers Discover School (Crozet Baptist Church), with the following conditions:**

1. The child day center use shall take place within the existing Crozet Baptist Church building except for outdoor play which shall take place within a fenced yard.
2. A fence and landscaping must be maintained along the western and northern property lines while the child day center use is in operation.
3. The maximum number of students present at any time at the child day center shall be no more than 50 students.
4. Hours of operation for the child day center shall be no earlier than 7:30 a.m. and not later than 6:00 p.m., except that occasional child day center-related events may occur after 6:00 p.m.
5. A staggered morning drop-off period shall be employed by the owner to more evenly distribute traffic generated by the use across a one and one half hour period.

POSSIBLE PLANNING COMMISSION MOTIONS for SP202000001

- A. Should the Planning Commission **choose to recommend approval** of this special use permit:

I move to recommend approval of SP202000001, Little Explorers Discovery School (Crozet Baptist Church), with the conditions as stated in the staff report.

- B. Should the Planning Commission **choose to recommend denial** of this special use permit:

I move to recommend denial of SP202000001, Little Explorers Discovery School (Crozet Baptist Church). (State reasons for denial.)

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Location Map

Attachment 2 – Zoning Map

Attachment 3 – Project Narrative

Attachment 4 – Concept Map