

**Albemarle County Planning Commission
Final Minutes May 28, 2024**

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a public hearing on Tuesday, May 28, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

Members attending were: Fred Missel; Luis Carrazana; Corey Clayborne; Julian Bivins; Karen Firehock (arrived at 6:04 p.m.); Nathan Moore; Lonnie Murray

Other officials present were: Michael Barnes, Director of Planning; Khris Taggart; Syd Shoaf; Margaret Maliszewski Frances MacCall; Kevin McDermott; Rebecca Ragsdale; Andy Herrick, County Attorney's Office; and Carolyn Shaffer, Clerk to the Planning Commission.

Call to Order and Establish Quorum

Ms. Shaffer called the roll.

Mr. Missel established a quorum.

Other Matters Not Listed on the Agenda from the Public

There were none.

Consent Agenda

Mr. Moore motioned the Planning Commission adopt the consent agenda, which was seconded by Mr. Carrazana. The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Public Hearings

SP202400003 Olivet Preschool Enrollment Increase

Syd Shoaf, Senior Planner, said that he would be presenting staff recommendations for Special Use Permit SP202400003, Olivet Preschool Increased Enrollment. He said that the request sought to amend an existing permit to increase enrollment from a maximum of 24 students to 48 students.

Mr. Shoaf said that the subject property was approximately 9.19 acres and located west of Charlottesville at 2575 Garth Road. He said that it was zoned Rural Areas (RA) and home to Olivet Presbyterian Church, which had occupied the site since the early 1900s. He said that the comprehensive plan designated this area as Rural Areas. He said that the site featured a fellowship hall, Sunday school classrooms, a cemetery, and other church-related facilities.

Mr. Shoaf said that a special use permit was granted in 2015 for a preschool with a maximum enrollment of 24 students. He said that surrounding properties were zoned Rural Areas and consisted of single-family residential uses. He said that the applicant proposed increasing the maximum enrollment from 24 to 48 students and extending hours of operation from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., allowing extended pickup time for students until 2:00 p.m. He said that no changes were proposed to the site itself, and a drawing illustrated the current student drop-off flow. He said that according to the applicant, they had sufficient classroom capacity to accommodate an increase in enrollment up to 48 students.

Mr. Shoaf said that the special use permit application was reviewed under the factors for consideration outlined in the zoning ordinance. He said that staff believed that the proposed special use permit would not be detrimental to adjacent parcels, would not alter the character of the nearby area, and was consistent with the rural areas zoning district as well as the comprehensive plan. He said that two recommended conditions were presented, one amending the previously approved condition from 24 students to 48 students and a second amending the hours of operation as requested by the applicant.

Mr. Shoaf said in sum, there were three factors favorable. He said that the first was consistency with review criteria for special use permits contained in the zoning ordinance. He said that the second was that the proposal provided a preschool and daycare option for community members who lived and worked in the area. He said that lastly, no detrimental impacts to adjoining properties were anticipated. He said that with this said, staff recommended approval of the application with the conditions as recommended in the staff report.

Ms. Firehock said that because this was in her district and they had already gone through this once before, she would like to know if staff had asked the applicant if this was the final request or if they would be coming back to amend the SUP in two years to allow 62 students. She said that she wished they had just requested the higher number before.

Mr. Shoaf said that the applicant could speak to that question, but when he spoke with them, they were comfortable with 48 and it should be sufficient for the time being.

Ms. Firehock said that she would like to avoid the applicant returning again to request additional enrollment.

Mr. Missel opened the public hearing and asked if the applicant had a presentation.

Seth Lovell, pastor and head of staff at Olivet Presbyterian Church, said that he had been on staff since 2010, and he had served as pastor and head of staff for the last four and a half years. He said that the church had operated a preschool for about ten years, as Mr. Shoaf noted, and they regretted not having requested more enrollment when they first established it around ten years ago. He said that they were back now, and they hoped this was the final time they would need to revisit this issue.

Mr. Lovell said that an assessment of their building had been conducted, and they believed the preschool had the potential for growth. He said that when they initially began, they started with one classroom, eight students, and two teachers. He said that the program had grown exponentially since then. He said that they currently had a waiting list, which was why they were there tonight. He said that their goal was to provide a pre-kindergarten option for nearby families who lived in the community. He said that he would like to express his gratitude to County staff, who had been incredibly helpful throughout this process.

Mr. Missel asked if the Commission had any questions for the applicant.

Mr. Bivins said that he was attempting to understand where all of the kids would be going, because the proposal indicated on page 1 that there were two 2-year-old classes, one 3-year-old class, one 4-year-old class, and one Pre-K class; however, he did not have sufficient space for all of those students.

Mr. Lovell said that for two-year-olds, they do not meet daily due to their age and ability to participate in a pre-K setting. He said that instead, there were two classes, an A class and a B class, which met at different times throughout the week. He said that this could be notated in the documents. He said that to clarify, in the preschool model, there was only the Pre-K class that attended Monday through Friday, as they were the older children who attended school for five days a week. He said that the other classes had varying schedules, with some offering three-day and others offering two-day options.

Mr. Bivins said that he would recommend that be added so that it was clear in the proposal. He said that his other question was that if they were doubling their capacity, could their playground handle that increase in capacity.

Mr. Lovell said that they installed a new playground recently.

Mr. Clayborne asked if they foresaw being open longer than 2:00 p.m. in the future to accommodate working families.

Mr. Lovell said that they had explored the possibility of extended daycare and felt that the scope of their mission called for a true preschool. He said that when moving into full-day care, it would require being open until after 5:00 p.m., which would significantly change their staffing model and needs. He said that their wonderful preschool committee had investigated this option and did not foresee them considering it. He said that they considered it because they wanted to be a preschool that accommodated working families. He said that in fact, they had scholarship funds available. He said that what they found was that due to their location, they were not attracting many families seeking that specific option.

Mr. Missel said that if they were going from 24 students to 48 students, he was curious if the permit capacity was maxed out for this space.

Mr. Lovell said yes. He said that they had four classrooms and a maximum of 12 students per classroom.

Mr. Missel asked if occupancy would be maxed out at 48 students.

Mr. Lovell said yes.

Mr. Missel asked if there were any members of the public who wished to speak on this item. Seeing none, he asked the Clerk if there were any speakers signed up online.

Ms. Shaffer said that there were none.

Mr. Missel closed the public hearing and the matter rested with the Commission.

Mr. Shoaf said that for clarification, there was a typo in the recommendation for approval. He said that it was written as "SP202400004" but should be "SP202400003."

Ms. Firehock motioned the Planning Commission recommend approval of SP202400003 Olivet Preschool Enrollment Increase with the conditions stated in the staff report. The motion was seconded by Mr. Murray and passed unanimously (7-0).

Adjournment

At 8:02 p.m., the Commission adjourned to June 11, 2024, Albemarle County Planning Commission meeting, 6:00 p.m. in Lane Auditorium.



Michael Barnes, Director of Planning

(Recorded by Carolyn S. Shaffer, Clerk to Planning Commission & Planning Boards; transcribed by Golden Transcription Services)

Approved by Planning Commission
Date: June 11, 2024
Initials: CSS