

SHIMP ENGINEERING, P.C.

Design Focused Engineering

Project Narrative For: Field School of Charlottesville

Parcel Description: Tax Map 60, Parcel 68

Pre-App Meeting Date: March 22, 2021

Initial Submittal Date: May 17, 2021

Revised: July 7, 2021

Revised: October 8, 2021

	ACREAGE	EXISTING ZONING	PROPOSED ZONING	COMP PLAN DESIGNATION
TMP 60-68	21.00	Rural Area SP approved for private school use	Amendment to condition #9	Rural Area

Additional Zoning Considerations:

Airport Impact Area (AIA), Entrance Corridor (EC), Critical Slopes, Water Protection Ordinance

Location:

This property is located on Barracks Road, 500 feet east of Colthurst Drive and approximately 750 feet west of Montvue Drive; within the Ivy Creek water supply watershed.



Project Proposal:

Field School of Charlottesville is the Owner (the “owner”) of tax map parcel 60-68 in Albemarle County, Virginia, a 21.00-acre parcel located off of Barracks Road approximately 500’ east of Colthurst Drive and approximately 750’ west of Montvue Drive (the “property”). The owner intends to construct and operate a private school on the property and has received approval of a special use permit with conditions to allow for this use to be realized on the property. The owner requests removal of condition #9 with this 2021 special use permit amendment request (the “2021 SP amendment”), to allow for additional time to commence construction on the property without compromising the validity of the special use permit. Condition #9 approved with SP2019-12 states, “if the construction of the private school for which this Special Use Permit is issued is not commenced by February 28, 2022, the permit shall be deemed abandoned and the authority granted there under shall thereupon terminate.” The 2021 SP amendment, SP2021-00011, solely requests removal of condition #9 and does not propose any changes to the other conditions of approval; if approved, condition #1 would be revised to reference the 2021 SP amendment, SP2021-11. Likewise, SP2021-11 does not propose any changes to the approved SP2019-12 concept plan, beyond minor changes to labels on the concept plan to accurately reflect a change in acreage of the subject property and a neighboring parcel that occurred as a result of a boundary line adjustment that occurred subsequent to the approval of SP2019-12. Specifically, minor changes to the concept plan include:

- Sheet C1: Revised “proposed use” note that includes language about the 2019 SP approval and revised property acreage
- C1: Revised “zoning” note that incorporates language about the 2019 SP approval
- C3: Approved SP2019-12 concept plan, exhibits, and conditions provided for reference purposes
- C4: Updates to the Existing Conditions sheet for tax map parcel information regarding acreage (changed from 24.57 acres to 21.00 acres for Field School property and from 2.66 acres to 6.23 acres for Malasek property)
- C5: Clarifying SP2015-24 approved conditions and SP2019-12 approved conditions on General Conditions of Development

Condition #9, the sunset clause, was originally adopted with approval of SP2015-24 in 2017 and remained unchanged with SP201900012 (an amendment to SP2015-24) which was approved on July 1, 2020; SP2019-12 incorporated a boundary line adjustment, bringing the total acreage of the property from 24.57-acres to 21.00-acres, and amended the concept plan accordingly, revising the limits of the special use permit to be consistent with the property’s new boundary line. Slight revisions to building and parking areas to accommodate proposed drainfield locations were included as well.

The owner received approval of an initial site plan for “Phase 1” of the school campus in September of 2017; Phase 1 included the construction of the site entrance, a limited parking area, and the ball field. The owner had secured funding to develop Phase 1 but due to delays with plan approval the time-sensitive funding fell-through.

The owner amended SP2015-24 with the approval of SP2019-12 which changed the “limits of SP” so that a boundary line adjustment with a neighboring residential property could be recorded without the residential property being encumbered by the special use permit conditions on the property. While SP2019-12 was under review, the global COVID-19 pandemic hit. The owner continued pursuing approval of SP2019-12 during the early months of the pandemic so that the boundary line adjustment

could move forward however additional construction plans to establish the new Field School Campus on the property were put on hold as the global pandemic created a great deal of uncertainty for future funding opportunities and general construction feasibility.

The Field School is actively working towards site plan submission to Albemarle County and hopes to move forward with construction as quickly as is feasible. A targeted timeline is to have the site plan under review with Albemarle County in late 2021 or early 2022; budgeting for a year for administrative reviews and approvals, the Field School hopes to be under construction in spring of 2023.

It is a difficult endeavor to fundraise for the construction of a private school anywhere and the land use regulations in Albemarle County create an additional obstacle for not only the establishment of private schools but also for the fundraising efforts needed to construct private schools as the legislative review process creates uncertainty for donors. Since private schools are not permitted by-right in any zoning district, a school must request and receive approval from the Board of Supervisors to operate within the County. Approval is not guaranteed and it is difficult to fundraise for the purchase of land without having the certainty of approval in place. Fundraising efforts effectively happen in two phases, the first initial phase typically focuses on the land acquisition which includes the permitting process to ensure necessary entitlements are in place so that the private school use may be established on a particular property. Once the entitlements are in place, and the school can be established with certainty, a second fundraising effort can take place for the building and construction effort.

The Field School has been actively working on realizing their permanent home on this property for years and they will continue to work towards that goal. The entitlement effort to secure a special use permit for the operation of a private school on the property first began in 2015 and the property was officially acquired by the Field School in 2019. Elimination of the sunset clause will allow for the Field School to continue working towards realizing their permanent home on this property without having the burden of potentially losing all that they've worked for up until this point. The appropriateness of a private school on this property has been previously reviewed and determined. Field School of Charlottesville looks forward to continue working towards creating its new campus on the property and in light of some funding setbacks and the global COVID-19 pandemic; respectfully requests more time to bring this long-anticipated and worked-for vision to fruition.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan:

A private school use on this property has been deemed to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and removal of the sunset clause will not compromise that evaluation. Field School embodies several community values as outlined in the Comprehensive Plan:

Vision + Values

- *Excellent educational opportunities as found in the County's public and private schools, college, and university*

The Field School of Charlottesville offers an excellent educational opportunity in Albemarle County. The Field School is a small private school, dedicated specifically to middle school boys. The school is committed to a lean school model, with its small teacher-student ratio encouraging strong relationships and engagement with their students, and allowing for quick policy and institutional decisions that are made by those who work directly with their pupils. The private school is interdisciplinary, with an emphasis on a 'collective experience' of in-class exercises, special events, and field trips and teachers that educate the student body by subject, not by grade;

the school firmly believes that this consistency creates a stable foundation of which their middle school education is able to grow from.

Economic Development

- *Promote economic development activities that help build on the County's assets while recognizing distinctions between expectations for the Development Areas and the Rural Area.*

A private school offers a unique opportunity for partnership with Albemarle County, where 54% (or \$202 million) of the budget is allocated toward capital and operational costs of schools. It is anticipated that over half of the students at The Field School will live in households in Albemarle County, paying property taxes toward the Albemarle County school budget. The Field School offers an opportunity to increase the inventory of schools within the County and increase the capacity for students within the public school system, at no additional cost to the County taxpayer.

Impacts on Public Facilities & Public Infrastructure:

Removal of Condition #9 will not result in impacts on public facilities and public infrastructure.

Lighting/Noise:

Approved conditions 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8 work in conjunction to limit lighting and noise impacts. There are no proposed changes to these approved conditions with this 2021 SP amendment.

Impacts to Traffic:

Removal of Condition #9 will not result in transportation impacts.

Since there are no operational changes, such as changing the school's instructional hours or the enrollment limit, requested with this SP amendment there are no anticipated transportation impacts beyond what was previously evaluated with the approval of SP2015-24. According to VDOT AADT data, the number of trips along Barracks Road in front of this site has increased from 2017 when SP2015-24 was approved to 2019, the most recent trip count data available prior to changing traffic patterns that were onset by the COVID-19 pandemic. This increase in traffic is not unique to this road or this site as background traffic counts have increased on many roads in Albemarle County as the population grows in and around Albemarle County. Although the background traffic has increased from 2017 when SP2015-24 was approved and may continue to increase on Barracks road, the trips anticipated from the Field School will be included in the trip generation projections for any transportation improvements that are considered for the area, if any transportation improvement projects are identified via the Smartscale or any other publicly funded process. Further, during site plan review, VDOT will review the proposed entrance improvements in the context of the background traffic at the time of site plan review. This will ensure that entrance improvements, such as turn lanes, are designed to accommodate safe ingress and egress maneuvers from the Field School site without causing increased delays on the background through traffic at the entrance location. The final design of entrance improvements will be based on the background traffic at the time of entrance permitting review and approval.

Impacts on Environmental Features:

Removal of Condition #9 will not result in impacts on environmental features.