Charlottesville Waldorf School

Application for Special Use Permit
Submitted on March 5, 2019

charlottesville
WALDORF SCHOOL

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Vicinity (City)

Context

Site

Charlottesville Waldorf School

120 Waldorf School Road, Charlottesville, VA 22901

Application for Special Use Permit

Special Use Request

The Charlottesville Waldorf School would like to extend their existing Special Use Permit to include the two adjacent parcels directly to the north of the school campus; Tax Map #'s 61-172 and 61-172A. The school will utilize the existing residential buildings and convert them into additional classrooms and programmed spaces supporting the school's operation.

The Charlottesville Waldorf School (CWS) is located on TMP 61-170 and 61-174 on the west side of Rio Road (Route 631). It is located across the street from Pen Park, and the Charlottesville Catholic School, and directly north of the Village Square Neighborhood. The western boundary is created by the Meadow Creek basin and to the north of the property resides three residential properties. The two parcels directly north of the campus (61-172 and 61-172A) are owned by the school (Ownership: CWF Property, LLC). The purpose of this SUP request is to extend the current SUP onto these school owned properties.

While the site occupies frontage on Rio Road the presence of the school campus is nondescript as the school has utilized these original residential properties to house their Early Childhood (EC) program. The requested extension of the current SUP will allow the school to provide additional early childhood program space within these residential properties fronting on Rio Road.

PROJECT PROPOSAL

Per Section 33.4(c)

Public Need or Benefit:

Charlottesville Waldorf School has created a campus that provides a unique independent school curriculum which holds environmental awareness and stewardship in high regard. The Charlottesville Waldorf School has met and will continue to meet the educational needs of many families in Albemarle County and the surrounding communities who wish to give their children a Waldorf Education. In addition, due to the nature and design of Waldorf Schools, the campus provides the County with a beautiful green and open space in the midst of one of its development zones.

Additionally, CWS has dedicated a portion of the property to the County Greenway trail network and continues to support the natural ecology within this area.

How the Special Use will not be a Substantial detriment to Adjacent Lots

Given the nature of the existing school campus, and this planned expansion, only one (1) adjacent property (TMP 61-171+) can be considered a new adjacency. The school continues to be a good neighbor to all existing adjacent lots on the East and South Boundaries and has honored the original SUP request to locate parking away from residential properties and has kept site-lighting to a minimum.

Regarding the single property affected by this planned expansion: the school intends to uphold the good-neighbor reputation and will start by proposing to extend their existing 8'-tall opaque fence along the remainder of the property boundary. Photo 1 and Photo 2, at right, shows the existing fence which the school proposes to extend along the boundary, subject to coordination with the residential land owner.

Furthermore the school will provide additional landscaping to create a vegetated buffer adjacent to the new fence. The school intends to locate all outdoor activity spaces (Play Grounds, Tot Lots, etc.) toward the center of campus and not directly adjacent to this residential property. Refer to the Concept Plans herein for further information regarding the outdoor activity spaces.

The school is not proposing additional parking facilities on these adjacent lots with the current SUP concept plans. The goal is simply to occupy the two (2) existing structures and allow these additional spaces to supplement their educational program.

Given this low-impact approach to utilizing these properties and the school's willingness to honor the neighbor with extending the fence and providing additional landscaping the applicant suggests that this SUP will not have a negative affect on the adjacent property.

Hours of Operation:

The school currently operates between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. with limited weekend and/or evening activities for the school community. The expanded campus will operate consistent with the existing campus schedule.

Photo 1 | Existing 8' Opaque Fence. School Proposes to Extend this Fence In-Kind Along Boundary

Photo 2 | Existing 8' Opaque Fence. School Proposes to Extend this Fence In-Kind Along Boundary

How the Character of the Zoning District will not be changed by the Proposed Special Use

The presence of the Waldorf school Campus within this R4 Residential Zoning District has enhanced the district by providing a beautiful campus, designed in harmony with the natural surroundings and has done so in a much less intensive way than would have otherwise been developed by a by-right development.

This trend will continue by permitting the school to extend the Current SUP onto these adjacent properties. It is noteworthy to express that because the school intends to use the existing residential properties as the new program space - the character of the zoning district will continue to be harmonious and well integrated with the surrounding R4 zoned parcels.

Zoning Map. Campus and SUP Extension Parcels Fall with R4 Zoning Classification

How the Special Use will be in Harmony with the Following:

The Purpose and Intent of the Zoning Ordinance

Chapter 18, Zoning Section 15, Part 15.1

The CWS Campus is in harmony with the Zoning Ordinance as it provides a valuable educational resource in an area which exhibits continued growth, it continues to honor the land the campus occupies by using the land in a much less intensive way than would otherwise be permitted by-right and the nature of the school curriculum honors the natural landscape and teaches stewardship through environmental awareness and responsibility.

Comprehensive Plan Land Use Density

The uses permitted by right in the Zoning District

The use of 'Private School' is not permitted by right within the R4 Zoning District. However: the R4 Zoning District permits Private Schools by Special Use Permit per 15.2.2 Part 5.

However, the County has already seen the value of the campus being present at this location by granting the original SUP.

The regulations provided in Section 5 of the Zoning Ordinance as applicable

Based on a review of Section 5 - Supplementary Regulations, there does not appear to be any applicable supplementary ordinances for the use of Private School.

The Public Health, Safety and General Welfare

The proposal to extend the existing SUP onto these adjacent parcels does not pose an adverse affect on Public Health, Safety and General Welfare.

Steep Slopes Map

Consistency with Comprehensive Plan

The campus is located in the Places 29-Rio (Neighborhood 2) Development Area and is designated Urban Density in the Future Land Use Plan. Previous reviews of special use requests for this parcel have found that the school is consistent with the residential use designation as it is supportive of nearby residential uses and serves as a connection within an extensive trail network along the Meadow Creek. The Places 29 Master Plan is also supportive of this use at this location as it supports infill development and re-development; this project represents more the latter (Development Guiding Principal No 5). Furthermore the campus is well integrated within the adjacent neighbors and contributes to a diverse and vibrant community, reflecting a varied land use in the area.

Impacts on Public Facilities and Public Infrastructure

The current SUP permits a maximum enrollment of up 350 students and 40 staff. The extension of this SUP is not intended to increase these limits. As such, we do not anticipate any negative impacts on Public Facilities or Public Infrastructure that has not already been accounted for. The applicant acknowledges the intended slight increase of enrolled students by virtue of this additional program space; the applicant also acknowledges that the original enrollment numbers are not requested to increase. Moreover, the peak hour traffic associated with school drop off and pick-up is off-set from the traditional peak hour traffic. As such, a negative impact on the transportation network is not anticipated.

Land Use Map (Source: County of Albemarle)

Impacts of Environmental Features

No negative impacts on environmental features are proposed in association with this SUP extension request.

It is noteworthy to express that one of the hallmarks of Waldorf education is time spent in nature and in natural surroundings. The current campus design has avoided unnecessary development, created beautiful green and open spaces within the heart of campus. No negative impacts on environmental features are proposed with this SUP Extension.

Additional Information

Narrative of the Proffers Proposed to Address Impacts

No Proffers are proposed in association with this SUP extension request.

One or More Maps Showing the Proposed Project's regional context and existing natural and man-made physical conditions

Please refer to the Vicinity Map, Context Map and Site Map on Page 3.

Parking and staffing

Current staffing (all staff including after-care) currently measures 32.3 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs).

The additional classroom space will be served by the existing parking areas on the existing campus as indicated in the conceptual plans. As previously indicated: the current SUP permits a maximum enrollment of 350 students and 40 staff. The current site plan provides 47 parking spaces which is sufficient for the day-to-day operations of the school and to provide parking spaces for the 32-34 Full-Time Equivalent staff.

Outdoor Play Areas

The new outdoor play spaces will be located logically given campus programming. In addition, an existing play ground directly adjacent to the Residential Property will be moved toward the center of campus, away from the adjacent residential property. The proposed fence enclosing the play areas will not permit student access behind the building adjacent to TMP 61-171+.

Restricted and Emergency Access

The existing residential entrance for the two (2) properties associated with this SUP extension will remain open to Emergency Vehicle access and very limited access by the school.

Critical Resource Map (Source: County GIS)

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1 EXISTING CONDITIONS PLAN

1" = 60' 60 120

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CIVIL ENGINEERING

CHARLOTTESVILLE WALDORF SCHOOL SUP
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA

EXISTING CONDITIONS PLAN

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