



**COUNTY OF ALBEMARLE
STAFF REPORT SUMMARY**

Project Name: SP201600006 Generations Montessori School	Staff: J.T. Newberry, Planner
Planning Commission Public Hearing: May 3, 2016	Board of Supervisors Public Hearing: TBA
Owner: Broadus Memorial Baptist Church	Applicant: Rita Pace, Christina Pace
Acreage: 9.3 acres	Special Use Permit: 10.2.2.5, Private school
TMP: 06200-00-00-025C00 Location: 1525 Stony Point Road	Existing Zoning and By-right use: (RA) Rural Areas - agricultural, forestal, and fishery uses; residential density (0.5 unit/acre in development lots)
Magisterial District: Rivanna	Conditions: Yes
Development Area: Pantops Master Plan	Requested # of Dwelling Units: N/A
Proposal: Request for approval of a private school for up to 50 students in the existing Broadus Memorial Baptist Church.	Comprehensive Plan Designation: Urban Density Residential – residential (6.01-34 units/acre); supporting uses such as religious institutions, schools, commercial, office and service uses within Neighborhood 3 – Pantops Master Plan.
Character of Property: The subject property has an existing church and associated parking areas.	Use of Surrounding Properties: Residential uses and Darden Towe Park
Factors Favorable 1. The request is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. 2. Other private schools have operated in this location without creating significant impacts to adjacent properties. 3. The request serves an unmet and growing educational need in the community. 4. The proposed use utilizes an existing building, which provides for a more economical use of land.	Factors Unfavorable 1. None.
RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of this special use permit, with conditions.	

STAFF PERSON:
PLANNING COMMISSION:
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

J.T. Newberry
May 3, 2016
TBA

PETITION:

PROJECT: SP201600006 Generations Montessori School

MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT: Rivanna

TAX MAP/PARCEL: 06200-00-00-025C0

LOCATION: 1525 Stony Point Road

PROPOSAL: Request for approval of a private school for up to 50 students in the existing Broadus Memorial Baptist Church facility.

PETITION: Private schools under Section 10.2.2.5 of the Zoning Ordinance. No dwelling units proposed.

ZONING: RA, Rural Areas - agricultural, forestal, and fishery uses; residential density (0.5 unit/acre in development lots)

ENTRANCE CORRIDOR: Yes

MANAGED AND PRESERVED STEEP SLOPES: Yes

FLOOD HAZARD OVERLAY: Yes

SCENIC BYWAYS OVERLAY: Yes

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: Urban Density Residential – residential (6.01-34 units/acre); supporting uses such as religious institutions, schools, commercial, office and service uses within Neighborhood 3 – Pantops Master Plan.

CHARACTER OF THE AREA:

The subject parcel is located at the northern edge of the Pantops Development Area along Stony Point Road (Route 20 North). The site is developed with a large church facility (over 10,000 sq. ft.) and lies adjacent to the Cascadia development which is under construction. Up to 330 residential dwellings and 20,000 sq. ft. of non-residential uses are allowed at Cascadia. One single-family residence is located adjacent to the church entrance and the northern portion of Darden Towe Park is located directly across Stony Point Road (see Attachment A).

A small portion of the western edge of the site is impacted by the 100 year floodplain and the dam break inundation zone (DBIZ) of the Ragged Mountain Dam. These areas will be discussed in greater detail later in the report.

PLANNING AND ZONING HISTORY:

- SP198900063 – Approved with conditions – Request for a church facility (Broadus Memorial Baptist Church) in the Rural Areas zoning district.
- SP198900066 – Approved with conditions – Request for fill and culvert in the floodway fringe of an unnamed stream of the Rivanna River.
- SDP199100088 – Approved – Final site plan for Broadus Memorial Baptist Church
- SP199700001 – Approved with conditions – Request for a private school (The Frost Montessori School) in the Rural Areas zoning district. The approval permitted up to 18 students for a two-year period while a facility in the Fontana development was constructed.

DETAILS OF THE APPLICANTS' PROPOSAL:

The applicants have requested a special use permit to establish a licensed Montessori School that would serve up to 50 school-aged children and infants within the existing Broadus Memorial Baptist Church facility. A full description of the request is provided in Attachment B. The school will be accepting students as young as two-months old and up to age six. On holidays and during the summer months, the school plans to provide full-day enrichment activities for existing students and siblings of existing students up to 12 years in age.

SUMMARY OF THE COMMUNITY MEETING:

The community meeting was held the evening of March 7th, 2016 and was well-attended. The applicants provided an overview of their proposal, as well as some information about the Montessori Method. Several of the attendees were interested parents who expressed difficulty in finding space for their children at other pre-schools in the area, especially Montessori schools. It was noted that no other Montessori school in the area currently serves children aged 2-20 months old. A representative from the church's leadership shared their unanimous support of the application and further stated a school would be addressing a need in the community.

ANALYSIS OF THE SPECIAL USE PERMIT REQUEST:

Section 33.8 of the Zoning Ordinance states that the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors shall reasonably consider the following factors when reviewing and acting upon an application for a special use permit:

No substantial detriment. The proposed special use will not be a substantial detriment to adjacent lots.

No physical external improvements are proposed as most of the activities will occur within the existing church building. Outdoor play would take place on the existing playground or in a play area to be established west of the lower parking areas (see Attachment C). A mature tree buffer has been established in areas that were disturbed when the site originally developed in 1991, including the space between the new play area and the single-family residence adjacent to the church entrance. A significant wooded buffer also exists along the stream that runs parallel to the northern boundary of the parcel as shown in Attachment A.

Vehicle trips to the site are anticipated to be substantially fewer than those generated by the church. The school is expected to produce a maximum of 230 vehicle trips per day for both students and instructors. This estimate includes school-related trips and any trips related to enrichment days.

One important note about enrichment days is that while they will occur on holidays and during the summer months, they will not extend beyond the school's normal hours of operation, nor the maximum enrollment for any typical day during the school year. Questions were raised during the review about whether these activities constituted a "day camp" or "boarding camp" use. Staff confirmed with the Zoning Division that the activities are considered a customary accessory use for a private school.

Finally, other similar requests have operated from this location in the past without issue, including The Frost Montessori School (now located close to the subject parcel at 1553

Delphi Drive) and the Y-ASPIRE program operated by the YMCA (After School Program Integrating Recreation and Education). This request is not anticipated to be a substantial detriment to adjacent lots.

Character of district unchanged. The character of the district will not be changed by the proposed special use.

The proposed use is located within an existing facility and proposes no physical external improvements. No visual impacts on Route 20 (an Albemarle County Entrance Corridor and a Virginia Byway) are anticipated.

Although the church is zoned Rural Areas, it is located at the edge of the Development Areas. Uses in the Development Areas are expected to reflect a different character than uses in the Rural Area, although they may provide a transition to the Rural Area. At this time, the character of this part of the Development Area is undergoing a significant transformation while the construction of Cascadia takes place. The developed landscaping and mature wooded areas surrounding the perimeter of the Broadus Memorial Baptist Church site allow for some transition from the Development Areas to the Rural Area. Staff finds the use to be in keeping with the character of the existing site and surrounding area.

Harmony. The proposed special use will be in harmony with the purpose and intent of this chapter, with the uses permitted by right in the district,

Section 1.4.4 of the zoning ordinance states that one of the purposes of this chapter is “to facilitate the provision of 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.” The use is viewed to be in harmony with the purpose and intent of the zoning ordinance and with the uses permitted by right in the district.

...with the regulations provided in section 5 as applicable,

There are no regulations for private schools in section 5 of the Zoning Ordinance. However, the proposed use does significantly overlap with the zoning ordinance definition of day care center “...by providing care, protection and guidance... to a group of six (6) or more children under the age of thirteen (13) [years]...” Section 5.1.06 of the zoning ordinance lists additional regulations relating to day care centers and, although it is not required, the proposed use meets all of the supplemental regulations contained within this section.

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

The applicant provided traffic analysis that showed the entrance to the church would meet the left-turn lane warrant off of Route 20 with the addition of a private school. However, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) later performed a more sophisticated capacity analysis and determined no improvements would be required and that the existing entrance is suitable for the proposed use.

Still, VDOT did recommend that this property pursue all future opportunities to connect through the Cascadia development to consolidate entrances onto Route 20. This recommendation is consistent with their access management policy and anticipates the

growing traffic volumes along Route 20, particularly in this area.

Staff also worked with the Engineering Division and Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority (RWSA) to determine the safety of the proposed play area relative to the floodplain and Ragged Mountain DBIZ. Because the proposed play area is located outside of these zones, neither reviewer felt the presence of these areas constituted any danger (see Attachment E). Staff finds that the proposed use should not adversely impact the public health, safety and general welfare of residents of the County.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. The use will be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

The Pantops Master Plan designates the Broadus Memorial Baptist Church site as partially Urban Density Residential and partially as Greenspace (see Attachment D). Urban Density Residential areas accommodate all dwelling types as well as institutional uses such as places of worship, public and private schools, and early childhood education centers including day care centers and preschools. Greenspace areas contain sensitive environmental features including stream buffers, flood plain, and adjacent slopes that typically allow only passive recreation. The proposed play area does not negatively impact any of the environmental features found in this greenspace and the proposal overall is consistent with these recommendations.

Because the proposed use does not involve any physical improvements to the site, provision of a full Neighborhood Model analysis is not necessary. Conformity to applicable principles is provided below:

Principle 2 – Mixture of Uses

Private schools can be considered support uses to residential areas. Adding a neighborhood support use within an existing facility helps to provide a mixture of uses while also supporting a growing residential area.

Principle 7 – Parks, Recreational Amenities and Open Space

The proposal does not negatively impact the County's goal to protect green systems that contribute to a high quality of life in the Development Areas.

Principle 10 – Redevelopment

While adding a private school use to a church facility does not technically result in redevelopment, it can help to maximize use of sites served by existing infrastructure and negate the need to expand further out the Development Areas for such uses.

SUMMARY AND ACTION:

Staff has identified factors which are favorable. Factors favorable to this request include:

1. The request is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Multiple private schools have operated in this location without creating significant impacts to adjacent properties.
3. The request serves an unmet and growing educational need in the community.

4. The proposed use utilizes an existing building, which provides for a more economical use of land.

No unfavorable factors have been identified.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of SP201600006 Generations Montessori School based upon the analysis provided herein, with the following conditions:

1. Use of site shall be in general accord with the concept plan “Generations Montessori School in Broadus Memorial Baptist Church” signed and dated by Rita Pace, 04/11/2016, as determined by the Director of Planning and the Zoning Administrator. To be in general accord with this plan, development and use of the site shall reflect the general size, arrangement and location of the existing church facility and outdoor play areas. Minor modifications to the plan which do not conflict with the elements above may be made to ensure compliance with the Zoning Ordinance;
2. Enrollment shall not exceed fifty (50) students; and
3. The hours of operation for the school shall not begin earlier than 8:30 A.M. and shall not end later than 5:30 P.M., each day, Monday through Friday, except that occasional school-related events may occur after 5:30 P.M.

PLANNING COMMISSION MOTION:

A. Should a Planning Commissioner **choose to recommend approval** of this special use permit:

Move to recommend approval of SP201600006 Generations Montessori School with conditions outlined in this staff report.

B. Should a Planning Commissioner **choose to recommend denial** of this special use permit:

Move to recommend denial of SP201600006 Generations Montessori School. *Should a commissioner motion to recommend denial, he or she should state the reason(s) for recommending denial.*

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – [Area Map showing Development Area Boundary](#)

Attachment B – [Application Narrative](#)

Attachment C – [Concept Plan](#)

Attachment D – [Comprehensive Plan Map](#)

Attachment E – [Floodplain and DBIZ Map](#)