

**Albemarle County Planning Commission
FINAL Minutes Regular Meeting
September 27, 2022**

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a public hearing on Tuesday, September 27, 2022, at 6:00 p.m.

Members attending were: Karen Firehock, Chair; Corey Clayborne, Vice-Chair; Julian Bivins; Luis Carrazana; Fred Missel; Lonnie Murray.

Members absent: None.

Other officials present were: Charles Rapp, Director of Planning (via Zoom); Jodie Filardo (via Zoom); Andy Herrick, County Attorney's Office; Bart Svoboda; Rebecca Ragsdale; Kevin McCollum; Alberic Karina-Plun; and Carolyn Shaffer, (via Zoom) Clerk to the Planning Commission.

Ms. Shaffer was present electronically via Zoom call.

Call to Order and Establish Quorum

Ms. Shaffer called the roll.

Ms. Firehock established a quorum.

Matters Not Listed on the Agenda

Ms. Firehock said this item was for matters not currently scheduled for a public hearing, so if there was anything that was not on the public agenda for this evening that a member of the public would wish to speak to, now would be the time. She said she saw no one approach the podium.

Ms. Shaffer said there was no one signed up remotely.

Ms. Firehock said she would move to the next item.

Consent Agenda

Ms. Firehock asked if any Commissioner wished to pull an item from the Consent Agenda.

Mr. Missel moved that the Planning Commission adopt the Consent Agenda, which was seconded by Mr. Carrazana. The motion passed unanimously (6-0).

Public Hearings

Ms. Firehock said there were two public hearings even though there was one site being considered because there were two specific items that had to be addressed separately.

SP202200003 Daylily Preschool

Mr. Kevin McCollum, Senior Planner in the Planning Division of Albemarle County Community Development, said he would be giving the staff presentation on the application SP202200003. He

said it was a proposed special use permit amendment for an existing preschool facility. He said the subject property was located at 4281 and 4297 Old Three Notched Road, located east of the Crozet development area and north of the intersection of Three Notched Road, Rockfish Gap Turnpike, Ivy Road, and Browns Gap Turnpike. He said the property was two separate parcels, one was home to an existing church and the other was an existing dwelling. He said they were at the intersection of Browns Gap Turnpike and Old Three Notched Road.

Mr. McCollum said the subject preschool currently operated at the Sunday School building at the church. He said the existing zoning of the property and the surrounding area was zoned Rural Areas, and the character of the surrounding area included rural area uses including low-density residential, agricultural, and some vacant, undeveloped land. He continued that the applicant requested a special use permit amendment to move the preschool from the Mountain Plain Baptist Church to the existing dwelling and increase the maximum number of children from 20 to 35 with a maximum of five teachers. He said the proposed preschool would operate from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, utilizing the existing structures and playground areas.

Mr. McCollum said the conceptual plan provided an overview of the proposed site layout, with minimal site changes being made. He said parents and teachers would utilize the existing parking areas, and parents would escort their children to the preschool. He said a "Do Not Enter" sign would be provided at the entrance to the preschool to prevent parents from turning in. He said there was an existing playground behind the church, and one would be added behind the preschool.

Mr. McCollum said the factors favorable were that the use was consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and Rural Area Plan, the proposal provided a preschool/daycare option for people who lived and worked in the area, there were no detrimental impacts to adjoining properties are anticipated, and the parking lot striping would increase safety. He said that staff did not identify any unfavorable factors and had concluded by recommending approval with conditions, with the conditions detailed in the staff report.

Mr. Bivins asked what staff's position was on having 50 students.

Mr. McCollum said Transportation Planning had a large comment on that and expressed concern about the amount of existing parking and the potential for cars to back up onto the existing road. He said their first comments were suggesting a decrease in the number of students, and when the applicant resubmitted with the number of 35 students, they felt there was sufficient space for pickup and parking for those students.

Mr. Bivins asked if the modification was because the applicant heard the concerns expressed by staff. He said he assumed there was not a traffic study performed.

Mr. McCollum said no traffic study had been done at this time.

Mr. Bivins said it was an isolated area with not much traffic. He said he did not understand why they could not have 50 students.

Ms. Firehock said in two years they may come back and ask for 15 more people.

Mr. Bivins said if it could handle it, he did not see why they should force the applicant to come back, but he would not push that point right now.

Mr. Clayborne said he agreed. He asked if this would go to a site plan review.

Mr. McCollum said there was no existing site plan on the site.

Mr. Clayborne asked if it did not, who would be responsible for ensuring accessibility with the parking and building.

Mr. McCollum said building permits would be required before the preschool opened as well as zoning clearance. He said the Inspections department and Zoning would be out to inspect the site to make sure it was safe and accessible.

Mr. Clayborne thanked Mr. McCollum for the answer. He said the sketches provided were minimal, so he would like to know how many handicap spots and other factors were accounted for with the information given.

Mr. McCollum said some of the reviewers had provided comments to the applicant already and discussed potential building permits they would need, but they could certainly follow up with the applicant if there were other concerns. He said at this time, staff did not note anything that was typically concerning.

Ms. Rebecca Ragsdale said the zoning clearance process would include another site inspection and verification that any of the conditions were met. She said that there was nothing triggering the need for a site plan in this case.

Mr. Missel said his question referred to water and sewer. He said in the information given, there was correspondence back in June and July on this, and it was not much of an increase in the student body, but he would like to know if they had the water and sewer necessary and at what point that would be confirmed.

Mr. McCollum said with the second submittal, the Health Department provided their approval of up to 50 students and at least five staff.

Mr. Missel asked if that was what was referred to as non-transient.

Mr. McCollum said yes, it was for water and sewer consumption.

Ms. Firehock said they would now hear from the applicant.

Ms. Elizabeth Claman said she was currently the Director and lead teacher at Daylily Preschool. She said they had operated for over 10 years. She said the proposed program would run from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, throughout the school year. She said the ages of the children would be 16 months to 5 years old, and she was looking at a maximum of 35 children at this time and 5 teachers. She said the parents would park in the front of the church and the teachers would park at the side and behind. She said Daylily would play a central role in the community because it would prepare children socially, cognitively, and physically for kindergarten. She said they learned reading, art, math, and social skills in a safe and nurturing environment.

Ms. Claman said they would be actively involved in daily, small-group activities and instruction. She said as a reading specialist, she would individualize the lessons for all enrolled children and

implement them with the 4- and 5-year-old children. She said the children would be immersed in a language-rich environment; they were read multiple books daily, alphabet would be taught through exposure to letters and letter sounds, writing, rhyming, and poetry. She said the intention was to serve Western Albemarle's community. She said the preschool would be operating from an existing building with no major exterior or parking lot changes planned. She said a preschool in Western Albemarle would reduce the traffic from Crozet area into Charlottesville, and Daylily would continue to provide a local option for a fast-growing area.

Ms. Firehock asked if there were any questions for the applicant at this time.

Mr. Bivins said he assumed they were talking about the house behind and to the right of the church.

Ms. Claman said yes.

Mr. Bivins asked if there would be a path from that house to the existing playground, or if they would only have activity centered at the house's new daycare center.

Ms. Claman said the plan was to use both and allow the younger children to use the current playground and the older children to use the larger backyard in the back.

Mr. Bivins asked if there would be paths to get the younger children there without using the driveway.

Ms. Claman said there was no traffic or anything there and there was only grass that went across.

Mr. Bivins said he understood that the applicant responded to the comments from staff to reduce the number of students from 50 to 35. He asked if they could accommodate 50 students with what Ms. Claman envisioned the staffing and structure to be.

Ms. Claman said that was the original plan and she had worked through all of that thinking it would work, but after meeting with everyone at the County, it seemed that the parking and traffic could be an issue. She said other than that, she felt she could make it work in this space.

Mr. Bivins said he assumed when they had church on Sundays, there were more than 50 people.

Ms. Claman said absolutely.

Mr. Bivins said he wanted to note that point.

Ms. Firehock said they could return to it.

Mr. Clayborne asked how far in the future the limit of 35 students would last at the school.

Ms. Claman said the area was growing so much that she thought that she had a full waiting list until January of the following school year. She said that was why she decided to move forward with this project, so she did not have an issue filling it and it could be a possibility that she could try again.

Mr. Clayborne said that he was wondering if she would need to come back to get requests for an increase. He asked how many of the 35 to 50 kids were being picked up throughout the day.

Ms. Claman said she estimated about 60% would be picked up at 12:30 p.m.

Mr. Clayborne said he was trying to understand the traffic flow in the afternoon. He asked if Ms. Claman could discuss the demographics of the students with gender, socioeconomics, or race.

Ms. Claman said her school was a representation of the Western Albemarle area, and a majority of her children went to Crozet Elementary, Merriweather, or Brownsville, so it was representative of the demographics who attended those elementary schools.

Mr. Clayborne asked if there were any goals to change that.

Ms. Claman said she would be happy to change that. She said part of it was getting the travel to the school, but she would be happy to look into that.

Mr. Missel said one of the conditions of approval that staff gave was that the hours of operation for the preschool shall be limited to 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. He said before that was permanently made a condition, he would like to know if those hours were suitable. He asked if there were other events where the hours may need to be more flexible.

Ms. Claman said she had not done so in the past. She said usually when there was a special event, it was held during the school week.

Mr. Missel thanked Ms. Claman.

Ms. Firehock asked if there was anyone from the public who would like to speak.

Ms. Shaffer said there were no speakers signed up via Zoom.

Ms. Firehock said she saw no members of the public who wished to speak. She asked Ms. Claman if she had any final remarks.

Ms. Claman said she enjoyed what she did, and she learned so much from the children. She said the goal was to get them into kindergarten, and the majority of her children left knowing their letters, letter sounds, and how to read. She said that was their plan to continue.

Ms. Firehock thanked the applicant. She said the matter was now before the Planning Commission for discussion. She asked if Mr. Bivins wanted to discuss the number of students. She said it sounded like there were constraints with parking, but they were also sympathetic to small businesses having to go through the process multiple times.

Mr. Bivins asked to see the photographic site plan.

Mr. McCollum asked if Mr. Bivins wanted to see the conceptual plan.

Mr. Bivins asked where the issue was. He said they knew that 60% of the students would be leaving at noon, so he did not understand what the traffic issue was. He said he did not understand why they could not offer 50 students.

Mr. McCollum said Transportation Planning was cognizant of the fact that many students would be picked up at different times, so they were not concerned with afternoon traffic as much as they were with the morning traffic. He said when staff visited the site, the parking lot was not striped at the time, but they had since attempted to stripe it, and there was a large concern that if there were 50 students, the number of cars that may be in a line trying to drop off students may leak into the public roads. He said he was unsure if there would be space for stacked parking. He said that based on the site visit, it appeared to be an area where one would park perpendicular, facing the buildings, and it did not appear that multiple cars could park in that space.

Ms. Firehock asked if anyone discussed the idea of carpooling with the applicant. She said if children had siblings in the district they could carpool.

Mr. McCollum said they had a meeting, and he could not remember the numbers specifically, but carpooling was discussed as a possibility to alleviate some of that.

Ms. Firehock said there did not seem to be a solution at hand to the stacking problem at this time, but it sounded solvable.

Ms. Ragsdale asked Ms. Firehock to repeat herself.

Ms. Firehock said it sounded solvable.

Ms. Ragsdale said they mentioned this incremental increase did not trigger a site plan, so if they expand parking and need expanded parking, that would trigger the site plan process and delay the incremental increase, add expense, and while she would not speak for the applicant or Mr. McCollum, this allowed for that incremental increase with the existing parking areas and buildings, but they were approaching the threshold where the next increase would be substantial and would require an engineered site plan.

Ms. Firehock said that was helpful information.

Ms. Ragsdale said they tried to keep that in mind when working with these facilities, because they had some that came back multiple times.

Mr. Murray said looking at that intersection when Route 810 was closed, the road between Whitehall and Crozet was one of the only alternate routes to get back into Crozet, and that turn was difficult. He asked if there were any plans from VDOT to improve that turn. He said it was difficult to see oncoming vehicles at that turn.

Ms. Firehock said that Mr. Bivins was saying that he was satisfied it had all been considered, and they may eventually get to 50 students, but it would be a slow planning process. She asked if there were any other questions or concerns about this development. She said it was a great service when anyone was willing to offer more schooling opportunities for their young people.

Ms. Firehock said there were conditions associated with the motion.

Mr. Murray asked if the conditions were different than those in the staff report.

Ms. Firehock said no.

Mr. Murray said okay.

Mr. Murray motioned to recommend approval of SP202200003 Daylily Preschool with conditions as recommended in the staff report. Mr. Carrazana seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (6-0).

Ms. Firehock said the item would now be scheduled to be heard by the Board of Supervisors. She said they would now move on to their next public hearing item.

Mr. Herrick clarified that these were two related SP applications. He asked if the intent was to make a single hearing for the two items.

Ms. Firehock asked if there were two coming up.

Mr. Herrick confirmed that there were. He said that they were associated, so his recommendation was that they clarify from the outset that it was a single public hearing, if that was the will of the Commission. He said that there would be separate votes on each of the special use permit applications.

Ms. Firehock said that was fine. She asked if they would hear both presentations and then hold the public hearing.

Mr. Herrick said that would be his suggestion, if it worked for the presenter, the applicant, and the Commission.

Ms. Firehock said they would hear the first presentation.

Adjournment

At 8:00 p.m., the Commission adjourned to October 11, 2022, at 6:00 p.m.



Charles Rapp, Director of Planning

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

Approved by Planning Commission
Date: 10/25/2022
Initials: CSS