

SPECIAL USE PERMIT

Special Use Permit Written Narrative

May 21, 2018
Updated September 13, 2018

The Peabody School – Amendment to Existing Plan

PROJECT PROPOSAL

The Peabody School (the “School”) is the owner of 1232 Stoney Ridge Road, Tax Map Parcel 076M1-00-00-01500 (the “Property”). The School has been operating a private school on the Property since shortly after the County approved a special use permit for a private school in January, 1997 (SP 1996-46). The conditions of approval of SP 1996-46 limited the School’s enrollment to 140 students, which was thought to be ambitious at the time. 140 students contemplated one class of each grade from Kindergarten through Eighth grade. The School grew more than expected, and with the addition of two preschool classes, it requested an amendment of the original special use permit to allow 70 additional students, for a total of 210 children. On May 8, 2013, the Board of Supervisors approved Special Use Permit SP201200030 (the “2013 SUP”) to expand maximum enrollment to 210 students.

Description of the Property:

TMP	Acreage	Existing Use	Zoning	Comprehensive Plan Designation
076M1-00-00-01500	5.09	Private School	Planned Unit Development	Industrial

The School currently enrolls the maximum 210 students, from 150 families. To accommodate a modest expansion, the School requests an amendment of the 2013 SUP to allow an increase in enrollment of 30 students, to a total of 240. Currently, the School operates partially out of temporary trailers, located in the area shown as “Existing Classroom To Be Removed” on the enclosed Illustrative Renderings, and encompassing approximately 4,700 square feet. The School proposes to replace the existing trailers with a permanent one-story building that would include several classrooms, a fine arts studio, science lab, and a library/media center, totaling approximately 7,195 square feet. Please see the enclosed Illustrative Renderings prepared by Bartzen & Ball for more details. In addition to the replacement of the existing trailers, the School proposes adding a small stage or amphitheater area adjacent to the proposed new building on the existing field area. The existing field area is labeled as “Existing Playfield Area” on the Concept Plan and the amphitheater is labeled as “Proposed Amphitheater” on the Concept Plan. The amphitheater is intended to serve the School’s enrolled students and will not provide space for any additional special events outside of the School’s customary annual school-related events. The new additions will mirror the architecture and design of the gym that was recently approved with the 2013 SUP and constructed soon thereafter.

Given the above proposed modifications to the School, Bill Wuensch of EPR PC prepared a parking and circulation study, which is enclosed with this application. Traffic from the School is heavily concentrated in the pickup and drop off times of 8:00am to 8:30am and 2:55pm to 3:35pm, respectively. The pickup times are staggered: 2:55pm to 3:20pm for Pre-K through Fifth Grade, and 3:20pm to 3:35 for Sixth through Eighth Grade. According to the enclosed traffic report, it is projected that the increased enrollment will result in approximately 22 additional cars into the site and 20 additional cars out of the site in the morning peak hours, and 14 additional cars into the site and 15 additional cars out of the site in the afternoon peak hours. The Traffic Report concludes that “with the increase in the school enrollment it appears that the site will still provide adequate parking and traffic will circulate into and out of the site without adversely impacting the adjacent roadway” (page 7 of the Traffic Report).

SPECIAL USE PERMIT

While we believe this additional traffic will have a minimal impact, if any, the School proposes a minor modification to the site in order to further minimize the potential impact and improve the site's traffic flow. The School proposes adding an exit-only access point from its internal driveway to Southern Parkway. Currently, the internal driveway is designed where parents enter the site from Stoney Ridge Road and then circulate through one of the two internal circular loops and then exit at the same location as the entrance. By adding an exit-only accessway onto Southern Parkway, some vehicles would not have to double back to the entrance. This would enable traffic to flow out of the site more efficiently and avoid congestion on Stoney Ridge Road. The additional access would also provide improved access for emergency response vehicles.

The addition of the Southern Parkway exit would conflict with the buffer along Southern Parkway established by the original subdivision plat and zoning application plan applicable to the Property. The original 60-foot buffer was reduced to 10 feet by the 2013 SUP and enclosed 2013 subdivision plat amendment. We believe the minor disturbance of the buffer for this egress is appropriate and warranted given the benefits such access would provide to the traffic flow of the School. Therefore, with this special use permit amendment, the School also requests a special exception from the 10-foot buffer for the installation of the exit-only accessway onto Southern Parkway. Please see the enclosed Special Exception Application Form and Written Narrative for further information.

On certain occasions, the School will host school-related special events such as talent shows and graduation. During these special events, the School may have a parking shortage. The School has approximately 7 special events each year. For 3 of these events, the Property can accommodate parking for the estimated 80-100 attendees. To accommodate higher traffic volumes during the 4 larger special events per year, the School has an arrangement with the Tandem School, located less than a mile away, where attendees of the School's event will park in the Tandem School parking lot and then take a shuttle to the School.

Public Need or Benefit

The private school will provide the public school systems in the area relief from the stress of additional students. The request to increase the School's enrollment will only increase the benefit of further relief. In addition, as stated earlier, the School began operations in the late 1990s and has been approved several times subsequent to its initial approval for minor modifications and therefore the determination of the public need or benefit of the School has been established. By allowing an increase in the School's enrollment and the addition of several complementary educational and recreational spaces, the School will be able to provide its students an enhanced educational experience.

No Substantial Detriment to Adjacent Lots

The School will have minimal, if any, adverse impact on adjacent lots. The Traffic Report has determined that with the increased enrollment of the School, it will continue not to "adversely impact the adjacent roadway" (page 7 of the Traffic Report).

No Change in Character of the Zoning District

As stated earlier, the School began operations in the late 1990s and has been approved several times for modest amendments. The Mill Creek Industrial Park includes industrial uses such as Builders FirstSource, FedEx Shipping Center, Moore's Electrical & Mechanical, as well as institutional and commercial service uses such as Bright Beginnings Preschool across the street and All Things Pawssible, a dog daycare facility, further north along Stoney Ridge Road. The School is consistent with these adjacent uses and therefore does not change the character of the district.

SPECIAL USE PERMIT

Harmony with the following:

Purpose and intent of the Zoning Ordinance

Pursuant to Section 1.4 of the Albemarle County Zoning Code, its purpose is to promote the public health, safety, convenience and welfare, including: (B) reduce or prevent congestion in the public streets; and (C) facilitate creating a convenient, attract, and harmonious community. As stated earlier, the Traffic Report concluded that the increased enrollment will not result in any adverse impact on Southern Parkway or Stoney Ridge Road. Moreover, the request for access onto Southern Parkway may further increase the efficiency of traffic flow and therefore reduce congestion. The requested modifications to the School will enhance the educational experience for its students. The improved educational experience of the School and increase in enrollment will aid in further reducing the stress on the public school system, which is in the public interest and helps to promote a “convenient, attractive and harmonious community.”

Uses Permitted By-Right

The prior zoning application plans allowed for residential, commercial/service and industrial areas. A private school is consistent with these uses and compliments the pre-school across the street and dog daycare facility further north along Stoney Ridge Road. In addition, the School provides a buffer from the more industrial uses north of the Property (Builders FirstSource, FedEx Shipping Center, Moore’s Electrical & Mechanical) and the residential communities to the south and west.

Regulations of Section 5 of the Zoning Ordinance

There are no supplementary regulations related to private schools.

Public Health, Safety and General Welfare

As stated earlier, the School provides a public benefit to the community by lessening the burden on the public school system. In addition, the Traffic Report has concluded that there will be no adverse impact on the adjacent roadways from the increased enrollment and the proposed Southern Parkway access may further enhance the efficiency of traffic flow thereby reducing congestion.

CONSISTENCY WITH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The primary Land Use designation of the Comprehensive Plan for the School is Industrial. While private schools are not typically encouraged in such areas, the School has been operating since the late 1990s and has been approved several times (SP 1996-46 and the 2013 SUP). In addition, the School’s minor land use designation is Neighborhood Density Residential, which encourages private schools as secondary uses within such districts. When analyzing the School in the context of the Mill Creek Industrial Park, the School is consistent with the primary industrial designation and minor Neighborhood Density Residential designation. The park includes industrial uses such as Builders FirstSource, FedEx Shipping Center, Moore’s Electrical & Mechanical, as well as secondary uses Bright Beginnings Preschool and All Things Pawssible. As stated earlier, the Peabody School is consistent with these adjacent uses, in satisfaction of the primary and secondary land use designations of the area.

The School’s design is also in keeping with the principles of Neighborhood Model. The School and existing additions have been designed at a “human scale,” with all buildings either one or two stories.

SPECIAL USE PERMIT

The proposed addition would be in keeping with this scale, adding only 2,495 square feet. The site's internal sidewalks provide for safe and easy access to and from the School buildings and the parking lot area. The internal driveway network was designed to maximize efficiency of traffic flow for drop off and pickup. The site has sufficient landscape elements, screening the parking area and School buildings from residential neighborhoods located across Southern Parkway and to the west of the Property. In addition, the site has reserved open space comprising 1.9 acres or 38% of the parcel.

While the Property only has one use, a private school, when analyzing the School in the context of the Mill Creek Industrial Park and surrounding region, the principle of mixed use is satisfied. As stated earlier, the park has a mixture of industrial, institutional and commercial/service uses. In addition, several residential neighborhoods are in the immediate vicinity of the School. The School provides a buffer between such residential neighborhoods and the more industrial users of the park.

IMPACTS ON PUBLIC FACILITIES & PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

The proposed project has minimal, if any, negative impact on public facilities and public infrastructure. As stated earlier, the modest expansion of the School will result in a minimal increase in vehicular trips and the Traffic Report confirms "the site will still provide adequate parking and traffic will circulate into and out of the site without adversely impacting the adjacent roadway" (page 7 of the Traffic Report). While we believe the impact to be minimal, the School has proposed adding an exit-only access point from its internal driveways to Southern Parkway in order to ensure such minimal impact, and improve the overall site design and traffic flow.

IMPACTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

The proposed project has no negative impacts on environmental features of the site. Please see the enclosed Special Exceptions Written Narrative for further information. With the proposed additions cited in this application, the School will disturb approximately 2,178 square feet or 0.05 acres of managed slopes. The disturbance will be carried out consistent with the design standards for disturbing managed slopes contained in Section 30.7.5 of the Albemarle County Zoning Code.

In sum, we believe the proposed increase in enrollment and educational/recreational space will enhance the educational experience of the School, an important public asset, with minimal adverse impacts on the surrounding area.

Enclosed:

Conceptual Special Use Application Plan for the Peabody School, dated May 21, 2018, prepared by Collins Engineering, P.C.

Illustrative Renderings prepared by Bartzen & Ball, titled "Peabody School – North Wing Addition," dated April 30, 2018.

Onsite Traffic and Circulation Analysis Memorandum prepared by Bill Wuensch of EPC, PC dated May 14, 2018.

Special Exception Application Form to encroach upon the designated buffer for the construction of an accessway onto Southern Parkway.

SPECIAL USE PERMIT

Special Exceptions Written Narrative.

Subdivision Plat entitled "Subdivision Plat Parcels 1 Thru 14, Mill Creek Industrial Park, Mill Creek, Albemarle County, Virginia, dated November 17, 1989, last revised May 30, 1990, prepared by R. W. Ray, R. O. Snow & Associates, Inc., and recorded in the Albemarle County Circuit Court Clerk's Office in Deed Book 1102 at page 722.

Sheets 5 and 7 of Subdivision Plat entitled "Revised Parcel 5, Mill Creek Industrial Park, dated February 19, 1993, last revised September 8, 1993, and recorded in the Albemarle County Circuit Court Clerk's Office in Deed Book 1342, at page 242.

Easement Plat Showing Existing 60' Undisturbed Buffer Hereby Reduced to 10' Buffer Located on Revised Parcel 5, mill Creek Industrial Park, Mill Creek, Scottsville Magisterial District, Albemarle County, Virginia," dated November 5, 2012, last revised March 7, 2013, prepared by Roger W. Ray 7 Associates, Inc., and recorded in the Albemarle County Circuit Court Clerk's Office in Deed Book 4481, at page 568.

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