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HAUPT PROPERTY DAY CAMP SP 2021-00005

Project Proposal:

We request an amendment to our special use permit #89-110 on parcel 85-3A. Deed book 4534-475,479,480). Currently, it allows 10 people to attend programs on 30 days of the year. We request an extension to allow for 50-day campers- 42 children and 8 staff to attend daily week-day sessions for 9 weeks, (or 45 days), during the summer months June-August, beginning in June 2022. The hours of operation are from 9-4. The staff will have slightly longer hours, from 8-5.

Also, we request the additional parcel of land, 85-3A1, 24.06 acres we purchased in 2014, be included in the special use permit. This land includes a pond, ten acres of loblolly forest, and river frontage on the Mechums River and would be an excellent addition to the children's exploration.

Our property is located at 7181 Batesville Road, Afton, Virginia, on SR 636, the gravel section of Batesville Road, two miles from the village of Batesville. We purchased 79.5 acres in 1976. In 2014, we added to this piece when we bought 24.06 acres contiguous to our original purchase. The land includes a farmhouse built in 1870, two barns, and a chicken house. The property is located in the Batesville Agricultural and Forestry District, (AFD).

Public Need and Benefit

The proposed use is to enable our land to be leased to The Living Earth School, a nature-based day-camp owned and operated by Kate and Hub (Adam) Knott, who reside at 101 Rocky Bottom Lane, Afton, Virginia 22920. For eighteen years, they rented the Girl Scout Camp in Sugar Hollow but it is no longer available and they are seeking a long-term site.

The proposed camp will benefit the public by helping to create the next generation of conservationists. If we are to retain the rural nature of our countryside, we need future citizens who value it. The Living Earth School (LES) has been providing such quality experiences for almost twenty years and is an award-winning camp.

We are concerned about our rapidly developing county and the decisions that will be made by the next generation. How much development will this next generation allow, how much green space will they demand, will the importance of biodiversity be recognized, what will be done to reduce our community's contributions to global climate change?

These important decisions will be made consciously and unconsciously by future generations. We believe our county will best be served if these future adults have childhoods grounded in nature, in an appreciation of the quiet of a pine forest, the deep pleasure of swimming in a spring fed pond or fast flowing river.

Most of the land is a mixed deciduous hardwood forest; ten acres are planted in loblolly pines by a previous owner, there is a pond on each property. There was some discussion at the Planning Commission Meeting regarding the ownership of the two ponds. After further investigation into the boundary lines, we reaffirmed that both ponds are solely on our property.

We seek approval to **construct a permanent wooden pavilion** on the 24-acre parcel in the future. The location would be at an appropriate building site, out of the flood plain, stream buffers, and at the foot of a slope, on the edge of the loblolly forest and a short walking distance from the drop-off.

According to Clark Gathright, neighbor and engineer with Grigg and Gathright: the building code requires 750 sq. ft. for 50 people in a seats and tables arrangement. This pavilion will allow each teaching group a place to assemble. A 24'x 32' pavilion will provide the required amount of area for the occupants and more than enough room for the number of tables necessary to seat them. The pavilion will provide shelter in inclement weather.

Prior to the construction of the pavilion, when inclement weather occurs during camp sessions, 2, 20' x 20" tents will be set up for shelter. In prior years, the camp owners have noted that in their experience most thunderstorms come after the 4 PM pick-up.

Four outhouses are available and have been approved by The Virginia Department of Health. The campers will bring their own water and food.

The use of our land for a nature camp for nine weeks in the summer will not be a substantive detriment to adjacent lots. Our land is surrounded by homes of multi-generational families (the Gathright's and Arnolds to the West and the Rainey's to the East) who lived in the area for many years, preceding our arrival in 1976. Their properties are rural, with a mixture of woods, open meadows, and

pastures. Some own horses, many raise small flocks of chickens and grow gardens. One nearby neighbor operates a heavy equipment business from his property, Arnold Evacuation Hauling LLC, Afton, Virginia. With the campers divided into smaller groups and with the use of 100 acres, two ponds and a river, the neighbors will retain the peace and quiet of their rural homes.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan:

The special use permit will be in harmony with the purpose and intent of the Zoning Ordinance as it is consistent with the comprehensive plan's goals of retaining the rural nature of the county.

Compliance with AFD's Goals: The use of our land for a day camp complies with AFD's goals. For example, the majority of the land is forested and will remain so. The soil will remain available for farm or forest use in the future. Along the Mechums River, we have planted a buffer of riparian trees and continue to maintain and protect water quality and attempt to control erosion, a growing concern.

Our use of the land for a day camp complies with AFD's goal. For example, soils will remain available for farm or forest use. The majority of the land is forested and will remain so. Along the Mechums, we planted a buffer of trees we continue to maintain to protect water quality.

Conservation Easement

The original 79.5 acres is under a conservation easement with The Nature Conservancy (TNC). With the limited use and low impact anticipated by the camp, TNC supports the request for a special use permit, with certain restrictions.

The use of this property is consistent with the Albemarle County Comprehension Plan and its goals of preserving and protecting the county's rural character. The use of these 100 acres for a nature-based camp will not require any grading. Exploration will be by foot, using walking trails throughout the woods and the existing lightly graveled road to one of the ponds on the 79.5 acres.

Impact on Public Facilities: Batesville Road, route 636, is a gravel road in western Albemarle County that will be minimally impacted by the arrival and departure of day campers and staff. Transportation will be provided by one bus and several carpools into an existing driveway that exits off Batesville Road. Willis Bedsaul of the Virginia Department of Transportation states that our existing driveway meets the requirements for a low-volume commercial entrance as long as we complete the necessary clearing of small trees and underbrush.

That clearing is underway. We will add a pull—off on one side of the drive to allow a car to pass. The area has been marked and the work planned. It will be completed prior to June 2022.

Traffic cones will be used to direct drivers into a circle. Children will exit their cars, one car at a time. Adults will remain in their cars. The bus, contracted from a company, will not remain on the property but will be used to transport campers residing in Charlottesville/Crozet to and from the camp. There is ample room for emergency fire and rescue vehicles to access the camp and turn around.

Eight staff members will arrive at 8 AM and park their vehicles on the far side (north) of the barn, leaving room for car-pooling and bus turn-around. The staff will arrive from the west, the opposite end of Batesville Road. They will leave at 5:00.

42 campers will arrive at 9 AM by one bus (20 campers). The remaining 22 campers will be encouraged to carpool. Some may carpool from Batesville. It is our intention to get the number of cars down to 7. These numbers are approximate. The campers will leave at 4:00 PM. Campers will remain on the premises all day. There will be no field trips or ventures out from the camp.

There is a second driveway for residential use only and not for the camp. The driveway to the camp will be used almost exclusively for the camp, with occasional use by the residents for farm needs.

After being dropped off, the children and their camp leaders will disperse into smaller groups primarily using the pond, woodlands, and meadows on the 25 acres. They will also use the ridge opening and pond on the original property.

The camp will have no impact on public school facilities or parks.

Environmental Impact

The impact of the camp on the environmental features of ponds, river, meadows, and woods with a maximum of 50 people a day for a summer day camp and 100 acres to explore will be minimal due to the seasonal nature and number of campers. Exploration will be entirely by **foot** with the day campers using existing foot trails and one former logging road.

There will be no sound amplification of any kind and no outdoor lighting.

Required Approval for a Zoning Clearance:

Health Department approval for all well, septic and outhouse facilities

VDOT approval for a low volume commercial entrance

Fire Department approval prior to all outdoor cooking and campfires

We are grateful to have lived on this beautiful piece of land for 45 years. We placed our land in a conservation easement with The Nature Conservancy as one step in preserving it, but in addition we would love for our legacy to be that we made it available for children. I hope you will support our request for this special use permit.