



Albemarle County

Legislation Text

File #: 21-418, **Version:** 1

AGENDA DATE: 9/1/2021

TITLE:

The Regents School - Private Central Sewerage System

SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: Resolution for a private central sewer system for The Regents School

ITEM TYPE: Regular Action Item

STAFF CONTACT(S): Richardson, Walker, Kamptner, Herrick, Filardo, McCulley, Pohl

PRESENTER (S): Frank Pohl

LEGAL REVIEW: Yes

REVIEWED BY: Jeffrey B. Richardson

BACKGROUND: As required by County Code § 16-102, The Regents School has notified the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors of its intent to construct a private central sewer system to serve its proposed development (Attachment A). Under County Code §§ 16-104 and 16-105, the Board is to consider this proposal and either approve or deny this request.

On September 18, 2019, the Board approved Special Use Permit (SP201800011), with conditions, to allow construction and operation of a private school (The Regents School) on Tax Parcels 07500-00-00-06600 and 07600-00-00-01700. The property is in the Neighborhood 6 comprehensive plan area and the jurisdictional areas of the Comprehensive Plan. The Board also approved a request in conjunction with SP 2018-11 for a special exception.

Later, on December 2, 2020, the Board approved a request for a shared central sewerage system to be located on the properties of The Regents School and the adjacent Trinity Presbyterian Church (Tax Parcel 07600-00-00-017C0). The current proposal is to revise the previously-approved central sewerage system request from a shared system to one that will only serve the School.

STRATEGIC PLAN: Thriving Development Areas: Attract quality employment, commercial, and high density residential uses into development areas by providing services and infrastructure that encourage redevelopment and private investment while protecting the quality of neighborhoods.

DISCUSSION: The current proposal is for a new private gravity main, new sanitary sewer pumping station, and new force main, which are needed to connect the proposed buildings to the public sewer located along Fontaine Avenue. Though the property is in the County's Jurisdictional Area for public water and sewer, the Albemarle County Service Authority (ACSA) has determined that there is no cost-effective means of providing public sewer service to the School parcels and does not envision that a public pump station in this location could ever serve a large enough population to justify the ongoing maintenance cost. Public sewer service is not available to the property.

This proposal includes constructing a gravity collection system on The Regents School property that would serve 13 buildings and discharge to a private pump station located on the same property (refer to Attachment B for the preliminary plan, profiles and calculations). Section 16 of the County Code defines a central sewerage system as a system “designed to serve three (3) or more connections.” Because there would be more than three connections, this system is considered a “central sewerage system”, requiring Board consideration.

Though several available alternatives would avoid the need for the central system, the conceptual site plan submitted with the approved SP201800017 included both six separate structures and a central system that would have been shared with the adjacent Church property. Instead of connecting to the existing lift station on the adjacent Church property, the Regents School is now proposing to construct a new lift station on its own property because the School has determined that connecting to the Church system would be cost prohibitive.

Alternatives to a central sewerage system include:

- 1) Providing six separate, onsite septic systems, each with its own distribution box and primary and reserve drainfield. This alternative is considered inferior because of adjacent environmental features (Moore’s Creek, which is an impaired perennial stream) and its higher probability of failure; or
- 2) Utilizing six individual duplex pumps and wet wells to serve the 13 proposed buildings, which could be done by-right, but is considered to have a higher failure potential by both staff and the applicant’s consultant. Failure could potentially impact the impaired perennial stream.

Staff reviews requests such as this for technical feasibility and for conformity with the Comprehensive Plan. The County Engineer has reviewed this request and has no objections, noting that the system would be designed and constructed to public utility standards and would be regulated by DEQ. The Comprehensive Plan discourages central systems in the Rural Area but does not contain guidance on central systems in the Development Areas.

Staff is of the opinion that allowing a new central system would result in fewer impacts and risks to scenic and natural resources and is a better site design with fewer site impacts. Staff’s opinion has not changed with this new proposal. The central system would be classified as a DEQ Class I system, which provides the highest level of safety and reliability. For these reasons, staff is supportive of the request and recommends approval of the proposed central sewerage system.

Staff recommends that, if approved, the Board impose conditions requiring that:

1. The central sewerage system be constructed in accord with the Preliminary Central Sewage System Plan (Attachment B) and DEQ Reliability Classification Worksheet (Attachment C);
2. Final plans and specifications be submitted with the final site plan and subject to approval by the County Engineer prior to commencing construction of the sewerage system;
3. Prior to issuance of any certificate of occupancy for any building to be served by the sewerage system, the owner provide a copy of the DEQ-issued operations permit to the Building Official or County Engineer;
4. The owner of Parcel ID number 07600-00-00-01700 assume full responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the sewerage system; and,
5. If requested by the County Engineer, the owner document compliance with all State operation and maintenance requirements.

BUDGET IMPACT: Minimal staff time would be required to review final design documents, completion reports, and to verify that ongoing maintenance is being provided.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Board adopt the attached Resolution (Attachment D) approving the installation of a

central sewerage system (gravity sewer, pump station and force main) at The Regents School, subject to the conditions therein.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A - Owner's Request Letter
- B - Preliminary Central Sewerage System Plan
- C - DEQ Reliability Classification Worksheet
- D - Resolution