



Albemarle County

Legislation Text

File #: 17-294, **Version:** 1

AGENDA DATE: 4/12/2017

TITLE: Field School - Central Sewerage System

SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: Request Board approval of a Central Sewerage System to serve the Field School of Charlottesville.

ITEM TYPE: Regular Action Item

STAFF CONTACT(S): Walker, Kamptner, Blair, Graham, Pohl

PRESENTER (S): Pohl

LEGAL REVIEW: Yes

REVIEWED BY: Douglas C. Walker

BACKGROUND: On March 8, 2017, the Board approved Special Use Permit (SP201500024) with conditions to construct a private school (Field School of Charlottesville) on Tax Map Parcel Numbers 06000-00-00-06800 and 06000-00-00-068E0. The Board also approved setting a public hearing for a Central Sewerage System on April 12, 2017. This request is specifically for the Central Sewerage System.

STRATEGIC PLAN: Critical Infrastructure: Prioritize, plan and invest in critical infrastructure that responds to past and future changes and improves the capacity to serve community needs.

DISCUSSION: The proposed system would consist of a sewer lateral system, collecting waste from three (3) buildings, along with a distribution box and drainfield as seen on the Concept Plan (Attachment A). The plans identify an area for a primary drainfield and two reserve drainfields.

Chapter 16 of the County Code defines a central sewerage system as a system “designed to serve three (3) or more connections”. Primary users of central systems are public schools and campgrounds in the Rural Area. Though the applicant has not completed a final design for the private school layout, the applicant anticipates building three (3) separate structures on site: an academic building, a gymnasium, and a dining hall. While the three (3) building connections are for one overall use, they are considered a central system, which requires Board approval. This request does not require action by the Planning Commission.

Use of central sewage systems in the Rural Area is discouraged due to the potential of a proliferation of residential uses using a central system or the potential for uses that should be in the Development Area to locate in the Rural Area. They also have a tendency to promote development of a higher intensity. As part of any request, an applicant must provide justification (included as Attachment B).

There are several alternatives available to the applicant to avoid the need for the central system. One alternative is to provide two or three separate systems, each with its own distribution box and primary and reserve drainfield. This alternative would create a greater area of land disturbance on site because of the need to construct two or three separate primary and reserve drainfields, as well as result in a higher cost and need

for maintenance by the owner.

Another alternative available to the applicant would be to limit the school infrastructure to only one or two buildings. The applicant's justification for the three building layout is to provide a campus setting for the students requiring them to transport themselves from one setting to another, which the applicant has stated is an integral part of their approach to education. If the applicant were to construct only one or two buildings, it would increase the maximum building footprint to a size much larger than the conditioned 12,000 square foot maximum size for any single building. One or two larger buildings would increase the visual and scenic impacts on the site and the school would likely be more visible from surrounding properties and the Entrance Corridor. Three smaller buildings of no more than 12,000 square feet are more in keeping with the scale and size of other Rural Area uses and will be easier to screen from surrounding properties. This alternate is only available if the SP were amended to allow buildings exceeding 12,000 square feet.

Staff reviews requests such as this for conformity with the Comprehensive Plan and for technical feasibility. The County Engineer has reviewed this request and has no objection to the design and location of the proposed system. County Engineer and Health Department approval of the final system plans and specifications will be required prior to construction. Regarding conformity with the Comprehensive Plan, staff believes that allowing the central sewerage system in this case will result in fewer impacts to scenic and natural resources and create a better site design. Usage and capacity of the sewerage system would not change for the centralized system but will allow for three smaller buildings, which will be less visually intrusive to the Rural Area and will reduce land disturbance. For this reason, staff is supportive of the request and recommends approval of the proposed central sewerage lateral system for three buildings.

BUDGET IMPACT: There will be no direct impact to the County budget.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Board adopt the attached Resolution (Attachment C) approving the request for a central sewerage system, subject to the conditions contained therein.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A - Conceptual Plan

Attachment B - Applicant's Central Sewerage Request/Justification

Attachment C - Resolution