Community Christian Academy at RiverStone Church Application Narrative
Special Use Permit Request to Use RiverStone Church by Community Christian Academy for Upper Elementary and Secondary Students
5/24/2022

Project Proposal – Community Christian Academy would like a special use permit to use space at RiverStone Church, located at 1515 Insurance Lane, Charlottesville, VA 22911, to provide a five-day-per-week education for upper-elementary to high-school students. Over the last two years, we at Community Christian Academy have had to turn away about 100 children whose parents wanted admission into the school because of lack of space. Interest in private education over the last few years has increased greatly, and many private schools are full and have waiting lists. For the 2022-23 school year, several private schools are full already, so clearly, the public would like more options for private education.

With nearly 12,000 square feet of space, we believe that we could adequately serve 100 students in that building, even though we are expecting only half that for the 2022-23 school year. The building would be used for school from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday from mid-August to early June except for school holidays. The church is generally empty during school hours because church activities are typically held in the evenings and on weekends. The school does not intend to have consistent after-school activities on the property.

The space is already set up with a large room used as a sanctuary, classrooms, and multiple bathrooms. Behind the building are a basketball hoop and a gaga-ball pit and a large grassy area that extends to the side. Because our students are older, no changes would be necessary outside to accommodate the students. However, the possibility exists that a ball could reach S. Hollymead Drive through a roughly 32-foot gap between a line of trees and bushes and dumpster that are behind the gaga-ball pit. We will put in a fence to close that gap in order to prevent balls from rolling into the road. The church has roads in front of and on both sides of the property, and the roads beside the property converge behind the property making a triangular property with no direct neighbors. Because there are no contiguous properties, there is no concern regarding our students crossing onto other properties or our activities interfering with the neighbors.

Beside the building is a large parking lot with about 90 parking spaces. We anticipate needing parking for six faculty and staff members for next year, and wouldn't need parking for more than 12 when we grow to 100 students. Parents typically will drop-off students in the morning, so most will not park and stay. Parents are more likely to park in the afternoons, but considering the number of students expected and the frequency of multi-child families, the current number of parking spaces is sufficient to support 100 students. As indicated on the conceptual plan, parents will enter Hollymead at the north entrance where there is a stoplight, and they will exit Hollymead using the south entrance. (The current entrance and exit signs will be repainted to align with the new traffic pattern.) Those needing to go south after exiting Hollymead will drive to the stoplight at the north entrance and make a u-turn. We do not anticipate using buses or vans for pick-up and drop-off. As shown on the conceptual plan, there is adequate space in the parking lot to loop cars so that cars will not back up on Insurance Lane. The

The property is in an area that is developed as a commercial mixed-use area. It faces Insurance Lane, and across the road is a strip of businesses and large parking lots. The businesses include various commercial and educational businesses such as a Montessori preschool and some doctor and dentist offices. The properties are at the front of a large residential neighborhood, Hollymead, that after a mile or so ends at Hollymead Elementary School. The large area is home to many types of buildings including residences (single and multi-family dwellings), schools, businesses, churches, and a pool. The request to use a church within this area for a very small day school is in line with the current use and zoning of the area. While we would require a special use permit to use the church, other uses by right – including child day centers – currently exist in the area and would be in harmony with our desire to include a small school in the vicinity.

Having reviewed Section 5 of the Zoning Ordinance, we do not believe that the list of requirements for certain entities and events apply to the school we want to have at RiverStone Church. We are not any of the entities listed in that section, and it seems that the only part that could potentially apply to our school are the requirements regarding events. However, the code specifically states that the regulations are not intended for small events with minor logistical issues. Since we do not expect to have large community events and possibly only a few small school events (like a school Christmas program), these regulations shouldn't apply to the school.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan – RiverStone Church is located in the Places 29 – Hollymead district. It appears that the intention of Albemarle County is to create a neighborhood area that includes the core aspects needed for a neighborhood to function independently – schools, residences, retail, medical offices, churches, etc. The commercial mixed use designation allows for all of these uses, so our desire to add a private school for grades that are not currently served in that area through a private educational institution is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan for the area.

Impacts on Public Facilities and Public Infrastructure – Since we are not using any public facilities, there would be no impacts on that. The only public infrastructure that relates to the location of RiverStone Church is roads. There would be very little impact on the roads by having a small school in RiverStone. First, we are small, so there would not be many drivers changing their normal driving patterns to drop off children at school. There are major employers both north (i.e. U.Va. and NGIC) and south (i.e. U.Va. and Albemarle schools and government) of the Hollymead area, and Route 29 is the main route to many of those businesses. Second, driving in to Hollymead, dropping off, and exiting Hollymead (as indicated on the conceptual plan) can be a smooth process that will not significantly impact the current flow of traffic. The stoplight, turning lanes, and small road that diverts from the main roads through the neighborhood to the front of the church provide for an easy system for entering and exiting Hollymead.

Impacts on Environmental Features – Because we are looking to have upper-elementary to high-school students at RiverStone, Church, there will be no impacts on the environmental features of the property. No playground for younger children will need to be added. The current basketball hoop, gaga ball pit, and grassy area are sufficient for outdoor play for the older students. The parking lots and the building size and exterior will not be changed. Shrubs and other outdoor

plantings will not be changed. The only outdoor change will be the addition of a small fence by the gaga-ball pit to prevent balls from rolling into S. Hollymead Drive. For these reasons, there are no concerns regarding impacting the environment on the property.