

**Albemarle County Planning Commission
September 1, 2015**

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a public hearing on Tuesday, September 1, 2015, at 6:00 p.m., at the County Office Building, Auditorium, Second Floor, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, Virginia.

Members attending were Karen Firehock, Tim Keller, Thomas Loach, Cal Morris, Chair; Richard Randolph, Bruce Dotson and Mac Lafferty, Vice Chair. Julia Monteith, AICP, Senior Land Use Planner for the University of Virginia was absent.

Staff present was Megan Yaniglos, Principal Planner; Claudette Grant, Senior Planner; David Benish, Acting Director of Planning; Sharon Taylor, Clerk to Planning Commission, Wayne Cilimberg, Deputy Director of Community Development and Greg Kamptner, Deputy County Attorney.

Call to Order and Establish Quorum:

Mr. Morris, Chair, called the regular meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and established a quorum.

Public Hearing Items

SP-2015-00011 Montessori School

PROJECT: SP201500011/Montessori Community School

MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT: Rivanna

TAX MAP/PARCEL: 07800-00-00-012A0 and 07800-00-00-011B0

LOCATION: 440 Pinnacle Place

PROPOSAL: To amend special use permits SP2006-38 and SP2009-001 for revisions to site layout, concept plan and conditions.

PETITION: Educational School on 9.18 acres under Section 23.2.2(6) of Zoning Ordinance. No dwelling units proposed.

ZONING: CO, Commercial Office which allows offices, supporting commercial and service; residential by special use permit (15 units/ acre); school of special instruction under Section 23.2.2(6) and HC, Highway Commercial which allows commercial and service; residential by special use permit (15 units/ acre).

ENTRANCE CORRIDOR: Yes

MANAGED STEEP SLOPES: Yes

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: Urban Density Residential – residential (6.01-34 units/acre); supporting uses such as religious institutions, schools, commercial, office and service uses and Urban Mixed Use – retail, commercial services, office, and a mix of residential types (6.01 – 34 units/acre) in Neighborhood 3-Pantops.

(Claudette Grant)

Claudette Grant presented a PowerPoint presentation regarding SP-2015-00011 Montessori School, which is located at 440 Pinnacle Place or the northwest corner of the Richmond Road and Rolkin intersection.

A portion of the school property is zoned CO, Commercial Office which allows offices, supporting commercial and service uses by right and residential and schools of special instruction by special use permit.

The school recently purchased the adjacent property, which was the former American Legion parcel. A portion of this parcel is zoned HC, Highway Commercial, which allows commercial and service uses and residential by special use permit. A private school use is allowed by right in this district.

The Pantops Master Plan designates most of this property as Urban Density – Residential, which allows 6 to 34 units per acre and supporting uses such as religious institutions, schools, commercial, office and service uses. There is a small portion of the property that is designated Urban Mixed Use that allows retail, commercial services, office, and a mix of residential types.

The applicant is requesting to amend special use permits SP-2006-38 and SP-2009-001 as they intend to merge and improve the two parcels into a campus with a more cohesive continuous layout. The revised concept plan shows vehicular, pedestrian and landscape improvements. Specific details regarding the improvements can be found in the staff report.

Factors Favorable

1. There are no anticipated detrimental impacts to the use or on adjacent property resulting from the proposed revisions to the special use permit conditions.
2. The proposed revisions will provide a more cohesive physical layout of the site that will enhance vehicular and pedestrian connections.

Factors Unfavorable

There are no unfavorable factors.

Staff's Recommendation

Based on the findings contained in the staff report, staff recommends approval of SP 2015-00011, Montessori Community School with the conditions listed in the staff report.

- The first condition is related to the amount of students not to exceed three hundred (300) students.
- The second condition has to do with the special use permit being in accordance with the conceptual plan.
- The third condition has to do with the allowable time for construction of the improvements, which is three (3) years in this case.

Mr. Morris invited questions for staff. There being none, the public hearing was opened for applicant and public comment. He invited the applicant to address the Commission.

Wendy Fischer, Head of School at Mountaintop Montessori, said they were happy to be here and she would be happy to take any questions.

Eugene Young, principal of Water Street Studio, said they were the consultants on the project.

Mr. Morris noted there was no presentation and invited questions for the applicant.

Mr. Keller said at the CCAC meeting and at your previous time here he thinks much of the discussion was focused on the stacking ability and the changes that are being made by integrating the new property and having the longer drive through the property. At the CCAC there was a bit of a discussion about previously there had been some issues with stacking of parents coming to pick up children on Rolkin Road. He asked if they think that is going to be alleviated by this new design concept.

Ms. Fischer replied that I feel very confident that it will be. We are probably more than doubling the space that cars can take up to stack along as they wait to pick up children versus now where they flow all the way down the driveway into the road in front of Rite Aid. So I have no doubt that this will alleviate that problem.

Mr. Keller asked will you have some accessing from both directions or is it just going to be a flow in one direction.

Ms. Fischer replied it is just going to be a flow in one direction. However, the access takes people all the way around to what was formerly the American Legion Building. So it brings people all the way around and then out again.

Mr. Randolph asked with the proposed exit next to the Car Max Super Store he would hope that you will have signage there indicating no left hand turn.

Ms. Fischer replied yes, they will have signage. She pointed out they already make that very clear to our employees and parents.

Mr. Randolph said they hope parents will follow that. They don't always follow signage as we noticed in other locations further out on 250.

Ms. Fischer said they have discussed quite a bit actually building some sort of structure that will make it difficult to do a left hand turn. It would structurally make it obvious that is the only way to go.

Mr. Randolph asked does the school reserve the option to put parents in detention if in fact you find them in violation.

Ms. Fischer replied they are a Montessori School and would want them to intrinsically find their inner motivation to do the right thing.

Mr. Randolph said a less punitive approach may be coming in on a Saturday in helping to clean up the ground.

Ms. Fischer noted it could mean to clean the chicken coop.

Mr. Morris invited public comment. There being no public comment or applicant rebuttal, Mr. Morris closed the public hearing to bring the matter before the Commission for discussion and action.

Mr. Randolph commended the Board, Head and the staff of the Montessori School for their foresighted planning and the work they have done to come back with a much more realistic proposal and better proposal.

Mr. Morris asked if anyone would like to make a motion on this.

Motion: Mr. Randolph moved and Mr. Keller seconded to recommend approval of SP-2015-00011 Montessori Community School with the conditions outlined in the staff report.

1. Enrollment shall not exceed three hundred (300) students;
2. Development of the use shall be in general accord with the "Mountaintop Montessori School, Sheet 2, entitled Master Plan", prepared by Water Street Studio, dated February 17, 2015, revised June 15, 2015, as determined by the Director of Planning and the Zoning Administrator. To be in general accord with the plan, development shall reflect the general size, arrangement, and location of buildings, the Amphitheatre, playgrounds and ball fields, wooded natural area, and parking areas. Minor modifications to the plan which do not conflict with the elements above may be made to ensure compliance with the Zoning Ordinance; and
3. Construction of [e.g., for example "building identified as the New Upper Elementary & Laboratory Space shown on"] the "Master Plan" referenced in Condition 2 above shall commence by three (3) years from the Board of Supervisors approval date or this special use permit shall expire.

Mr. Morris invited further discussion. There being none, Mr. Morris asked for a roll call.

The motion passed by a vote of (7:0)

Mr. Morris noted that SP-2015-00011 Montessori School would be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors with a recommendation for approval at a time to be determined.

(Recorded and transcribed by Sharon C. Taylor, Clerk to Planning Commission & Planning)