

**SPECIAL USE PERMIT-6-00. Williamsburg Montessori School
Staff Report for May 23, 2000, Board of Supervisors Public Hearing**

This staff report is prepared by the James City County Planning Division to provide information to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors to assist them in making a recommendation on this application. It may be useful to members of the general public interested in this application.

PUBLIC HEARINGS Building C Board Room; County Government Complex
Planning Commission: May 1, 2000, 5:00 p.m.
Board of Supervisors: May 23, 2000, 7:00 p.m.

SUMMARY FACTS

Applicant: Mr. John Tarley, Williamsburg Montessori School
Land Owner: C. T. and Anna Lewis

Proposed Use: School

Location: 4200 Longhill Road; Powhatan District

Tax Map and Parcel No.: (31-4) (1-3)

Primary Service Area: Inside

Parcel Size: .845 acres

Existing Zoning: R-8, Rural Residential

Comprehensive Plan: Low-Density Residential

Surrounding Zoning: North: R-2, General Residential (several duplexes)
 South: R-2, (Longhill Gate)
 East, West: R-8, Rural Residential

Staff Contact: Jill E. Schmidle - Phone: 253-6685

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff finds the proposal to be consistent with surrounding zoning and land use and is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. On May 1, 2000, the Planning Commission voted 7-0 to approve this application. Staff recommends the Board of Supervisors recommend approval of this proposal with the conditions listed in the staff report.

Project Description

Mr. John Tarley has applied on behalf of the Williamsburg Montessori School for a special use permit to operate a school at 4200 Longhill Road in a single-story residential dwelling unit, which is adjacent to the Williamsburg Montessori School located at 4210 Longhill Road. The house is owned by C. T. and Anna Lewis, and the Montessori School is under contract with the owners to purchase the property. The single-family residence is zoned R-8, Rural Residential, and will be used for office space, a library, and toddler classroom space and would be part of an overall school renovation and expansion permitting the addition of 14 students. Currently two structures house the Montessori School: the original school building on the corner of Longhill Road and Lynnette Drive, and an adjacent structure, which was formerly a convenience store. The Montessori School received approval from the Board of Supervisors to expand the school to the convenience store in 1996, and the details of that approval will be outlined in pertinent sections of this report. The single-family dwelling proposed for the Montessori School expansion is adjacent to the former convenience store.

The home is approximately 1,700 square feet, and is occupied by two tenants. The tenants are set to move upon the closing of the purchase contract, scheduled for May 15, 2000. No changes to the footprint of the single-family structure will occur. The Montessori School currently has 111 students, and if the special use permit is approved, the Montessori School will have capacity for 125 students. The proposed expansion will not generate any additional staff.

The renovation and expansion is scheduled to occur in three phases. Phase 1, anticipated to occur by September 2000, calls for renovating the house for office space and a library. No additional students are projected in this phase. Phase 2, anticipated for September 2001, includes renovating the remainder of the house to allow the relocation of the Toddler Room, which currently is housed in the school with 12 children ages 18 months to three years. Phase 2 also includes expanding the existing classroom being vacated by the toddlers to add four additional pre-school aged children, and creating an additional playground behind the house. This phase would increase capacity by four additional children in the school. Phase 3, projected for September 2002, includes building a connection between the classrooms in the original school and the former convenience store for 10 upper elementary students, and expanding the parking area in front of the house. **To summarize this request, a total of 14 additional children will be permitted with this expansion, as well as various renovations to the existing and proposed school structures.**

History

The Williamsburg Montessori School has operated on Longhill Road since 1982. As stated previously, the first school expansion occurred with the approval of Case No. SUP-4-96, which permitted the school to locate in the adjacent convenience store. The 1996 SUP also included a façade renovation which serves to visually tie the two structures together. The applicant has stated that there are no plans to renovate the façade of the single-family structure, but that small-scale architectural improvements may be added in the future, so as to tie all three structures together visually. **To ensure that any architectural changes are compatible with the existing structures, staff has added a condition that any architectural changes to the single-family structure be approved by the Planning Director.**

Existing Conditions

Case No. SUP-4-96 was approved with conditions that address the following issues:

1. placed a time limit on construction;
2. limited the number of additional students to 35;
3. required a capacity analysis of existing waterlines;

4. required additional landscape screening between the playground and adjacent properties;
5. required a Sidewalk Agreement for a sidewalk along the Longhill Road frontage when warranted;
6. required the new parking lot to connect to the existing parking lot; and
7. required the removal of the convenience store driveway, so that only one entrance serves the school.

These conditions were implemented as part of the site plan approval process.

Topography and Physical Features

The .845 acre site is relatively flat and contains a handful of mature trees. Prior to site plan approval, the Environmental Division will require that this site meet redevelopment standards for compliance with the water quality stormwater requirements of the Chesapeake Bay Ordinance. The quantity of stormwater runoff will also need to be controlled from the expanded parking and building areas.

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use

The site is zoned R-8, Rural Residential. The property is approximately one-half mile west of Lafayette High School, 550 feet west of the District Park Sports Complex entrance and approximately 1,400 feet east of the Ford's Colony entrance. To the north of the site behind the Montessori School is property zoned R-2, General Residential, with several residential duplexes. To the south of the site, across Longhill Road, is property zoned R-2, and includes the Longhill Gate townhouse development. Property to the east and west of the site is zoned R-8. The general area is residential in character and is expected to continue to develop in that fashion.

The 1996 SUP required landscaping to be installed at the rear of the property to screen the proposed and existing playground from the adjacent duplexes. Staff recommends a similar condition to ensure the proposed playground behind the single-family house is screened from adjacent properties. **Since the school has co-existed with the neighborhood for 18 years, staff finds that the proposed expansion is compatible with surrounding zoning and land uses.**

Utilities

The existing school and single-family structure are served by public water and individual private septic systems. As part of the 1996 school expansion, the James City Service Authority (JCSA) required an analysis of the water and sewer capacity for the school. As a result of that analysis, JCSA required an upgrade to the water and sewer capacity, and the septic systems were upgraded to include a grinder pump and force main to the existing lines. JCSA will require a similar analysis for the single-family structure to determine if the existing waterlines and septic systems need to be upgraded further. Staff has added a condition requiring this analysis be submitted with the site plan application.

Access

As part of the approval of Case No. SUP-4-96, the separate entrance for the convenience store was closed so that only one access serves both buildings of the school. Please note that this sole access point also serves the single-family structure. The driveway to the single-family structure is accessed through the Montessori School parking lot, and will remain with the approval of this proposal.

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has performed a preliminary analysis which concluded that this expansion will require a 150-foot right-turn taper and a 200-foot left-turn lane into the property. **Staff has added a condition that traffic improvements on Longhill Road as determined by VDOT shall be**

required prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy. Staff also has added a condition requiring the applicant dedicate right-of-way to accommodate a bikeway along the Longhill Road frontage.

Comprehensive Plan

The site is designated Low-Density Residential on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map, and schools are an acceptable land use within this designation. The Comprehensive Plan designates this segment of Longhill Road a Community Character Corridor. There is no tree canopy along the frontage of the property. Because of site constraints present on the property for parking, the future sidewalk, bikeway, and possible right turn taper into the property, it would be impractical to reestablish a tree canopy in this location. Staff finds that the requirements of the landscape ordinance will be sufficient to help screen the future parking lot from Longhill Road. **This proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan because schools are a suggested use in this location, and because it is a use which complements the family-oriented, residential character of the area.**

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff finds that this expansion is consistent with the surrounding zoning and land use and also is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. On May 1, 2000, the Planning Commission voted 7-0 to approve this proposal. Staff recommends the Board of Supervisors approve Case No. SUP-6-00 with the following conditions:

1. Construction on this project shall commence within 24 months from the date of approval of this special use permit or this permit shall be void. Construction shall be defined as securing permits for land disturbance, building modification and/or construction, or for construction of required road improvements.
2. Site plan approval shall be required prior to commencing construction.
3. There shall not be more than 125 students at the entire facility at any one time. Additional students above the number of 125 shall require approval by the Director of Planning, who shall, as part of such request, review and approve parking facilities at the school.
4. A capacity analysis of existing water lines and sewer facilities to the site shall be performed and the results of that analysis shall be submitted with the site plan application. The Director of Planning shall approve the study, and its recommendations shall be incorporated into the site plan.
5. Traffic improvements along Longhill Road required by VDOT shall be installed or bonded prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy for any structure on the site.
6. Any exterior architectural changes to the existing single-family structure shall be compatible with the existing structures approved as part of Case No. SUP-4-96 and shall be approved by the Planning Director.
7. The landscape plan shall include a 15-foot wide landscape screening area along the rear property line, or length of the playground between the school and the adjacent property to the north. The planting standard for this area shall be one tree and three evergreen shrubs per 400 square feet, with the size and mixture requirements as specified in Section 24-94, General Landscape Area Standards, of the James City County Zoning Ordinance.
8. The applicant shall dedicate right-of-way for a five-foot VDOT standard shoulder bike lane along the property's Longhill Road frontage prior to final site plan approval. If turn lanes, drainage or utility

improvements are required along the Longhill Road frontage, the improvements shall be designed in such a manner to allow an unimpeded bikeway path through the right-of-way dedicated for such purposes.

9. Only one entrance driveway shall serve the entire school facility. Any additional parking spaces for this facility shall connect with the existing parking lot which currently serves the Williamsburg Montessori School.
10. This special use permit is not severable. Invalidation of any word, phrase, clause, sentence, or paragraph shall invalidate the remainder.

Jill E. Schmidle

CONCUR:

O. Marvin Sowers, Jr.

JES/tlc
sup-6-00.wpd

Attachments:

1. Planning Commission minutes
2. Site location map (2)
3. Development plans
4. Approved conditions for SUP-4-96
5. Resolution