



City of Harrisonburg, Virginia

Department of Planning & Community Development
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To: Kurt Hodgen, City Manager
From: Planning Commission;
Adam Fletcher, Director of Planning and Community Development
Date: February 1, 2016
Re: Special Use Permit Request, 98 Pleasant Hill Road, 9-D-1

Summary: Consider a request from Harold and Thelma Williams Life Estate with representative Tara Koontz for a special use permit per Section 10-3-40 (6) of the Zoning Ordinance within the R-2, Residential District, to allow for a major family day home on a 24,000+/- square foot property addressed as 98 Pleasant Hill Road.

Background: The Comprehensive Plan designates this area as Low Density Residential. This designation states that these areas consist of single family detached dwellings with a maximum density of 1 to 4 units per acre. Low density sections are found mainly in and around well established neighborhoods and are designed to maintain the existing character of neighborhoods and to provide traditional areas for home ownership.

The following land uses are located on and adjacent to the property:

Site: Single family detached home, zoned R-2
North: Single family detached homes fronting Middlebrook Street, zoned R-2
East: Single family detached homes fronting Middlebrook Street, zoned R-1, and other single family detached homes fronting Pleasant Hill Road, zoned R-2
South: Across Pleasant Hill Road, single family detached homes and undeveloped parcels, zoned R-2
West: Single family detached homes, zoned R-2

Key Issues: The applicant's representative, Ms. Tara Koontz, is requesting a special use permit (SUP) per Section 10-3-40 (6) to operate a major family day home (MFDH) at 98 Pleasant Hill Road, which is zoned R-2, Residential District. The subject site is currently for sale and Ms. Koontz has the property under contract to purchase. Ms. Koontz is hopeful that both her real estate contract and SUP application are approved so she can easily transition her family and her existing MFDH child care operation located at 627 South Mason Street to the subject site.

As noted, Ms. Koontz currently operates a MFDH at 627 South Mason Street, where the property is zoned U-R, Urban Residential District and has the R-P, Residential Professional District Overlay. In May 2010, after going through the public hearing process and receiving favorable recommendations for approval of a SUP to allow a MFDH from both staff and Planning Commission, City Council approved her SUP with

no conditions at the Mason Street location. Prior to receiving her MFDH SUP, Ms. Koontz operated a minor family day home at the same property.

The subject site at 98 Pleasant Hill Road is located within the block bounded by Willow Hill Drive to the west and Central Avenue to the east, where it is just over one half acre in size and is improved with a single family detached dwelling with a large, fenced rear yard. The property is accessible via Pleasant Hill Road by a paved single lane, almost 80-foot in length driveway, leading from the public street to the garage.

After thorough review, staff has only one concern with the application and is recommending approval of the request with one condition. Although Pleasant Hill Road no longer maintains the same traffic volumes it once carried prior to the opening of Erickson Avenue between South Main Street and South High Street, the street remains designated a collector street and holds relatively high traffic counts. (After Erickson Avenue was opened, there was almost a 45 percent traffic reduction on Pleasant Hill Road.) Because the traffic numbers remain relatively high, staff does not want to allow new or additional uses that would promote vehicles backing into Pleasant Hill Road when exiting properties.

Environmental Impact: N/A

Fiscal Impact: N/A

Prior Actions: N/A

Alternatives: City Council could approve the SUP request for a MFDH with no conditions.

Community Engagement: As required, the request was published in the local newspaper twice for Planning Commission's review and twice for the City Council review. Adjoining property owners were notified of both Planning Commission and City Council's hearings. The property was also posted with signage advertising the request.

Recommendation: Staff is recommending approval of the MFDH only with the following condition:

A vehicle turnaround shall be provided on site. The turnaround shall not simply be additional space for the storage of vehicles for drop-off and pick-up of children, but rather a designated area, where vehicles can safely turnaround on site to eliminate the need to back into Pleasant Hill Road when exiting the property.

Attachments: Planning Commission extract; staff report; site maps; application and other supporting documents.

Review: Planning Commission recommended approval (7-0) of the special use permit to allow a major family day home on the property identified as tax map parcel 9-D-1, with the following condition:

A vehicle turnaround shall be provided on site. The turnaround shall not simply be additional space for the storage of vehicles for drop-off and pick-up of children, but rather a designated area, where vehicles can safely turnaround on site to eliminate the need to back into Pleasant Hill Road when exiting the property.