



City of Harrisonburg, Virginia

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

409 South Main Street

Harrisonburg, Virginia 22801

Website: <http://www.harrisonburgva.gov>

Telephone: (540) 432-7700 Fax: (540) 432-7777

September 2, 2016

TO THE MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

SUBJECT: Public hearing to consider a request from Eastern Mennonite School, Virginia Mennonite Missions, and Mennomedia, Inc. with representative Eastern Mennonite School to rezone 26.88 acres of property by amending Eastern Mennonite School's existing Master Plan. The request would extend the Institutional Overlay District to several lots that have been added to campus property. The Master Plan approval would allow for a 10-foot building setback to be applied to the entire campus outside boundary, as well as, a zero setback to all interior lot lines. Additionally, Eastern Mennonite School is requesting approval of the parking plan layout, per Section 10-3-25(12). The current Master Plan includes properties zoned B-2, General Business and R-3, Medium Density Residential, and are addressed as 801 Parkwood Drive and identified on tax map parcels 47-N-7. The properties to be added to the Master Plan are zoned B-2, General Business and addressed as 601 Parkwood Drive and 1251 Virginia Avenue, and identified as tax map parcels 47-N 8, 10 & 11.

EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF HARRISONBURG PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON: August 10, 2016

Chair Fitzgerald read the request.

Mr. Colman recused himself at 7:14 p.m. and left the Council Chambers.

Chair Fitzgerald said Commissioner Colman is recusing himself and we still have a quorum, so we can proceed. She then asked staff for a review.

Mrs. Banks said the Comprehensive Plan designates this area as Institutional and Professional. The Institutional designation states that these areas are for development by certain nonprofit and public institutional uses such as private colleges and universities, hospitals, offices of nonprofit organizations, community assembly uses and institutions that provide for the shelter and care of people. The Professional designation states that these areas are for professional service oriented uses with consideration to the character of the area. These uses are found in the residential areas along major thoroughfares and adjacent to the Central Business District. Conversion of houses in these areas to office and professional service uses is permitted with appropriate attention to maintaining compatibility with adjacent residential areas in the same manner as described for Planned Business areas.

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

Site: Facilities of Eastern Mennonite School, zoned R-3/I-1 and B-2/I-1; Virginia Mennonite Missions and Mennomedia, Inc. offices, zoned B-2

- North: Across Parkwood Drive, single-family dwellings, zoned R-3; facilities of Eastern Mennonite University; and facilities of Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community, zoned R-3/I-1
- East: Across Virginia Avenue, non-conforming manufactured home park, non-conforming dwellings and convenience store, zoned B-2
- South: Across Mt. Clinton Pike, commercial shopping centers, zoned B-2
- West: Facilities of Eastern Mennonite University, zoned R-3/I-1

Eastern Mennonite School (EMS) is requesting to amend their approved master plan and to incorporate three new parcels, totaling 2.08+/- acres, into the plan. The site is located in the northern area of the City and is bounded by three streets, Parkwood Drive, Virginia Avenue, and Mt. Clinton Pike. If approved, the master plan would include a total of 26.88+/- acres.

The City's Zoning Ordinance, Section 10-3-103 (1), Uses permitted by right in the I-1, Institutional Overlay District allows for "[c]ivic, educational, charitable, scientific, religious, and philanthropic uses for a public or nonprofit institutional organization." EMS fits within this classification and is an allowed use. Additionally, under Section 10-3-106 (a) of the I-1 District, a master plan process allows an applicant to request approval of a master plan for development that may include uses which do not meet the dimensional requirements – such as setbacks and building height – or parking minimum off-street parking requirements.

The original master plan for EMS was approved in September 2002 and had two specific areas that did not meet all necessary requirements – a dugout planned to be located parallel to Mt. Clinton Pike would encroaching into the 30-foot setback requirement by five feet, and relief to the required parking separation located along the western property line that adjoins Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) was approved as part of the master plan. The remainder of the 2002 approved master plan provided for the orderly development of the EMS campus, which included building expansions, parking lots, and athletic fields.

As described within the Master Plan Narrative dated August 3, 2016, EMS is requesting that the 2002 master plan be replaced with the proposed 2016 plan in order to include the additional acreage within the Institutional Overlay and to accommodate a proposed elementary school, which is currently located offsite. If approved, EMS would vacate all interior lot lines, creating one campus. In addition to the incorporation of the new land and elementary school, EMS desires a 10-foot building setback be applied to the entire campus perimeter to allow for flexibility with future building expansions and additions. Currently, a 30-foot setback from public streets would be required. As indicated on the proposed master plan site drawing, the existing MennoMedia office building would be updated and renovated to become the new elementary school. Future additions and expansions, which may or may not need setback relief, are proposed for both the high/middle school building and the elementary school building. The 10-foot building setback would also allow the dugout along Mt. Clinton Pike that received relief in the 2002 master plan to continue to be conforming to setback regulations.

Additionally, the site drawing shows where parking areas will be located on the grounds. A large portion of the parking currently exists; however, any new parking area or any redevelopment of existing parking area would be required to meet regulations per Section 10-3-30.1 Parking Lot Landscaping. EMS is asking to deviate from the required parking lot landscaping ordinance for the new parking areas, provided that landscaping as shown on the proposed master plan will be installed near the perimeter of the parking lots rather than at otherwise required internal landscaping islands. The master plan also notes that access easements and/or shared parking agreements will be provided

for Virginia Mennonite Missions and Eastern Mennonite University to allow them access to their parking areas via EMS property.

Lastly, EMS has stated within the master plan narrative (and as shown on the attached “Exhibit A” drawings), they will dedicate the needed right-of-way and easements to the City for the future widening of Mt. Clinton Pike. This would include stormwater facilities, public utilities, and a shared-use path, all to be constructed by the City, along with necessary slope maintenance and temporary construction easements.

Along with their request for master plan approval, EMS is seeking parking approval per Section 10-3-25 (12) of the Zoning Ordinance; therefore, Planning Commission must review and approve the proposed off-street parking plans for the proposed uses. EMS conducted a traffic and parking study, which is included as part of this packet. The study indicates a total of 135 parking spaces is sufficient to meet the needs of the school campus. The study took into consideration traffic flow and drop-off/pick-up areas for students. A total of 410 parking spaces are proposed for the campus. Staff believes the projected number of 135 parking spaces is adequate for the proposed uses and also understands their desire for additional spaces due to extra-curricular activities and functions.

Staff has reviewed the master plan and finds that the development as shown is in compliance with the requirements of the I-1, Institutional Overlay District. The relief and flexibility in building setbacks allows for the cohesive development of the structures, parking, and athletic fields within the campus. In addition, the development is not detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare of the neighborhood and is not in conflict with the policies and principles of the Comprehensive Plan.

Staff recommends that the Eastern Mennonite School Master Plan Amendment 2016 be approved as submitted. Staff also supports the provided parking layouts for the facilities.

Chair Fitzgerald asked if there were any questions for staff at this time. Hearing none, she opened the public hearing and asked if the applicant would like to come forward and speak at this time.

Mike Stolzhus, College Avenue, said I do not have anything to add, I want to make myself available to questions if you have specific questions. Mrs. Banks did a great job of summarizing the master plans we submitted to staff.

Chair Fitzgerald asked if there was anyone else that would like to speak in favor of the request. Hearing none, she asked if there was anyone opposed or anyone with a general comment. Hearing none, she closed the public hearing and asked Planning Commission for a motion on the request for the purposes of discussion.

Mr. Finks moved to approve the rezoning of the Eastern Mennonite School Master Plan Amendment as submitted with the recommendations from the staff.

Mrs. Whitten seconded the motion.

Chair Fitzgerald asked for further discussion on the request. Hearing none, she called for a voice vote on the motion.

All voted in favor (4-0) to recommend approval of the rezoning of the Eastern Mennonite School Master Plan Amendment.

Chair Fitzgerald asked Planning Commission for a motion on the request for the Eastern Mennonite School Parking layout.

Mr. Finks moved to approve the Eastern Mennonite School Parking layout as presented with the recommendations from the staff.

Mrs. Whitten seconded the motion.

Chair Fitzgerald asked for further discussion on the request. Hearing none, she called for a voice vote on the motion.

All voted in favor (4-0) to recommend approval of the Eastern Mennonite School Parking layout as submitted.

Chair Fitzgerald said the rezoning will go to City Council on September 13, 2016.

Mr. Colman returned to the room at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Banks

Alison Banks
Senior Planner