



City of Harrisonburg, Virginia

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July 1, 2016

TO THE MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

SUBJECT: Public hearing to consider a request from Rockingham County School Board, with representative John Hash of Timmons Group for a special use permit per Section 10-3-97 (9) to allow an educational use within the M-1, General Industrial District. The 16.8 +/- acre parcel is addressed as 215 and 311 Pleasant Valley Road and is identified as tax map parcel 102-B-1. Planning Commission must also review the school's proposed off-street parking plan per the requirements of Section 10-3-25 (12).

EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF HARRISONBURG PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON: June 8, 2016

Chair Fitzgerald read the request and asked staff to review.

Mrs. Banks said the Comprehensive Plan designates this area as Public/Semi-Public. This designation states that these lands are designated for public and semi-public use. They include lands owned or leased by the Commonwealth of Virginia, the federal government, the City of Harrisonburg, and other governmental organizations. Examples of uses included in this category are public schools, libraries, City Hall and City administrative and support facilities.

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

- Site: Non-conforming elementary school and related facilities, zoned M-1
- North: Across Pleasant Valley Road, Tenneco Manufacturer, zoned M-1
- East: Massanutten Vocational School, zoned M-1
- South: General Electric Auto-Auction, zoned M-1
- West: Across Early Road, Interstate 81 and exit 243 interchange.

The applicant is requesting a special use permit (SUP) per Section 10-3-97 (9) of the Zoning Ordinance to allow an educational use within the M-1, General Industrial District. The property is located on the southeast corner of the intersection of Pleasant Valley Road and Early Road. If approved, an existing school would become compliant with zoning regulations, an additional learning facility could be constructed on the site, and it would allow for expansion of both uses as necessary in the future. This review will also bring the existing use and allow the proposed use to be considered in compliance with off-street parking requirements. The 16 +/- acre site has been the home of Rockingham County's Pleasant Valley Elementary School since it opened in 1967. In 1983 the property was annexed into the City and given the M-1 zoning classification, where educational uses are not permitted by right, and thus the use has been non-conforming since it has been within the limits of the City.

Rockingham County desires to relocate the existing Dayton Learning Center/Alternative Learning Center to this site. The Dayton Learning Center is part of the Rockingham County School System and functions

The City With The Planned Future

substantially the same as a public school. Their mission is to enable students from the four high schools and four middle schools in Rockingham County to achieve academic success, gain valuable self esteem, and receive a diploma from their home high school. Upon meeting with city staff to discuss the possible relocation of the Learning Center to the Pleasant Valley Road site, staff informed the applicant that the M-1 zoning classification does not allow schools by-right and a SUP would be required.

As noted earlier, Pleasant Valley Elementary School has operated from this location since 1967 without any concerns. The campus is primarily used as a school with operating hours between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. There are various school related functions, such as school plays, parent teacher conferences and open playground facilities that often occur after hours. The school has a capacity of 50 employees and 376 students.

The proposed Learning Center would operate between 8:45 a.m. and 2:45 p.m., with occasional after school or weekend activities associated with the school use. The existing Dayton Learning Center is used for a variety of after hour uses (such as line dancing and square dancing) and at this time it is unknown if any of these uses will continue at the Alternative Learning Center. However, the applicants consider these uses to be associated with the Learning Center; therefore, they are part of this request. The new center will have a capacity of 15-20 employees and up to 150 students.

If the SUP is approved, the Alternative Learning Center would be required to go through a comprehensive site plan review prior to construction to ensure compliance with all development regulations. This would include all necessary street improvements that would be required along the frontage of Pleasant Valley Road and possible dedication of right-of-way. The extent of this work would be determined during the comprehensive site plan review process.

Staff has also informed the applicant that the City's Comprehensive Plan and the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization's Long Range Transportation Plan's Vision List proposes a new road to be constructed through this property to improve connectivity in that area as part of the Exit 243 interchange improvements. The schedule for the proposed road is uncertain.

Lastly, per Section 10-3-25 (12) of the Zoning Ordinance, Planning Commission must review and approve the proposed off-street parking plans for the uses. As previously stated, Pleasant Valley Elementary School would have up to 50 employees and 376 students. Currently, there are 76 parking spaces provided for the school. Included within this report is the site layout for the existing school and parking lot. This existing parking arrangement has worked for the school for more than 30 years within the City, and staff has no concerns that the parking layout is insufficient.

The applicants are proposing a minimum of 57 parking spaces for the Alternative Learning Center; however, the attached site plan shows that more can be placed on site. There is also a separate bus loop shown, as most of the students would arrive to the center by bus; only about 10 percent would drive to the school. The projection of 57 parking spaces is based somewhat upon the Rockingham County Code of one space per employee, one space per high school student, and one visitor space per 20 spaces. Therefore, given the projected capacity of 20 employees and 150 students, of which 10 percent drive, they would only need 20 spaces for the maximum number of employees, 15 spaces for students, and two for visitors – a total of 37 spaces. Staff believes the projected number of 57 parking spaces is adequate for the Alternative Learning Center use.

Planning Commission's review and acceptance of the parking would bring both facilities into compliance with off-street parking requirements; however, staff has informed the applicants that any future expansion to the facilities, which would be permitted without applying for another SUP, could necessitate a re-approval of the parking plan by Planning Commission.

Although located within an industrial area, the property has functioned well as an educational use for almost 50 years. As listed above, Massanutten Vocational School is directly adjacent to the subject

property and when combined, these two parcels make up more than 30 acres of land in this area being used for educational purposes. At this time the adjacent industrial uses are not of such intensity to be a detriment to the operation of the site as a school facility and staff has no concern with allowing educational uses at this site.

Staff supports a favorable recommendation to City Council for the requested SUP to allow an educational use within the M-1, General Industrial District. Staff also supports the provided parking layouts for the facilities.

Chair Fitzgerald asked if there were any questions for staff.

Mr. Finks said from looking at an aerial of the property as it currently is, it appears the elementary school would lose the activities field. Was that addressed at all with the applicant?

Mrs. Banks replied from the GIS aerial it looks as if the new building would not be built near the activity field.

Mr. Finks said he is currently looking at a Google Earth Map that shows a soccer field in the location where the building would be constructed. Was this addressed with the applicant at all?

Mrs. Banks said that was not addressed with the applicant; however, the applicants are here with us this evening so we can ask that question of them.

Chair Fitzgerald opened the public hearing and asked if the applicant or the applicant's representative would like to speak.

Mr. Steve Reed, Director of Maintenance for Rockingham County Schools and Mr. John Hash with Timmons Engineering Group introduced themselves to the Planning Commission as representatives for the SUP.

Mr. Hash said Timmons Engineering Group prepared the plat of the subject parcel. The existing elementary school is technically a non-conforming use and this has not been an issue until some additional work was planned to be done on the campus. Therefore, we are asking for the SUP to bring the existing elementary school into conformance and to construct the new facility. We feel this is an appropriate use for this property. We would be happy to answer any questions.

Mr. Reed said to answer the question regarding the soccer field – that area is really not used by the elementary school. All of the play areas associated with the elementary school are in the back of the building. If in the future we needed to have more play areas for the elementary school, we have area between the building and Early Road. Right now the area you are questioning is just area to be mowed.

Chair Fitzgerald asked if there was anyone else desiring to speak in favor of the request. Hearing none, she asked if there was anyone desiring to speak in opposition of the request. Hearing none, she closed the public hearing and asked Planning Commission if there was further discussion or perhaps a motion.

Mr. Colman moved to recommend approval of the SUP as presented by staff.

Mrs. Whitten seconded the motion.

Chair Fitzgerald asked if there was any further discussion. Hearing none, she called for a voice vote on the motion.

All voted in favor (7-0) of the motion to recommend approval.

Chair Fitzgerald asked if there was any further discussion on the parking layout for the two facilities. Hearing none, she asked if there was a motion.

Mr. Colman moved to approve the parking layouts as requested by the applicant.

Mrs. Whitten seconded the motion.

Chair Fitzgerald called for a voice vote on the motion.

All voted in favor (7-0) of the motion to approve the parking for the two facilities.

Chair Fitzgerald said the SUP will move forward to City Council on July 12th and the parking approval is completed with Planning Commission's approval.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alison Banks

Alison Banks

Senior Planner