



## ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item  
Meeting of July 7, 2007**

**DATE:** June 20, 2007

**SUBJECT:** U-3176-07-1 USE PERMIT for a childcare center at 758 S. 23<sup>rd</sup> St. (Keshet Child Development Center, Inc) (RPC #36-039-013)

**Applicant:**

Ilisa St. Pierre  
Keshet Child Development Center, Inc.  
3830 Seminary Road  
Alexandria, Virginia 22304

**C. M. RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve the child care center use for a maximum of 24 children, subject to the proposed conditions, and with a County Board review in one (1) year (July 2008).

**ISSUES:** None

**SUMMARY:** The proposed child care center would be located in a commercial office building with primary frontage on S. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, a minor arterial street. The child care center staff is working with the County Child Care Office to obtain licenses for child care at this location and to ensure compliance with County child care regulations. Staff does not anticipate any adverse impact to adjacent residences. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the use permit for a child care center use, subject to the proposed conditions, and with a County Board review in one (1) year (July 2008).

**BACKGROUND:** The Keshet Child Development Center, established in 1980, is a preschool which offers education and enrichment programs based on the foundations of Judaism. The program has operated at the Beth El Hebrew Congregation in Alexandria, Virginia for the past 27 years and will continue at the current location through this summer. The program operates in a 3,500 square foot space on two levels at Beth El Congregation. There is currently a total of 12 staff including 10 teachers and two administrative staff who administer the preschool program. The program provides care for children who range from infancy to 5 years in age. Children attend the program between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. for up to two to four days throughout the week.

Site: The site is located on the southeast corner of the intersection of S. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and S. Hayes Street. The site area totals 7,500 square feet with frontage on S. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. The site is adjacent to the Sheltered Occupational Center (SOC) property to the south and

County Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff: Rasheda DuPree McKinney, DCPHD, Planning

PLA-4713

east, a small office building to the north, and Our Lady of Lourdes Church to the west, with single family residences to the northwest. The proposed use would occupy the easternmost suite of a one-story strip commercial building comprised of a total of three suites. The subject suite totals 2,183 square feet on the first floor and a lower level. The subject space is currently an office for the Lincoln Mortgage Group. The subject space is adjacent to Arlington Realty, and a beauty shop use occupies the westernmost suite space. The site is served by surface parking to the rear of the existing building which is shared among the three businesses in this strip development.

Zoning: The site is zoned “C-1,” Local Commercial Districts.

Land Use: The site is designated on the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) as “Low” Residential (1-10 units per acre).

Neighborhood: The site is located in the Aurora Highlands neighborhood.

**DISCUSSION:** Keshet proposes to move their existing preschool in Alexandria to the subject location in Aurora Highlands. The proposed program will operate on Mondays through Fridays primarily from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The program will also provide an option to parents for early drop-off between 8-9 a.m. and after-school enrichment programs from 1-2 p.m. The children in care will range in age from 2 to 5 years and will attend the program between two and four days per week. The program will operate with a total of four teachers and one program administrator. The applicant states that the center will have direct access to outdoor recreation space through a proposed gate in a common property line fence between the subject site and the adjacent Nelly Custis Park. The site is also within one block of Nina Park at the southwest corner of the intersection of S. 24<sup>th</sup> Street and S. Hayes Street.

The use permit application includes a request to operate the child care center with care for up to 40 children. The proposed commercial office space would be reconfigured to provide 848 square feet of classroom space designated for educational instruction. Arlington County Child Care regulations limit child care program daily attendance to a maximum of one child per 35 square feet of classroom space. Given the size constraints and logistics of the existing subject space, the program may only provide care for up to 24 children at any one time. The applicant states that program daily attendance will comply with the maximum regulations.

#### Parking

The site abuts a surface parking lot along the southern portion of the subject parcel. There are five parking spaces which would be marked with signs for the child care center’s exclusive use. All of the site’s daily staff parking would be accommodated on-site. The narrow width of the right-of-way and high traffic volumes could create an undue burden on traffic flow and a potential safety hazard with pick-up and drop-off on S. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. The applicant has provided an agreement letter with the SOC located immediately east of the subject site to provide parent parking for pick-up and drop-off on their surface parking lot. The parking agreement with SOC provides a safer pick-up and drop-off area than on S. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street.

There are a number of child care centers either currently or soon to be operating on S. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street in the vicinity of the proposed location for the Keshet child care center. In December 2005, the County Board approved a use permit to convert an existing single-family detached residence to a child care center use for up to 34 children at 825 S. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. The building is currently undergoing significant renovations and has yet to commence the child care center use.

Additionally, a use permit was approved in 1956 for the Busy Bee child care center located within a converted detached dwelling at 913 S. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. This center provides care for up to 30 children. The Keshet Child Care Center is similar in size to other child care center uses located along this street. However, the proposed site differs from the above mentioned child care center sites given that the subject site is located within a commercial zoning district, which is characterized by more intense uses, and is adjacent to two large surface parking areas which accommodate higher parking ratios associated with this type of development.

**CONCLUSION:** The proposed child care center use is compatible with other land uses in this neighborhood and provides additional child care resources to the community. The proposed child care center site is adjacent to a surface parking area which provides a safe location for child pick-up and drop-off. At the time this report was written, the Aurora Highlands Civic Association had contacted staff seeking information regarding the proposed child care center use, but had not had a chance to meet to formally discuss the applicant's proposal. The civic association intends to meet with the applicant to discuss the application and hoped to forward their position on this request to staff at a later date. The applicant has committed to working with the civic association to provide information and respond to any issues raised by the community. Staff finds that the proposed child care center use would not create an adverse impact on the Aurora Highlands community. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the use permit for a child care center use, subject to the proposed conditions below, with a County Board review in one (1) year (July 2008):

1. The applicant agrees that the hours of operation will be weekdays from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. with a maximum capacity of 24 children. Provided, however, that the Child Care Office may determine the final number of children that can be served in the program following the required renovations and improvements to the site. This number may be modified based on appropriate space ratios. The applicant agrees not to provide care for more than 24 children at any one time, or such other number as the Child Care Office has determined can be accommodated and as evidenced by the certificate of occupancy.
2. The applicant agrees to meet all requirements of the Child Care Ordinance, Community Code Enforcement Office, Environmental Health Bureau and the Fire Marshal's Office, including securing the appropriate assembly permit prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.
3. The applicant agrees that all outdoor play shall be planned at scheduled intervals acceptable to the Child Care Office to minimize potential neighborhood impacts. The applicant agrees to obtain the Child Care Office's approval of a plan for such play as minimizing neighborhood impacts prior to the issuance of any certificate of occupancy for the child care use on the site.

4. The applicant agrees to require parents of children attending the program (or persons designated by the parents) to escort their children to and from the center at all times.
5. The applicant agrees to provide written correspondence to the parents of the children in care explaining the procedures for dropping off and picking up children in accordance with the parking agreement with Sheltered Occupational Center (SOC). Evidence of this letter must be provided to the Zoning Administrator prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy for a child care center and must remain in effect throughout the duration of the child care center use. Should this agreement be terminated, the applicant agrees to provide another executed written agreement between the applicant and owner of the private parking area to provide off-street parking for pick-up and drop-off to the Zoning Administrator within 30 days of termination of the prior parking agreement.
6. The applicant agrees that all child care center staff parking will be accommodated either on site or in another off-street parking area. The applicant further agrees to provide signs on each of its designated parking spaces which indicate that those parking spaces are designated for the child care center's exclusive use.
7. The applicant agrees to designate a neighborhood liaison to communicate with nearby residents and neighbors to address concerns that may be related to this child care center. The name and telephone number of the liaison shall be submitted by the applicant to the Zoning Administrator, as well as to the Aurora Highlands Civic Association, prior to issuance of any building permit.
8. The applicant is aware and agrees that the required Virginia State and Arlington County Child Licenses will not be issued prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy for a child care center.