



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

County Board Agenda Item Meeting of January 26, 2008

DATE: January 17, 2008

SUBJECT: U-3019-01-1 USE PERMIT AMENDMENT for the addition of an eight (8) student third grade class to existing school of kindergarten and first grade located at 935 S. 23rd St. (Potomac Crescent Waldorf School, formerly Virginia Waldorf School). (RPC #36-032-023)

Applicant:

Virginia Waldorf School Initiative
D/b/a Potomac Crescent School
923 South 23rd Street
Arlington, Virginia 22202

C.M. RECOMMENDATION:

Approve, subject to all previous conditions and one new condition, with a review by the County Board in one (1) year (January 2009).

ISSUES: The use permit amendment application request includes additional students and an additional classroom. No issues have been identified with this permit amendment.

SUMMARY: The request for a use permit amendment is for the addition of an eight (8) student third grade class to the existing school of parent-child, kindergarten, and first grade programs operated by the Virginia Waldorf School as the Potomac Crescent Waldorf School (formerly the Waldorf School) at the Mt. Vernon Baptist Church. The school has requested to add eight (8) additional students to the 54 currently allowed by use permit, for a total of 62 students. The school currently enrolls 47 students. Staff has added a condition that clarifies the number of students and the grades and will ensure that the applicant meets County regulations and licensing requirements. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the use permit amendment, subject to all previous conditions and one (1) new condition, and with a County Board review in one (1) year (January 2009).

BACKGROUND: The applicant began operating a preschool and kindergarten for children aged 2 to 6 years old under a use permit approved by the County Board on November 28, 2001. The use permit was renewed by the County Board in December 2002, and December 2005, with a review by the County Board in five (5) years (December 2010). Since renewal, the program has continued in compliance with the use permit conditions and staff has received no complaints.

County Manager: _____

Staff: Colleen J. Connor, DCPHD, Planning Division

PLA-4861

The Child Care Office continues to work with the Potomac Crescent School and reports no problems or concerns regarding the subject use or the proposed amendment.

The program currently consists of a parent-child activity for children 2 to 4 years old and kindergarten classes for children 3½ to 6 years old. The program also includes a combined first and second grade class for children aged 6 to 8 years old. The Parent-Child activity currently operates two mornings per week (Thursdays and Fridays from 9:30 a.m. to 11:45 p.m.) for ten children with their parents; the class has two instructors. The Parent-Child program is a simplified Kindergarten morning designed to provide the first school experience for the younger child who is not quite ready for separation from the parent. The Parent-Child program is not required to be licensed by the Child Care Office.

The two kindergarten classes each have two teachers and 16 children. One class operates three mornings per week (Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 9 a.m. to noon) for children ages 3 to 4½. The other class operates five mornings per week (Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to noon with an optional lunch extension) for children ages 4 to 6. The combined first and second grade class for ages 6 to 8 meets five (5) days per week, from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. for up to nine (9) children. There is adequate outdoor and indoor space for all of the programs.

Site: The School leases approximately 2,000 square feet within the Mount Vernon Baptist Church Education Building and under the Sanctuary of the Church. The Church is located on the north side of 23rd Street South between South Joyce Street to the west and South Ives Street to the east. The site is generally surrounded by single-family residential houses.

Zoning: The site is zoned “R-5” One-Family, Restricted Two-Family Dwelling Districts.

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

Neighborhood: The site is located in the Aurora Highlands Civic Association and adjacent to the Arlington Ridge Civic Association. The Aurora Highlands Civic Association submitted a letter of support.

DISCUSSION: The proposed third grade class would meet five (5) days per week from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. in a new classroom space in the west wing of the building (see attached plan). The following table illustrates the number of students currently enrolled, total currently licensed, and the total proposed with the use permit amendment.

Age	Students (currently)	Licensed (currently)	Allowed under use permit	Total Requested
Elementary age				
First grade	4	17 for ages 6-8*	22	10
Second grade	6			10
Third grade	-			10
Non-elementary age (of those, Parent-Child in parentheses)	37 (14 PC pairs and 23 licensed)	32 in Kindertartens**	32	32 (20**)
TOTAL	33	47	54	62***

* The current private school license is by age rather than by grade

** The parent-child program is not licensed because parents are present. For pedagogical reasons, the school has determined the 10 PC pairs per class is the limit.

*** Because of scheduling, the total number includes only the total licensed number of children plus non-licensed PC children on-site at any given time.

Although only currently licensed by DHS for 47 students, the existing use permit allows the School a total of 54 students. The School now requests an amendment to add eight (8) students to the existing permitted 54 students, for a total of 62 students. In addition, the applicant requests that the first and second grade combined class currently conducted in one classroom be separated into two classrooms. The new second grade classroom would also be in the west wing, near the third grade classroom. The first grade class would remain in Room 103. As a condition of the use permit, the applicant would be required to have inspections and obtain the appropriate licenses and approvals to add the new students and classrooms. Staff recommends a new condition specifying the number of classes and students.

The School has 22 parking spaces (including two (2) handicapped spaces) for School use. This is more than sufficient parking for the total of nine (9) required parking spaces based on nursery school required ratio parking of seven (7) (one per employee), and for the elementary age portion of 2 spaces (one (1) space per twenty (20) students). Additionally, many of the families carpool to the School. The School is also allowed informal access to the fourteen (14) Church spaces on the west end of the building.

The subject use has continued to operate in compliance with all use permit conditions since 2001. The Code Enforcement staff reports no issues with the subject use. The Aurora Highlands Civic Association and Arlington Ridge Civic Association were notified of the upcoming use permit amendment. To date, the Aurora Highlands Civic Association responded that it placed the item on its listserv and received several positive responses and no negative ones on the amendment (see attachment). The Child Care Office continues to work with the School and reports no problems or concerns regarding the subject use.

CONCLUSION: The programs have operated in compliance with the use permit conditions. No issues or concerns regarding the use have been raised. Therefore, it is recommended that the use permit amendment be approved subject to all previous conditions and one (1) new condition, with a review in one (1) year (January 2009).

New Condition:

5. The applicant agrees that the hours of operation are Monday through Friday between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. and the programs include the number of students indicated in the following table:

Age	Total Requested
Elementary age	
First grade	10
Second grade	10
Third grade	10
Non-elementary age (Parent-child in parentheses)	32 (20)

PREVIOUS COUNTY BOARD ACTIONS:

- December 8, 2001 Approved a use permit (U-3019-01-1) for a parent/child activity, kindergarten and first grade class, subject to conditions and County Board review in one (1) year (December 2002).
- December 7, 2002 Renewed a use permit (U-3019-01-1) for a parent/child activity, kindergarten and first grade class, subject to all previous conditions and County Board review in three (3) years (December 2005)
- December 10, 2005 Renewed a use permit (U-3019-01-1) for a parent/child activity, kindergarten and first grade class, subject to all previous conditions and one revised condition, with a review by the County Board in five (5) years (December 2010)

Approved Conditions:

1. The applicant shall meet the requirements of the Child Care Office, the Community Code Enforcement Office, the Environmental Health Bureau, and the Fire Marshal's Office, including the installation of smoke detection devices.
2. The applicant agrees to provide a written document to each parent stating that children are to be escorted to and from the program at all times. The applicant agrees to provide a copy of the document to the Aurora Highlands Civic Association, the Arlington Ridge Civic Association, the Child Care Office and to the Arlington County Zoning Office prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy.
3. The applicant agrees to identify a contact person who shall have the authority to respond in the event that issues arise around the subject use. The name of the contact person is to be shared with the Arlington Ridge and Aurora Highlands and the Arlington County Zoning Office prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy.
4. The applicant agrees to work closely with the Child Care staff in the development of the outdoor play space and of the indoor classroom spaces. The Child Care staff shall make the final determination on the numbers of children to be included in the child care programs at any given time.