



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of January 26, 2008**

DATE: January 16, 2008

SUBJECT: U-3190-07-2 USE PERMIT for a head start program; premises known as 1801 North George Mason Drive. (RPC #09-016-052)

Applicant:

Northern Virginia Family Service, Inc.

By:

D. Leah Burnett, SVP Finance and Admin.
Northern Virginia Family Service, Inc.
110455 White Granite Drive
Oakton, Virginia 22124

C.M. RECOMMENDATION:

Approve, subject to the conditions of the staff report with a review by the County Board in one (1) year (January 2009).

ISSUES: This is a new use permit for childcare up to 228 children and no issues have been identified.

SUMMARY: This is a use permit request by Northern Virginia Family Service, Inc. (NVFS) to operate an Early Head Start (EHS) and a Head Start (HS) program in renovated space at the County-owned George Mason Center. The lease for the center is the subject of a separate report. NVFS has worked with the County Child Care office staff and meets County regulations and licensing requirements. All of the class rooms will meet or exceed Arlington County infant/toddler and preschool regulations for space and service. The program will serve 228 children, comprised of approximately 204 children between the ages of three (3) and five (5) years, and 24 children from newborn through three (3) years old. The program is a full day/full year program, with the hours of operation from 7:30 a.m. to 5:45 pm. in the building renovated for this purpose. There will be 52 employees, including a qualified teacher and teacher assistant in each classroom. Adverse impacts are not anticipated from the addition of this use into the neighborhood and there are no planning or zoning related issues. Therefore, it is recommended

County Manager: _____

Staff: Colleen J. Connor, DCPHD, Planning Division

PLA-4862

that the use permit be approved subject to the conditions of the staff report with a review by the County Board in one (1) year (January 2009).

BACKGROUND: On September 18, 2004, the County Board approved a use permit for the Arlington Community Action Plan's (ACAP) Head Start Programs to be housed at this site, in the County-owned George Mason Center. In addition to the Head Start Program, ACAP was to relocate its administrative offices to this location. The approval was for 208 students and approximately 60 staff including teachers, teacher assistants, administrative staff, and volunteers relocated with the Head Start programs. ACAP, however, did not commence the use permit. The Community Development Institute (CDI) has administered the Head Start program as a transitional organization since February 2006. CDI currently has 204 children in the following locations, all to be relocated to the new site: Langston Brown Community Center, Barcroft Elementary School, Hoffman Boston Elementary, Campbell Elementary, and at the First Baptist Church of Ballston. The Early Head Start program of 24 children at 601 Vermont Street is currently administered by NVFS.

The current application is by Northern Virginia Family Service, a non-profit human service agency that has served Northern Virginia for over 82 years, and is for a Head Start Program. Head Start, a federally funded non-profit program, is a multi-cultural community based early childhood program that provides services for income eligible families and children to meet all aspects of their growth and development. The majority of the funding for both the HS and EHS program comes from the Department of U.S. Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Head Start Bureau.

In keeping with the funding sources and all local regulatory agencies, NVFS will continue to meet EHS and HS Performance Standards as well as all state and Arlington County Child Care Regulations. NVFS is accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA). As the program relocates, the applicant has agreed to continue to work closely with Child Care staff to ensure that all Federal, State and local childcare codes are met.

Northern Virginia Family Service (NVFS) will occupy this location at 1801 North George Mason Drive in the building renovated for this purpose. The newly renovated space of approximately 11,313 square feet would consist primarily of 15 classrooms. NVFS will operate at this site under a long-term lease with the County. The lease between the County and the applicant for the space is the subject of a separate report.

Each classroom will have a qualified teacher and teacher assistant. The education classroom component will be based on the nationally recognized creative curriculum. A health component will provide screening and referral services assisting families with follow-up and ensuring that all children have received appropriate immunizations and that preventive health and dental care is appropriately addressed. Nutrition education will be provided to parents and children. A local approved vendor will cater food and snacks. Case management services will be provided to parents so as to assist with self-sufficiency goals, strengthening families, and parent education. A parent involvement component will involve parents in the activities and policy implementation of the program. There will be fifty-two employees, of which no more than forty-six (46) would

be on site at any one time. The employees include teachers, teacher assistants, case managers, and a Director on-site.

Site: The 5.53 acre site is located at 1801 North George Mason Drive. The site is developed with a two (2) story building originally built as a school, but most recently used as offices for a portion of the County's Department of Human Services. The site is located on the southeast corner of George Mason Drive at its intersection with 19th Street North. The site is bordered on the north by 19th Street North and to the east by North Edison Street. Surrounding uses include office buildings and the Virginia Hospital Center. To the north of the building are single-family residential uses.

Zoning: The site is zoned "S-3A" Special Districts.

Land Use: The site is designated on the General Land Use Plans as "Government and Community Facilities" [County, state and federal administration and service facilities (police, fire, property yard, etc.). Hospitals, nursing homes, and institutional housing. Utilities, military reservations, airports, etc.]

Neighborhood: The president of the Langston Brown Citizens Association (LBCA) expressed verbally to the applicant that LBCA had no objections to the use permit and that the program would be a good addition to the community.

DISCUSSION: The proposed use is consistent with the land use and zoning of the site. The land use is "Government and Community Facilities", which includes public uses. The Zoning is "S-3A" Special Districts and is developed with a complex of public buildings, including the premises at 1801 North George Mason Drive. Under *Section 3, subsection 3.A.2* of the *Arlington County Zoning Ordinance*, the proposed use is allowed by use permit in "S-3A" Special Districts for institutions of an educational, religious, charitable, or philanthropic nature.

Access to the site will be off 19th Street North and staff does not anticipate adverse impacts to the adjacent residences as sufficient parking and loading is provided on-site. Transportation will be provided by NVFS via bus for those children who qualify for this service. Approximately 191 children will travel on five (5) busses, and the remaining 37 children will be delivered to the Center by parents. None of the infants or toddlers (0-3) will be transported by bus. Based on the final determination by DHS of appropriate student numbers in the programs, an arrival and departure schedule will be developed to ensure a coordinated and smooth transition for drop-off and pick-up at the program. Children will be escorted from the buses by the bus monitor and bus driver, and handed over to the teachers at the building. The existing parking lot will accommodate the school bus drop-offs (see map attachment which indicates student path from bus to building).

The proposed use meets the parking requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. There would be a total of 54 parking slots, four (4) visitor spaces, and one extra large parking space for a 65 passenger bus. Of the 54 parking slots, four (4) would be for NVFS vans. The existing parking lot would be reconfigured to allow the school buses to safely drop-off and pick-up children internally on the site away from the public street. These spaces will be secured daily by staff and

visitors displaying an Arlington County parking hanger, but there will not be any assigned or reserved spaces. The 59 spaces for the program exceed the 46 spaces required by the Zoning Ordinance (one per employee on-site) and exceed the number of total employees (52). The parking will be primarily in the lot immediately behind the building, but there is additional nearby parking on the block that will be available for the program's use. There are a total of 195 parking spaces in the combined parking lots on the block. The other buildings on the block are currently using 128 spaces. The total number of spaces in all of the lots exceeds the required number spaces needed for the complex of buildings on the block. Therefore, staff does not anticipate that there will be any parking impacts on the adjacent community.

There is an existing playground area on-site that will be used on a scheduled basis.

CONCLUSION: The proposed relocation of the existing Head Start and Early Head Start Programs to the subject site is compatible with other public uses in the area. With more than adequate parking on site, staff does not anticipate parking or traffic conflicts. The site provides adequate space and services to the proposed number of children. Staff supports the applicant's request to consolidate and relocate the programs to the subject location. The applicant will continue to work closely with Child Care staff to ensure that all Federal, State and local childcare codes are met.

The use is located in the Langston Brown neighborhood and the Citizens Association has been contacted many times, but to date staff has not received input from the Association. However, the Association participated in the neighborhood discussions and process for the prior applicant in 2004. The president of the Citizens Association also expressed verbally to the applicant that LBCA had no objections to the use permit and that the program would be a good addition to the community. Child Care staff will continue to provide technical assistance to the applicant. Therefore, it is recommended that the use permit be approved, subject to the conditions of the staff report with a review by the County Board in one (1) year (January 2009).

1. The applicant agrees to meet the requirements of the Child Care Ordinance, the Community Code Enforcement Office, the Environmental Health Bureau and the Fire Marshal's Office, including acquiring the required assembly permit prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy.
2. Child Care staff shall make the final determination on the appropriate number of children to be included in the programs, not to exceed 228 total, and the final determination ensuring the public/teacher ratios for the group.
3. The applicant shall work with Child Care staff to provide appropriate sized groups of children who could occupy the on-site outdoor play space at any given time.
4. For children arriving by car or bus, the applicant agrees that the children receiving care shall be escorted by an adult (such as a parent or bus monitor) to the building.
5. The applicant agrees to work closely with the Child Care staff in the development of any changes to the outdoor play space.

6. The applicant agrees that center staff will escort the children to the playground utilizing the sidewalk between the center and the playground area.
7. The applicant shall designate a neighborhood liaison to communicate with nearby residents and neighbors to address concerns that may be related to the NVFS center use. The name and telephone number of the liaison shall be submitted by the applicant to the Zoning Administrator, as well as the Langston Brown Civic Association.
8. The applicant agrees to meet the minimum number of required parking spaces of one space per employee on-site and to secure additional parking if the number of employees increases from the currently 46 on-site.

PREVIOUS COUNTY BOARD ACTIONS:

September 18, 2004

Approved use permit (U-3094-04-1) for a head start program of approximately 208 students and 30 staff persons associated with the Head Start programs subject to conditions, with an administrative review in one (1) year (September 2005) and a review by the County Board in five (5) years (September 2009).