

CORPUS CHRISTI PARISH

Special Exception Application

(SPEX 2009-0008;SPEX 2009-0012; SPEX 2009-0013 & SPEX 2009-0014)

~Statement of Justification~

April 1, 2009

Introduction

The Catholic Diocese of Arlington, Virginia, (the “Applicant”) requests approval of a Special Exception (the “Application”) to allow religious assembly, (1200 seat church, parish house, rectory and accessory uses); education (school for more than 15 pupils), and group living (convent) uses on approximately 17.9 acres (the “Property”) in the Upper Broad Run subarea of the Transition Policy Area. Additionally, pursuant to Section 5-654 of the Loudoun County Zoning Ordinance (“Zoning Ordinance”), the Applicant requests approval to permit the proposed church and related uses to access a public road.

The Property is zoned TR1-UBF (Transitional Residential) and is a portion of an 83 acre parcel (Tax Map Parcel 100/57 and MCPI number 247-49-1020) currently owned by Stone Ridge Community Development II, LLC. The Property is located in the Dulles South area of Loudoun County (the “County”) south of Route 50, north and east of future Marrwood Drive and west of land currently zoned TR1-UBF and future Relocated Route 659. Land uses surrounding the Property include and the recently approved Arcola School (“Boyd’s School” – SPEX 2008-0021) to the north, and existing and planned residential uses/communities such as Stone Ridge, Marrwood Subdivision and Westport Subdivision on the east, south and west. The Property is located in the Dulles Election District.

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Background

Since the early 1990's, the Dulles South area of Loudoun County has experienced tremendous growth. Over 15 major planned residential communities have been approved and are under development in the same area served by the Corpus Christi Mission. As a result, the Corpus Christi Mission has experienced growth mirroring the growth in the Dulles South area of the County. Although the majority of the Corpus Christi parishioners live in Loudoun County, the Corpus Christi Mission (parish) is currently located in a flex industrial building in the Lafayette Business Park in Fairfax County. The Catholic Diocese of Arlington ("CDA") has been actively seeking land in the Dulles South area to locate a full-service parish that will satisfy both the existing and future needs of the Corpus Christi Parish. The proposed site south of Arcola School is a prime location for the Parish.

Applicant's Proposal

As indicated in the enclosed *Corpus Christi Parish Special Exception Application Plat* (the "Plat"), prepared by Bowman Consulting, dated February 27, 2009, and attached as Exhibit A, the project has been designed to incorporate the proposed special exception uses as one cohesive civic use site. The vision for the site is that of a self-sustaining Catholic Parish, with the inclusion of education services to provide the Corpus Christi Parish with community-based civic and religious enrichment. In consideration of the extensive number of residential communities and neighborhoods approved or planned to be located within the Corpus Christi Parish area, the proposed project will also offer a comprehensive civic use for the growing community.

To this end, the proposed project provides the following:

i. **5-656 – Group living, convent:**

The proposed convent is proposed as a Level I – Small Scale facility that may house up to 10 residents necessary for the customary operation of the proposed church and school uses.

ii. **Education, school for more than 15 pupils:**

The proposed elementary school education facility will serve Kindergarten through grade 8, with a projected enrollment of 200 students. Parking spaces

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to accommodate parents and faculty will be provided in accordance with the applicable parking regulations of the Zoning Ordinance..

iii. **5-639 – Religious Assembly, church:**

The proposed church will have an ultimate seating capacity of 1200 seats I in the sanctuary or main assembly space. Offices and accessory uses (i.e. classroom, gathering areas, etc.) supportive of the church will be located in the Parish House. The Parish House may also be used for smaller church services either prior to construction of the church and/or in conjunction with the church. The Applicant also requests approval of a future rectory on the Property. The location of the rectory will be determined in accordance with the applicable provisions of the TR1 Zoning District. Church operations will take place daily, with peak utilization occurring on weekends.

Special Exception - Criteria for Approval

Section 6-1310 of the Loudoun County Zoning Ordinance states, *“In considering a special exception application, the following factors shall be given reasonable consideration. The applicant shall address all the following in its statement of justification or special exception plat unless not applicable, in addition to any other standards imposed by this Ordinance”.*

(1) Whether the proposed special exception is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

The proposed church, rectory/convent and school uses are consistent with the comprehensive plan allowing compatible civic and non-residential uses to be located in the Transition Policy Area. The following policies indicate the appropriateness of the proposed uses in the Transition Policy Area:

Policy: *“Existing businesses in the Transition Policy Area include the Bull Run Quarry, the Luck Stone Quarry and a limited number of nurseries, private schools and*

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institutions, commercial stables, kennels and veterinary services” (General Characteristics, paragraph 3).

Proposed Special Exception: Since private schools already exist within the Transition Policy Area, the proposed use will contribute to and mimic the existing non-residential use mix of the community.

Policy: *“The non-residential component of the Transition Policy Area will be comprised of uses that represent an appropriate transition from suburban to rural land uses, such as golf courses, active recreation uses, kennels, nurseries and similar commercial uses, public and private schools and other compatible institutional uses. These uses will serve to promote a rural character while serving both rural and suburban populations... New non-residential uses that support residential development, such as schools, churches, small-scale commercial retail and home business occupations/local offices will be organized within the community cores of villages at appropriate scales. Other commercial and institutional uses will be considered in this area if they are compatible with the overall land use pattern” (Land Use Pattern, paragraph 5).*

Proposed Special Exception: The recently approved Arcola School (formerly utilized as a Loudoun County Elementary School) exists immediately to the north of the Property. The location of this project complements the Applicant’s proposed project. The co-location of these two similar civic facilities fall within the core of future residential communities in the Transition Policy Area. Westport, Stone Ridge and Marrwood surround the property. The centrally located church, rectory, convent and private school, in combination with the proposed elementary school to the north, create a civic core centrally located within the future communities of the Transition Policy Area.

Policy: *“Large-scale civic or institutional uses requiring more than 15 buildable acres, either individually or in a multipurpose facility, should be located on the periphery of an individual neighborhood or in core areas on roads that can accommodate the anticipated traffic volume” (Community Design Polices, #23).*

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Proposed Special Exception: The proposed church and elementary school are specifically mentioned in the Revised General Plan as civic uses appropriate within the Transition Policy Area. As previously stated, the proposed uses are located in prominent locations at the junction of three large residential communities. The uses are also located adjacent to the south of the recently approved Arcola School and near the future interchange of Relocated Route 659 and Route 50, providing regional access to the site throughout the County.

The property contains greater than fifteen buildable acres, and is centrally located between three large residential developments and near future high-capacity transportation improvements.

(2) Whether the proposed special exception will adequately provide for safety from fire hazards and have effective measures of fire control.

The proposed uses will meet applicable building code requirements for fire protection and will have adequate access to accommodate fire and rescue vehicles.

(3) Whether the level and impact of any noise emanating from the site, including that generated by the proposed use, negatively impacts the uses in the immediate area.

There are no noise impacts from the uses that would negatively affect adjacent properties. Buffering of the special exception uses from neighboring properties will be provided as required by the 1993 Revised Zoning Ordinance.

(4) Whether the glare or light that may be generated by the proposed use negatively impacts uses in the immediate area.

The proposed uses will conform to standard lighting policies and practices for Loudoun County. Any new lighting for the proposed special exception uses will be designed to minimize glare on adjacent uses.

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(5) Whether the proposed use is compatible with other existing or proposed uses in the neighborhood, and adjacent parcels.

The adjacent parcels include both residential and non-residential uses. Arcola School, a private kindergarten and elementary school, will be located on the former Arcola Elementary School site to the north of the Property. These compatible uses to the immediate north will complement the proposed uses in this special exception.

The property is also adjacent to large residential communities, both approved and active. The future Westport, Marrwood and existing Stone Ridge communities surround the property on the east, west and south. Future parishioners either already reside or will reside in the adjacent communities, as well as in Lenah Run, South Riding and other communities located in the Dulles South area.

Future Relocated Route 659 is planned to pass through the general vicinity of the eastern Property boundary. This high-use intersection of Route 659 and Route 50, which is planned to include a grade separated interchange, will provide visibility and access to the proposed church and civic uses. The Applicant has been engaged in a design process with the parishioners and building committee of Corpus Christi. The Corpus Christi building committee has oriented the church to take advantage of its location near the future Route 50/Relocated Route 659 grade separated interchange. The church will be the prominent structure on the Property and will serve as a future landmark for the community with views from Route 50, Relocated Route 659 and the adjacent residential communities.

(6) Whether sufficient existing or proposed landscaping, screening and buffering on the site and in the neighborhood to adequately screen surrounding uses.

The Applicant will provide landscaping and buffering in accordance with the requirements of the 1993 Revised Zoning Ordinance. To the extent possible, landscaping along the Marrwood Drive frontage of the Property will be installed to

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mirror the landscaping approved to be installed along the Marrwood Subdivision frontage of Marrwood Drive. Deviations will only be made as required by VDOT and the County to accommodate safety standards. In addition, to the extent possible, the Applicant will maintain trees on-site along the eastern and northern boundaries of the property.

(7) Whether the proposed special exception will result in the preservation of any topographic or physical, natural, scenic, archaeological or historic feature of significant importance.

The site will retain perimeter trees and, to the extent required, be supplemented with additional landscaping to meet Zoning Ordinance minimum requirements. There are no other features of significant environmental, archaeological or historic importance on the Property.

(8) Whether the proposed special exception will damage existing animal habitat, vegetation, water quality (including groundwater) or air quality.

Internal clearing of the property will occur to accommodate the uses. Groundwater or air quality will not be affected.

(9) Whether the proposed special exception at the specified location will contribute to or promote the welfare or convenience of the public.

Located in the Transition Policy Area, the RGP has tasked the Property with serving the Suburban, Rural and Transition Policy Areas with uses appropriate in scale and type to the surrounding area. The proposed church, elementary school, rectory and convent uses will serve all three Policy Areas and provide additional civic and educational opportunities for the citizens of Loudoun County, while not detracting from the current character of the Transition Policy Area.

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(10) Whether the traffic expected to be generated by the proposed use will be adequately and safely served by roads, pedestrian connections and other transportation services.

As indicated in the enclosed *Traffic Impact Analysis for the Catholic Diocese of Arlington*, prepared by Wells & Associates, Inc., dated January 8, 2009, the existing and planned road network will adequately serve the proposed uses. Direct access to the Property will be provided by Marrwood Drive. The proposed primary entrances to the Property have been aligned with the already approved entrances to Marrwood Subdivision. An emergency access is proposed to be located at the northern end of the Property. This access will only be accessible in the case of emergencies and will provide easy direct access to the rear of the Parish House, Church and school. The future connection of Marrwood Drive to the east (by others) will provide additional access to the site from future Relocated Route 659 and points east, north and south.

The Applicant is proposing to construct a sidewalk along the Marrwood Drive frontage of the Property, which will connect to the sidewalk planned to be constructed on the Arcola School property to the north, and sidewalks planned in Marrwood Subdivision.

(11) Whether, in the case of existing structures proposed to be converted to uses requiring a special exception, the structures meet all code requirements of Loudoun County.

There are no existing structures proposed for conversion with this application.

(12) Whether the proposed special exception will be served adequately by essential public facilities and services.

The Applicant has worked with the owner of Marrwood Subdivision to provide public water, sanitary sewer and stormwater management facilities to serve the Property. (See attached Utilities Access Exhibit.)

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(13) The effect of the proposed special exception on groundwater supply.

The proposed uses will be served by public water. Therefore, the special exception uses will not negatively impact groundwater supply.

(14) Whether the proposed use will affect the structural capacity of the soils.

There is no indication that the uses will affect the structural capacity of the soils.

(15) Whether the proposed use will negatively impact orderly and safe road development and transportation.

The proposed uses capitalize on future road network improvements. Please see the enclosed Traffic Impact Analysis and response to Criterion #10 for further discussion of the area road network.

(16) Whether the proposed special exception use will provide desirable employment and enlarge the tax base by encouraging economic development activities consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

The proposed uses will contribute to the civic diversity of the community. The proposed uses will provide additional employment opportunities.

(17) Whether the proposed special exception considers the needs of agriculture, industry, and businesses in future growth.

Not applicable.

(18) Whether adequate on and off-site infrastructure is available.

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Adequate on and off-site infrastructure is or will be available to support the proposed project. Please see the response to Criteria #10 and 12 for further discussion of the area road network and public water and sanitary sewer infrastructure..

(19) Any anticipated odors which may be generated by the uses on site, and which may negatively impact adjacent uses.

No odors are anticipated with these uses.

(20) Whether the proposed special exception uses sufficient measure to mitigate the impact of construction traffic on existing neighborhoods and school areas.

The property is accessed directly from Marrwood Drive and will not access through any residential local streets or neighborhoods.

Summary

Approval of the requested special exception uses will provide for the development of a church, K-8 elementary school, rectory and convent for the Corpus Christi Parish. Rapid growth in the Dulles South area of Loudoun County has necessitated the need for the Diocese of Arlington to acquire property that will serve both the current and future needs of the Parish. Suitable sites within the Dulles South area have been difficult to find because of size and physical constraints, pricing, and access. The proposed site is ideally located to serve the Parish's needs. The site is located near planned regional roads and. It is also located in an area that will serve as a civic landmark and identifying element for the community.

The application is in conformance with the applicable policies of the Revised General Plan and advances the Transition Policy Area goals regarding appropriate non-residential uses in the Transition Area of the County. The Applicant hereby respectfully requests favorable recommendation of this project by the Planning Commission and approval by the Board of Supervisors.

