

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

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PGCPB No. 14-78

File No. DSDS-683

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Prince George's County Planning Board has reviewed DSDS-683, Woodstream Church, requesting a departure from sign design standards to increase the institutional sign area by 14 square feet in accordance with Subtitle 27 of the Prince George's County Code; and

WHEREAS, after consideration of the evidence presented at the public hearing on July 31, 2014, the Prince George's County Planning Board finds:

1. **Request:** The subject application is for approval a departure from sign design standards to allow the institutional sign area to exceed the normal maximum area by 14 square feet. The DSDS is companion to a detailed site plan for a 69,060-square-foot family life center and building additions to an existing church in order to add a private school with 445 students and a 250-child day care center. For additional information regarding that approval see PGCPB Resolution No. 14-76.

2. **Development Data Summary:**

	EXISTING	APPROVED
Zone(s)	I-3	I-3
Use(s)	Church Private School Day Care	Church Private School Day Care
Acreage	15.28	15.28
Square Footage/GFA	81,719	169,326

3. **Location:** The 15.28-acre property is located in the southwestern quadrant of the intersection of Lottsford Road and Ruby Lockhart Boulevard. The site is also located in Planning Area 73A, Council District 5.
4. **Surrounding Uses:** The neighboring properties to the north, west, and south of the site are zoned Mixed Use-Transportation Oriented (M-X-T) and are currently undeveloped. This adjacent land area was the subject of Conceptual Site Plan CSP-10004, King Property, for 525,000 square feet of residential development and 404,000 square feet of retail and office space. To the north across Ruby Lockhart Boulevard, is The Villas at Regent Park condominium development located in the Commercial Office (C-O) Zone. The neighboring properties to the southeast across Lottsford Road are zoned Residential Medium Development (R-M) and are developed with townhouses.
5. **Previous Approvals:** The site was rezoned from the Rural Residential (R-R) Zone to the I-3 Zone through Zoning Map Amendment A-9604-C, which was approved by the Prince George's County District Council on April 11, 1988. The District Council approved Conceptual Site Plan CSP-96046 for Addison King Property for approximately 109.46 acres on December 3, 1997. The Prince George's County Planning Board approved Preliminary Plan of Subdivision 4-97013 and

Type I Tree Conservation Plan TCPI/05/97-01 for Addison King Property which covered approximately 110± acres on April 3, 1997. This preliminary plan created Lot 1, which contains the church, and Outlot A. Preliminary Plan of Subdivision 4-97013 was later superseded with the approval of Preliminary Plan of Subdivision 4-10005 by the Planning Board on July 14, 2011. The subject DSP is a revision to Detailed Site Plan SP-98001, which was approved by the Planning Board on April 2, 1998 for construction of the existing church. An -01 revision of DSP-98001 was approved by the Planning Director for the construction of a pavilion on the site.

Subsequent to DSP approval and construction of the proposed church, a private school use was added on the subject site. The Woodstream Christian Academy currently operates on the site. The subject CSP and DSP revisions are required to validate this existing use, and provide adequate play area that meets the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.

6. **Design Features:** The subject application proposes two building additions to the existing sanctuary building for a day care center and administrative offices and a new three-story, 69,060-square-foot multipurpose building. The applicant is proposing a private school for 445 students (kindergarten through 12th grade) and a day care for 250 children as an addition to the existing church.

One freestanding sign exists and one freestanding sign is proposed. Both signs are approximately 14.3 feet in width by seven feet in height and incorporate a digital sign panel and brick piers. The applicant proposed to add an address panel on the existing freestanding sign, which requires a DSDS.

7. **Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance:** The subject application complies with the requirements of the Planned Industrial/Employment Park (I-3) Zone, the site plan design guidelines, and additional requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. Approval of a CSP and DSP is required for all uses and improvements in the I-3 Zone, in accordance with Part 3, Division 9, of the Zoning Ordinance. The following discussion of the signage proposal is provided:

- a. The subject application includes a signage proposal. Signs for institutional uses are governed by Section 27-617 of the Zoning Ordinance, as follows:

Section 27-617. Institutional—Other than Temporary.

- (a) **In any zone (except Comprehensive Design and Mixed Use Zones) where a church; library; school; hospital; fire station; community center; day care center for children; service, fraternal, or civic organizations; or other similar institution is allowed, a sign may be erected. Institutional signs shall meet the following design standards:**

- (1) **Maximum area for each sign - 48 square feet.**
- (2) **Maximum height - 8 feet above finished grade at base of sign.**

- (3) **Minimum setback - 15 feet from adjoining land in any Residential Zone (or land proposed to be used for residential purposes in a Comprehensive Design, Mixed Use, or Planned Community Zone).**
- (4) **Type allowed - freestanding or attached to a building.**
- (5) **Maximum number - 1 per street the property fronts on (must face street frontage).**

The property fronts two streets and is proposed to contain three institutional uses (a church, a day care, and a school). Multiple institutional signs are permitted; however, the maximum sign area permitted is 48 square feet. The application includes two ground-mounted signs, one of which is a 62-square-foot ground-mounted sign that requires a DSDS. The other freestanding sign is 43 square feet. For additional discussion of the departure request, see Finding 8.

- b. The I-3 Zone contains the following additional pertinent regulation regarding building-mounted signs:

Section 27-613. Signs Attached to a building or canopy.

(b) Height.

- (2) **In the I-3 Zone the sign shall not extend above the lowest point of the roof of the building to which it is attached.**

The architectural elevations depict the appearance and location of one building-mounted sign that is proposed on the new family life center. The building-mounted sign does not extend above the lowest point of the roof.

- 8. **Departure from Sign Design Standards DSDS-396:** The applicant's site plan shows one existing sign along Lottsford Road and one sign proposed for Ruby Lockhart Boulevard. The sign to be located along Ruby Lockhart Boulevard is within the sign design standards of the Zoning Ordinance and is not part of this DSDS request. The existing sign along Lottsford Road is being proposed to be slightly larger than the allowable sign area in the I-3 Zone for an institutional use. Specifically, the applicant is proposing a 62-square-foot digital sign, which is 14 square feet larger than is permitted by the sign design requirements in the zone.

(A) Section 27-239.01(b)(9) of the Zoning Ordinance provides that in order for the Planning Board to grant the departure, it shall make the following findings:

- 1. **The purposes of this Subtitle will be equally well or better served by the applicant's proposal.**

The applicant's proposed sign is attractive and understated as it is only slightly larger than the allowable sign area for institutional uses. As designed, the applicant's proposed sign will not detract from the continuing regulation of unsightly and detrimental signs, which could depreciate the value of property and discourage quality development in the regional district. Further, the proposed sign seeks to adequately identify and safely locate the existing church and its related facilities. As a result, the applicant's proposal not only maintains quality development, but it prevents the proliferation of signs that could detract from the scenic quality of the landscape or the attractiveness of the development due to its layout, size, and quality of the proposed sign.

The Planning Board finds that the purposes of this Subtitle are equally well served by the applicant's proposal.

2. The departure is the minimum necessary, given the specific circumstances of the request.

The requested departure will allow for the continuing of an existing church and nursery in the area and the integration of a private school and day care center on the applicant's property. As noted above, the subject site fronts on Lottsford Road, a master-planned arterial roadway with a right-of-way of 170 feet. With the addition of a private school and day care center to the site, a slightly larger sign is desired to protect and promote the health, safety, and welfare of the present and future inhabitants of the county because it would increase the visibility of the sign from the travel lanes along Lottsford Road, which would allow the church facilities to be safely identified. Given the extent of road frontage along Lottsford Road (approximately 771 feet), the departure is the minimum necessary for the proposed sign to be visible from the travel lanes of Lottsford Road.

The 14-square-foot departure is requested to provide a sign panel with the church's name and address above an existing digital message board. The Planning Board finds that the 14 square feet is the minimum area needed to provide a name and address that can be reasonably visible from Lottsford Road. The digital board will be used to advertise activities within the church and school.

3. The departure is necessary in order to alleviate circumstances which are unique to the site or prevalent in areas of the County developed prior to November 29, 1949.

The applicant's property has varying grades of topography and environmental features unique to it. The on-site regulated environmental features include a wetland with its associated wetland buffer and a regulated stream and its associated buffer. In addition, portions of the applicant's property are significantly depressed below Lottsford Road for motorists travelling northeast towards Greenbelt Road (MD 193), which impedes a clear view of the site. Moreover, as a result of the existing median strip of varying widths (24 to

13 feet wide), which is highly planted with shade trees, ornamental trees, and base evergreen shrub plantings along Lottsford Road, directly in front of the applicant's property, a slightly larger sign is necessary in order to alleviate circumstances which are unique to the site. Better visibility to the applicant's existing and proposed development will ensure safer access by motorists, residents, and workers in the area.

Three institutional uses are proposed on the site. A digital board that advertises the variety of activities on the site is warranted. In addition, the church's name and address should be visible on the sign. The Planning Board finds that this, coupled with frontage on an arterial roadway, creates a circumstance that is unique to the site.

4. The departure will not impair the visual, functional or environmental quality or integrity of the site or of the surrounding neighborhood.

The requested departure will not impair the visual, functional or environmental quality or integrity of the site, or of the surrounding neighborhood. The applicant's proposed sign is attractive and understated as it is only slightly larger than the allowable sign area for institutional uses. As designed, the applicant's proposed sign will not detract from the continuing regulation of unsightly and detrimental signs, which could depreciate the value of property and discourage quality development in the regional district. Further, the proposed sign seeks to adequately identify and safely locate the existing church and its related facilities. As a result, the applicant's proposal not only maintains quality development, but it prevents the proliferation of signs that could detract from the scenic quality of the landscape or the attractiveness of the development due to its layout, size, and quality of the proposed sign.

In addition, the brick monument-style sign will correspond with the façade for the existing church and related facilities, which will preserve the visual integrity of the site, and the surrounding neighborhood.

9. Further Planning Board Findings and Comments from Other Entities: The subject application was referred to the concerned agencies and divisions. The referral comments are summarized as follows:

- a. **Community Planning**—The Planning Board finds that the application conforms to the land use recommendations of the 1990 *Approved Master Plan and Adopted Sectional Map Amendment for Largo-Lottsford, Planning Area 73* for a mix of residential, commercial (office and retail), park and open space, and institutional uses.
- b. **Permit Review**—In a memoranda dated February 25, 2013 and June 10, 2014, the Permit Review Section provided comments on the plan submission.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that pursuant to Subtitle 27 of the Prince George's County Code, the Prince George's County Planning Board of The Maryland-National Capital Park and

Planning Commission adopted the findings contained herein and APPROVED the above-noted application.

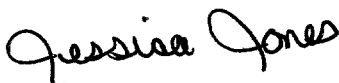
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appeal of the Planning Board's action must be filed with the District Council for Prince George's County, Maryland within thirty (30) days of the final notice of the Planning Board's decision.

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This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the action taken by the Prince George's County Planning Board of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission on the motion of Commissioner Washington, seconded by Commissioner Bailey, with Commissioners Washington, Bailey, Shoaff and Hewlett voting in favor of the motion, and with Commissioner Geraldo absent at its regular meeting held on Thursday, July 31, 2014, in Upper Marlboro, Maryland.

Adopted by the Prince George's County Planning Board this 31st day of July 2014.

Patricia Colihan Barney
Executive Director

By 
Jessica Jones
Planning Board Administrator

PCB:JJ:MF:arj


APPROVED AS TO LEGAL SUFFICIENCY
M-NCPPC Legal Department
Date 8/4/14