

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Prince George's County Planning Board is charged with the approval of Detailed Site Plans pursuant to Part 3, Division 9 of the Zoning Ordinance of the Prince George's County Code; and

WHEREAS, in consideration of evidence presented at a public hearing on October 26, 2006 regarding Detailed Site Plan DSP-03016 for Faith Baptist Christian School, the Planning Board finds:

1. **Request**—The subject application requests approval of a private school with a variance from the outdoor playground area requirements for a private school.
2. **Location**—The site is located in Planning Area 62, Council District 1. More specifically, it is located at 12700 Claxton Drive, Laurel, MD, on the northwest quadrant of Claxton Drive and Montpelier Drive.
3. **Surroundings and Use:** The subject property is bounded to the north by residential use in the R-30 Zone (Multifamily Low Density Residential); to the west by residential use in the R-55 Zone (One Family Detached Residential); and to the south and east across Montpelier Drive and Claxton Drive by residential use in the R-55 Zone (One Family Detached Residential).
4. **Development Data Summary**

	EXISTING	PROPOSED
Zone(s)	R-55	R-55
Use(s)	Church's Private School	Church's Private School
Acreage	5.00	5.00
Lots	1	1
Parcels	1	1
Square Footage/GFA		
Preschool/Sunday School	4,998	4,998
Private School	5,918	5,918
Middle School	2,747	2,747
Church Sanctuary	4,502	4,502
Total Square Footage	20,526	20,526
Proposed Student Enrollment	171	171

OTHER DEVELOPMENT DATA

	REQUIRED	PROPOSED
Total parking spaces	74	129
Of which handicapped spaces	3	7
Loading Spaces	1	1
Playground Area	17,100	12,459

5. **Previous Approval:** On January 15, 1993, the Prince George's County Planning Board approved Preliminary Plan of Subdivision 4-93016 for the site, together with Type II Tree Conservation Plan TCPII/108/96. The Department of Environmental Resources also approved Stormwater Concept Plan 40266-2005 for the site on November 29, 2005. The stormwater concept plan is valid for three years, or until December 31, 2008.
6. **Design Features:** The intent of the existing private school is to create a recognizable image as a distinct place, to vary massing to provide visual interest, as applicable, to ensure compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood, and to use building height and massing to emphasize important corners, designated points of entry.

The 5.00-acre site is accessed from two entry drives that lead into the property from Claxton Drive and Montpelier Drive to the campus of existing buildings, which include a church sanctuary and academic buildings ranging from 2,747 square feet to 5,918 square feet. The compound of buildings is provided with both visitor and employee parking.

The private school and church integrate existing natural features and open space into the overall design and layout of the site. Existing natural features and common open spaces are sufficiently used to create site amenities and to provide physical separators and buffers from adjacent development. The location and design of the individual buildings reinforce the identity and function of the church and private school development. The primary facades of the building, particularly the facade containing the primary-classroom building's entrance, are oriented toward the primary drive and parking areas to define the entries.

The primary architectural character of the campus buildings is the modern ranch style. The commercial interpretation of this style is evident in the building design through asymmetrical one-story and two-story shapes with low-pitched roofs dominating. The roofs for the various buildings are either hipped or side-gabled. There are moderate to wide eave overhangs and a mixture of cementitious siding and brick veneer walls.

The landscaping is designed to visually tie the entire development together, to define major entryways, circulation (both vehicular and pedestrian), and parking patterns, and to create buffers at less intensive adjacent land uses.

The existing playground area is designed to accommodate primarily the preschool student enrollment and not the middle school recreational activities. The playground area consists of preschool age equipment with 12-inch fiber wood surfacing and a six-foot-high fence. Additional school playground areas for ages 5-12, open play areas, or athletic fields are not provided on the site.

COMPLIANCE WITH EVALUATION CRITERIA

7. **Zoning Ordinance:** The subject application has been reviewed for compliance with the requirements in the R-55 Zone, additional specific uses, and the site plan design guidelines of the Zoning Ordinance.

The subject application is in general conformance with the requirements of Section 27-430 of the Zoning Ordinance, which governs development in the residential zones. The church is a permitted use in the R-55 Zone. The private school is a permitted use in accordance with Section 27-443.

The subject application is not in general conformance with the requirements of Section 27-443 of the Zoning Ordinance, which governs additional requirements for private schools. The proposed private school conforms to the requirements of Section 27-443 except for the outdoor playground area requirements of Section 27-443(a)(1)(C).

8. **Requirements of the Zoning Ordinance for the Granting of a Variance:** The applicant has requested a variance from Section 27-443(a)(1)(C) to reduce the outdoor play area requirement of 17,100 square feet to 12,459 square feet. The request is seeking approval of a 4,641-square-foot variance, which is a 27 percent reduction in play area size. Staff has listed each required finding for the granting of a variance as stated in Section 27-230 of the Zoning Ordinance, followed by staff comment. Comment has been made jointly for two requested variances.

“(1) A specific parcel of land has exceptional narrowness, shallowness, or shape, exceptional topographic conditions, or other extraordinary situations or conditions:”

Urban Design Comment: The specific parcel of land has exceptional shape and topographic conditions that prohibit the development of the entire property. However, the applicant developed the property with multiple buildings and subsequently expanded the campus facilities over the course of 13 years. The applicant indicated that the 4,998-square-foot preschool/Sunday school building was constructed in 1980. The applicant has also indicated that the existing playground area has not been altered or moved since the initial construction of the preschool/Sunday school building. The 2,747-square-foot middle school and 5,918-square-foot academic building were constructed in later years.

Based on the information provided on the detailed site plan, staff is unable to determine if the playground area was at one time in conformance with the Zoning Ordinance. It also appears that no additional alterations or expansion of the playground area was attempted with the addition of the middle school and academic building additions. Also, the detailed site plan illustrates that the parking area exceeds the required number of parking spaces for the church and school, which restricts the expansion of the playground area.

“(2) The strict application of this Subtitle will result in peculiar and unusual practical difficulties to, or exceptional or undue hardship upon, the owner of the property; and”

Urban Design Comment: The applicant submitted a detailed site plan for existing buildings and site development. No previous review of the existing development was performed to evaluate compliance with the Zoning Ordinance. Hence, the required square footage of playground area is creating exceptional or undue hardship upon the owner of the property. However, staff has determined that open areas adjacent to the existing playground area can accommodate the expansion of the existing 3,526-square-foot playground area and increase the playground area by approximately 8,993 square

feet. The expansion of the playground area will not provide the entire 17,000 square feet required for the student enrollment, but it would substantially improve the square footage by increasing it to a total of 12,459 square feet, 73 percent of the required playground area square footage.

“(3) The variance will not substantially impair the intent, purpose, or integrity of the General Plan or master plan.”

Urban Design Comment: The Community Planning staff has indicated this application for a school will not substantially impair the intent, purpose, or integrity of the General Plan or the master plan.

9. **Preliminary Plan of Subdivision, 4-93016:** The Planning Board approved Preliminary Plan 4-04146 on June 24, 1993. The Planning Board adopted resolution PGCPB 93-159 formalizing the approval on July 15, 1993. Record Plat VJ 167@11 contains five plat notes. The following plat notes apply to review of the DSP:

Plat Note 1: Development is subject to restrictions shown on the approved Type II Tree Conservation Plan (TCPII/108/93) and precludes any disturbance or installation of any structure within specific areas. Failure to comply will mean a violation of an approved tree conservation plan and will make the owner subject to mitigation under the Woodland Conservation/Tree Preservation Policy.

Plat Note 2: An automatic fire suppression system shall be provided in the proposed building.

Plat Note 3: Prior to the issuance of any grading permits, the applicant, his heirs, successors and/or assignees shall obtain a joint state/federal permit for wetland and wetland buffer disturbance on this site.

Plat Note 4: Prior to the issuance of any building permits, a soils report shall be approved by the Natural Resources Division. The report shall address structural stability and drainage concerns in relation to the Christiana clay and Christiana fine sandy loams located on the site.

10. **Landscape Manual:** The proposed development is subject to the requirements of Section 4.3a, Landscape Strip Requirements, Section 4.3.c, Parking Lot Interior Planting Requirements, and Section 4.7, Buffering Incompatible Uses. Urban Design staff have reviewed the proposed landscape plan and found that the plans are in general compliance with the applicable sections of the *Landscape Manual* with respect to what is identified as Bufferyards A and B on the plans.
11. **Woodland Conservation Ordinance:** In a memorandum dated May 22, 2006, the Environmental Planning Section stated that the property is in conformance with the approved TCP II/108/92-01.
12. **Referral Comments:** The subject application was referred to the concerned agencies and divisions. The referral comments are summarized as follows:

- a. **Community Planning:** In a memorandum dated October 28, 2005, the Community Planning Division stated that:
1. This application for a school will not substantially impair the intent, purpose or integrity of the General Plan or the master plan.
 2. The proposal, located in the Laurel community, conforms to the public or quasi-public land use recommendation of the 1990 *Approved Master Plan and Sectional Map Amendment for Subregion I Planning Areas 60, 61, and 62*.

Additional comments regarding the site plan have either been addressed in the review process or included as conditions in the recommendation section of this staff report.

- b. **Transportation:** In a memorandum dated May 1, 2006, the Transportation Planning Section stated that access to the site and circulation within the site are acceptable.

Urban Design Comment: Preliminary Plan 4-93016 Resolution PGCPB No. 93-159 contained the abovementioned finding but did not apply the finding as a condition of approval.

- c. **Subdivision Section:** In a memorandum dated September 30, 2005, the subdivision section stated that the property is the subject of Preliminary Plan 4-93016 and the relevant resolution of approval, PGCPB Resolution 93-159, was adopted on July 15, 2006. Staff reviewed conditions contained in the resolution of approval related to the review of the detailed site plan. Please see Finding 9 for a more detailed description of the relevant conditions from the subdivision section's referral comments. The detailed site plan as submitted, is in conformance with the approved preliminary plan and record plat. There are no other subdivision issues at this time.
- d. **Permits:** In a memorandum dated May 9, 2006, the Permit Review Section has offered numerous comments that have either been addressed by revisions to the plans or in the recommended conditions below.
- e. **Environmental Planning:** In a referral reply comment dated May 22, 2006, the Environmental Planning Section indicated that the current application is in conformance with the approved TCP II/108/92-01.
- f. **Department of Environmental Resources (DER):** In a referral reply comment dated May 9, 2006, DER stated the site plan for Faith Baptist Christian School, DSP-03016 and VD 03016, is consistent with approved Stormwater Concept Plan 40266-2005.
- g. **Department of Public Works & Transportation (DPW&T):** In a memorandum dated June 5, 2006, DPW&T stated that all improvements within the public right-of-way as

dedicated to the county are to be designed in accordance with the county Road Ordinance, and DPW&T's specifications and standards. In addition, they stated that conformance with DPW&T street lighting and street tree standards are required. Lastly, they stated that existing utilities may require relocation and/or adjustments and that coordination with the various utility companies is required.

- h. **Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR):** At the time of this writing, DHR has not offered comment on the subject project.
- 13. As required by Section 27-285(b) of the Zoning Ordinance, the detailed site plan represents a reasonable alternative for satisfying the site design guidelines of Subtitle 27, Part 3, Division 9, of the Prince George's County Code without requiring unreasonable cost and without detracting substantially from the utility of the proposed development for its intended use.

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 Type II Tree Conservation Plan (TCPII/108/92) and APPROVED Variance Application No. VD-03016, and further APPROVED Detailed Site Plan DSP-03016 for the above-described land, subject to the following condition:

Prior to certificate approval of the subject detailed site plan, the applicant shall revise plans to provide timber edging along the entire playground area to contain the proposed wood fiber surfacing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appeal of the Planning Board's action must be filed with the District Council of Prince George's County within thirty (30) days following 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 Eley, seconded by Commissioner Clark, with Commissioners Eley, Clark, Squire and Parker voting in favor of the motion, with Commissioner Vaughns opposing the motion at its regular meeting held on Thursday, October 26, 2006, in Upper Marlboro, Maryland.

Adopted by the Prince George's County Planning Board this 16th day of November 2006.

Trudye Morgan Johnson
Executive Director

By Frances J. Guertin
Planning Board Administrator

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