



**PUBLIC NOTICE  
WILLIAMSBURG CITY COUNCIL**

The Williamsburg City Council will hold a public hearing on Thursday, July 9, 2015, 2:00 p.m. in the Third Floor Conference Room at the Williamsburg Municipal Building, 401 Lafayette Street, to consider the following:

**PCR #15-012:** Request of Williamsburg Montessori School for a special use permit for a "satellite campus" for upper elementary and middle school at 800 Richmond Road and 104 Brooks Street (formerly Suter's Handcrafted Furniture). These properties are zoned LB-2 Limited Business Neighborhood District and RS-2 Single Family Residential District.

Additional information is available at [www.williamsburgva.gov/publicnotice](http://www.williamsburgva.gov/publicnotice) or at the Planning Department [(757) 220-6130], 401 Lafayette Street. Interested citizens are invited to attend this hearing and present their comments to the Council.

If you are disabled and need accommodation in order to participate in the public hearing, please call the City Manager's office at (757) 220-6100, (TTY) 220-6108, no later than 12:00 noon, Thursday, July 2, 2015.

Gerry S. Walton  
Deputy Clerk



**CITY OF WILLIAMSBURG**  
MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** June 18,2015

**SUBJECT:** PCR #15-012

**Request of Williamsburg Montessori School for a special use permit to locate a “satellite campus” for upper elementary and middle school at 800 Richmond Road and 104 Brooks Street.**

Williamsburg Montessori School is proposing to operate an upper elementary (grades 4-6) and middle (grades 7-8) school at 800 Richmond Road and 104 Brooks Street which requires a special use permit in the LB-2 Limited Business District and RS-2 Single Family Dwelling District. The school currently has two “satellite campuses” in the City at 420 Scotland Street and 201 Penniman Road that will be closed and combined into one campus at this site if a special use permit is granted. The applicant proposes to serve 50 students at this location including 30 students in grades 4-6 and 20 students in grades 7-8. The applicant’s statement is attached.



## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The 2013 Comprehensive Plan designates this parcel as Mixed Use land use and Low Density Single-Family Detached Residential, which is defined by the Plan as follows:

*This Mixed Use land use category is intended to provide a degree of flexibility in land uses to be developed in areas suitable for a mixture of residential and commercial uses. Incorporating a potential range of residential, office, and moderately scaled commercial uses, mixed use development should be subject to a thorough urban design review which stresses quality architecture, proper building siting, and well-designed landscaping. Equally important, this category should promote the preservation, revitalization and adaptive reuse, where appropriate, of existing historic structures.*

*Mixed Use is implemented by the LB-2 Limited Business Neighborhood District for the Arts and Cultural District area on Richmond Road and the area south of Berkeley Middle School on Strawberry Plains Road. The LB-2 District allows a range of uses including single-family, duplex dwellings, banks, bake shops, hotels with 10 or less rooms, museums and art galleries, offices, restaurants and retail stores. More intensive uses, such as multifamily dwellings, hotels with more than 10 rooms, larger restaurants and retail stores, and buildings with a floor area exceeding 10,000 square feet require a special use permit. Residential uses are allowed at a base density of 8 dwellings units/net acre, and up to 14 dwelling units/net acre with a special use permit.*

*The Low Density Single-Family Detached Residential includes 104 Brooks Street which is located in the College Terrace Neighborhood in the Henley Jones Subdivision which was platted in 1933.*

Lands to the north and east are designated Mixed Land Use with areas to the south and west designated as Low-Density Single Family Detached Residential.

## **ZONING**

This property is located in the Limited Business Neighborhood District LB-2 and the Single Family Dwelling District RS-2.

The statement of intent for the LB-2 District reads:

*This district is established to allow a mixture of office, commercial and residential uses in areas that are designated by the Comprehensive Plan and Mixed Use land use, and which are located outside of the City Center area. In keeping with the urban mixed use character of these areas, studios and workshops for artists and artisans are allowed with a special exception. Higher intensity uses such as buildings with a floor area exceeding 10,000 square feet, multifamily dwellings, hotels with more than ten rooms, and larger restaurants may be allowed with a special use permit to ensure that the use is compatible with surrounding neighborhoods.*

The statement of intent for the RS-2 District reads:

*This district is established as a single-family residential area with low population density. The regulations for this district are designed to stabilize and protect the essential characteristics of the land and to promote and encourage a suitable environment for family life. To these ends, development is limited to a relatively low density and permitted uses are limited basically to providing homes for the residents. Certain additional uses that may be compatible with single-family neighborhoods, such as churches, schools and day care centers, may be allowed with the issuance of special permits.*

Lands to the north and east are zoned Limited Business Neighborhood District LB-2 with land to the south and west designated Single-Family Dwelling District RS-2.

### **SPECIAL USE PERMIT**

The special use permit section of the Zoning Ordinance (Sec. 21-42) establishes the following criteria:

- (a) *The proposed use shall be:*
  - (1) *In harmony with the adopted comprehensive plan;*
  - (2) *In harmony with the intent and purpose of the zoning district in which the use is proposed to be located;*
  - (3) *In harmony with the character of adjacent properties and the surrounding neighborhoods, and with existing and proposed development.*
- (b) *The proposed use shall be adequately served by essential public services such as streets, drainage facilities, fire protection and public water and sewer facilities.*
- (c) *The proposed use shall not result in the destruction, loss or damage of any feature determined to be of significant ecological, scenic or historic importance.*
- (d) *The proposed use shall be designed, sited and landscaped so that the use will not hinder or discourage the appropriate development or use of adjacent properties and surrounding neighborhoods.*

Additional reasonable standards as deemed necessary to protect the public interest and welfare may be imposed, including: more restrictive sign standards; additional open space, landscaping or screening requirements; additional yard requirements; special lighting requirements; limitation on hours of operation; and additional off-street parking and loading requirements.

The Planning Director or Planning Commission may require the following additional information:

- (1) A traffic impact analysis, showing the effect of traffic generated by this project on surrounding streets and neighborhoods.

- (2) A public utility analysis, showing the effect of this project on public water, sewer and/or storm drainage facilities.
- (3) A fiscal impact analysis. The Planning Director or the Planning Commission may request the City Council to provide funds for the preparation of this study by the City.

Staff does not feel that any additional studies are needed in order to make a decision on this request.

## **ANALYSIS**

The question to be considered with this request to relocate two satellite campuses in the City for the Williamsburg Montessori School to 800 Richmond Road is whether or not a school is an appropriate use in the LB-2 District at this location. The land use goal for this area, as stated in the Comprehensive Plan, is to “*provide a degree of flexibility in land uses to be developed in areas suitable for a mixture of residential and commercial uses*”. While the facility will not directly generate tax revenue for the City at this location, school children will add to the richness of the social fabric of the Arts District. Additionally, two current business zoned properties now used by the school will be available for business use.

The applicant is requesting a special use permit to serve 50 students and proposes to use the area behind the building for gardening and the relocation of three picnic tables and benches from the current school on Scotland Street to this location. No playground equipment is proposed at this location. The applicant notes that “students get their fitness from walking and jogging, tennis sessions at William and Mary McCormack-Nagelsen Center, fitness sessions at CrossFit Williamsburg and other offsite opportunities”. The building code allows more than 200 students in this building.

Allowing a school at this location is not a clear-cut issue. The property has been on and off the market for the last three years, either for sale or for lease with no takers except for the school with their current request. Permitted uses are hotels with ten or less bedrooms, bake shops, banks, convenience service establishments, museums, art galleries, offices, printing and photocopying, restaurants under 2,500 square feet and retail sales with a gross floor area not exceeding 5,000 square feet.

The neighbor at the rear of the property on Brooks Street supports the request conditioned upon a privacy fence being constructed along the property line between the two properties. The school agrees with the request and would like to construct a picket fence from the left corner of the building to the neighboring property, a privacy fence along the adjacent property and along the motel property to the rear of the building and continue with a picket fence to the building to enclose this area. Two letters of support have been received which are attached.



Traffic is an issue that needs consideration, and staff is concerned with Brooks Street being used for drop-off and pick-up. A new driveway connection with Brooks Street is not allowed because of closeness to Richmond Road. Since creation of a drop-off loop is not possible, the school proposes to stagger the start and end times for pick-up and drop-off for the two programs with a twenty-minute delay, utilizing the existing parking lot layout that contains 21 parking spaces.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that Planning Commission recommend to City Council that the special use permit be approved to locate a “satellite campus” for the Williamsburg Montessori School at 800 Richmond Road, contingent upon the following:

1. Bus and individual student drop-off and pick-up along Brooks Street shall be prohibited.
2. No parking shall be allowed behind the building (Brooks Street).
3. The number of students allowed at this location shall be limited to 60.
4. The grassy area behind the building located in the RS-2 District shall be used only for gardening and picnic uses.
5. A combination of picket and privacy fences shall be constructed to enclose the area behind the building used for gardening and picnic tables subject to design approval by the Architectural Review Board and with construction prior to occupancy of the building by the school. The privacy fence must be constructed inside the existing hedge row adjacent to 106 Brooks Street.

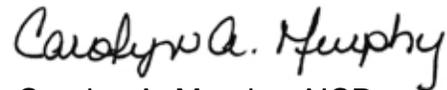
## **PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDTION**

Planning Commission held a public hearing on June 17. The applicant and two individuals spoke at the public hearing. Planning Commission recommended by a vote of 5-0 that a special use permit be approved to locate a "satellite campus" for the Williamsburg Montessori School at 800 Richmond Road, contingent upon the following:

1. Bus and individual student drop-off and pick-up along Brooks Street shall be prohibited.
2. No parking shall be allowed behind the building (Brooks Street).
3. The number of students allowed at this location shall be limited to 60 students for the 2015-16 academic school year with the ability to increase up to 70 students for the following academic school years provided that there are no demonstrated issues associated with student drop-off and pick-up, and subject to staff approval of an acceptable transportation plan for the increased number of students.
4. The grassy area behind the building located in the RS-2 District shall be used only for gardening and picnic uses.
5. A combination of picket and privacy fences shall be constructed to enclose the area behind the building used for gardening and picnic tables subject to design approval by the Architectural Review Board and with construction prior to occupancy of the building by the school. The privacy fence must be constructed inside the existing hedge row adjacent to 106 Brooks Street.

## **CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING**

The City Council public hearing is scheduled for July 9, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. in the Third Floor Conference Room at the Williamsburg Municipal Building, 401 Lafayette Street.



Carolyn A. Murphy, AICP  
Deputy Planning Director



WILLIAMSBURG  
MONTESSORI  
SCHOOL

Williamsburg Montessori School  
4200 Longhill Road  
Williamsburg, VA 23188

April 30, 2015

Miss Carolyn A. Murphy, Deputy Planning Director  
CITY OF WILLIAMSBURG  
Planning Department  
401 Lafayette Street  
Williamsburg, Virginia 23185

Dear Ms. Murphy,

RE: **800 Richmond Road, Williamsburg, Virginia**  
**Tax Map No. 434-0A-00-010**

Thank you for your consideration of the Williamsburg Montessori School's Special Use Permit (SUP) for the property located at 800 Richmond Road as a possibility to house our upper elementary and middle school programs.

Since 1982, the Williamsburg Montessori School has been the sole provider of Montessori education in Williamsburg. In those 33 years, we have grown steadily from a small program serving primarily pre-school age children to a flourishing school serving children between eighteen months to fourteen years. Our enrollment has outpaced our facility on Longhill Road and has created the need for additional satellite campuses in the City of Williamsburg.

The upper elementary classroom has been located at 420 Scotland Street since 2004 and our students have thoroughly enjoyed the proximity to Colonial Williamsburg and Merchant's Square. Our classes have made many a visit to Colonial Williamsburg, the Muscarelle Museum, William & Mary Swem Library, Williamsburg Regional Library, various local restaurants and shops. Just today, they headed to Colonial Williamsburg garden shop to purchase herbs and flowers to plant in their garden onsite.

Our middle school moved to 201 Penniman Road in 2013 and has also enjoyed all the area has to offer. They explore the historic area, picnic at Bicentennial and Highland Parks, take field trips to local Latin markets and restaurants, sketch baby animals in Colonial Williamsburg and study water quality in area rivers and streams.

Being able to combine the two programs into one location will enable us to expand our mission for upper elementary and middle school students. Dr. Montessori wrote that it is during a child's elementary and adolescent years, education should aim to give them "the keys to the universe." In theory that means a greater focus on abstraction and moral development with an

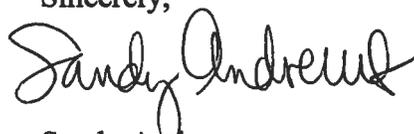
eye toward the discrimination of one's responsibility as a citizen and one's commitment to creating a peaceful world. In practice it means "going out" into the community for extended field study, service projects and exploring cultural and intellectual opportunities in the local community. What better place to discover citizenship and stewardship than Williamsburg?

For the City of Williamsburg, this location will bring approximately 45 families to Merchants Square, the Community Building, nearby galleries, shops and restaurants on a regular basis. Being in the "arts district" would allow our students to explore the cultural resources of the City while giving us a premium location to host summer art camps. We will be able to make the City our classroom, which will offer infusions of both commerce and commitment to the preservation and prosperity of the City.

We have given thoughtful consideration to traffic control during our drop off and pick up times and how to best utilize the green space behind the building. For pick up and drop off, we would stagger the start and end times between the two programs so one group is dropped off between 8:00-8:15 AM and the other between 8:20-8:40 AM with a similar twenty minute delay in the afternoon. For field trips, we have a small activity bus which can easily pull into and exit the parking lot without obstructing traffic. At our current location on Scotland Street, our students use the outdoor space for lunch, outside work and gardening. I hope to use the green space at this location for the same. We would bring our round concrete tables and benches for lunch and work time and install some raised beds or patio planters for gardening. We would not bring in any playground equipment since our students get their fitness from walking and jogging, tennis sessions at William & Mary McCormack-Nagelsen Center, fitness sessions at CrossFit Williamsburg and other offsite opportunities.

I would be happy to meet anytime if there are any questions or if more information is required. In the meantime, I thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sandy Andrews". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sandy Andrews  
Head of School