

DATE: May 6, 2025

TO: Tony LaColla, Division Chief, Land Use Services
Department of Planning and Zoning

FROM: Mavis Stanfield, Urban Planner
Department of Planning and Zoning

SUBJECT: Special Use Permit #2025-00023
Administrative Review for a Minor Amendment
Site Use: Day care establishment in a church
Applicant: Bright Mind Daycare
Location: 322 North Alfred Street
Zone: RB/Townhouse Zone

Request

Special Use Permit #2025-00023 is a request for a minor amendment to an existing day care center, Bright Mind Daycare, to increase the number of students from 50 to 70. The number of employees would increase from 10 to 15. The business would continue to offer activities and care for children ages 2 ½ to 5 years. The pick-up and drop-off of children would occur in 14 spaces of the church's 16-space parking lot.

Background

Meade Memorial Episcopal Church has operated at the site since 1870. Three day care operations have previously received SUP approval at this site. In December 1966, City Council granted approval for SUP #0696 for Hopkins House to operate a full-day day care establishment for 45 students with 10 staff members. The Del Ray Preschool received City Council approval in 1987 for SUP #1990 for a day care operation accommodating 44 children. Staff administratively approved SUP #2010-0064 in February 2011 for a six child day care service. The applicant filed an administrative SUP application (SUP #2015-0076) in July 2015 for a day care operation to increase the number of children. Staff received several comments regarding parking and traffic concerns from residents, and the Director of Planning and Zoning determined that the applicant's proposal would be docketed for Planning Commission and City Council review given residents' concerns. SUP #2016-0009 was approved in May 2016, allowing the day care to operate with a maximum of 32 students. On July 12, 2019, staff administratively approved SUP #2019-0056 to increase the number of students from 32 to 39.

Staff administratively approved SUP #2021-00076 on September 9, 2021, to increase the number of children from 39 to 50. Staff received one comment from the community regarding property maintenance and the location of the play area, which staff addressed by explaining that property maintenance is handled by the property owner and the child day care center has an agreement in place with The Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities to use Charles Houston Recreation Center.

An inspection conducted on April 30, 2025, confirmed that the day care center was operating in compliance with the conditions of SUP 2021-00076.

Parking

Section 8-200(A)(16) of the Zoning Ordinance requires day care operations to provide 0.25 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet. With approximately 6,400 square feet, the site would be required to have two parking spaces. Uses requiring two spaces or less are exempt from providing parking. However, staff typically requires one space per 20 children for day care centers for pick-up and drop-off, so the required minimum parking requirement is four spaces in the on-site parking lot for pick-up and drop-off, based on 70 children.

The day care center has access to 14 parking spaces in the 16-space church parking lot for the pick-up and drop-off of children and the applicant also provides six off-street parking spaces at an off-site location for the day care center employees. The vehicles of the church pastor and the day care center director would continue to occupy two spaces in the parking lot during the day care operating hours.

Community Outreach

Public notice was provided through eNews, via the City's website, and by posting a placard on the site. In addition, Old Town Civic Association was sent an email notification of the current application. Staff received one email from a nearby neighbor on North Alfred Street, who supported the application, saying that they had had some initial concerns about traffic and outdoor space when the use was originally proposed but have observed no problems at all with pick-up or drop-off since then.

Staff Action

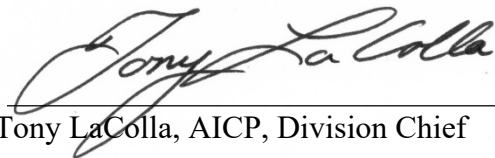
Staff supports the applicant's request for a minor increase of students from 50 to 70. The increase of students would allow the applicant flexibility in their operations and the ability to provide services to more members of the community. Staff has updated Condition #3 to reflect the applicant's requested increase in numbers of children and Condition #17 to reflect the new SUP application.

Staff hereby approves the Special Use Permit request.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION - DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING:

Date: May 6, 2025

Action: Approved



Tony LaColla, AICP, Division Chief

Attachments: 1) Special Use Permit Conditions
2) Department Comments
3) Statement of Consent

CONDITIONS OF SPECIAL USE PERMIT #2025-00023

The owner is responsible for ensuring that the following conditions are adhered to at all times. Violation of any of the conditions may result in fines and/or referral to public hearing by the Planning Commission and City Council.

1. The Special Use Permit shall be granted to the applicant only or to any business or entity in which the applicant has a controlling interest. (P&Z) (SUP #2016-0009)
2. The hours of operation for the day care center shall be limited to between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m., Monday through Friday. (P&Z) (SUP #2016-0009)
3. **CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF:** The maximum number of children permitted at the child care facility is limited to 50-70 at any one time. (P&Z) (~~SUP #2021-0076~~)
4. The facility shall obtain all required state, federal, and local licenses and certificates prior to opening its place of business. (P&Z) (SUP #2016-0009)
5. The applicant shall conduct employee training sessions on an ongoing basis, including as part of any employee orientation, to discuss all Special Use Permit provisions and requirements. The applicant shall also inform parents on an ongoing basis, including as part of any parent orientation, of all applicable Special Use Permit provisions and requirements. (P&Z) (SUP #2016-0009)
6. The applicant shall invite a representative from the neighborhood's residents to volunteer as a community liaison with the day care center. (P&Z) (SUP #2016-0009)
7. The applicant shall provide adequate drop-off and pick-up facilities in the church parking lot to minimize impacts on pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The transfer of children shall not occur in public rights-of-way. The applicant shall ensure that no vehicles double park on North Alfred or Princess Streets and that traffic does not back up onto either North Alfred or Princess Streets. The Director of Planning & Zoning reserves the right to revisit this agreement and may impose amended or additional requirements to ensure that adequate pick-up and drop-off facilities are maintained. (P&Z) (T&ES) (PC) (SUP #2016-0009)
8. The applicant shall ensure parents are aware of appropriate vehicle locations for drop-off and pick-up activities through information provided when the child is enrolled and annually as a reminder. (T&ES) (SUP #2016-0009)
9. The applicant shall require its employees who drive to use off-street parking. (T&ES) (SUP #2016-0009)
10. The applicant shall encourage its employees to use public transportation to travel to and from work. The business shall contact Go Alex at goalex@alexandriava.gov for information on establishing an employee transportation benefits program. (T&ES) (SUP #2019-0056)

11. Litter on the site and on public rights-of-way and spaces adjacent to or within 75 feet of the premises shall be picked up once each day to prevent an unsightly or unsanitary accumulation, on each day that the business is open to the public. (T&ES) (SUP #2016-0009)
12. All loudspeakers shall be prohibited from the exterior of the building, and no amplified sounds shall be audible from the property line. (T&ES) (SUP #2016-0009)
13. Condition deleted. (SUP #2021-00076)
14. The applicant shall provide a signed rental contract or purchase agreement to the Director showing that at least six off-street parking spaces are made available by the applicant for its employees at an offsite location to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning & Zoning. The applicant shall provide an up-to-date contract to the Director upon request. (P&Z) (SUP #2016-0009)
15. The applicant shall provide information about alternative forms of transportation to access the site, including but not limited to printed and electronic business promotional material, posting on the business website, and other similar methods. Contact Go Alex at goalex@alexandriava.gov for more information about available resources. (T&ES) (SUP#2019-0056)
16. The applicant shall encourage parents and guardians to park off-street through the provision of information on the school's website. (T&ES) (SUP#2019-0056)
17. **CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF:** The Director of Planning and Zoning shall review the special use permit one year after it has been operational ~~for one year~~, and then again every three years for compliance with all conditions and may ~~shall~~ docket the matter for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council if ~~(a) there have been documented violations of the permit conditions which were not corrected immediately, constitute repeat violations or which create a direct and immediate adverse zoning impact on the surrounding community; (b) or the director has received a request from any person to docket the permit for review, as the result of a complaint that rises to the level of a violation of the permit conditions or (c) the director has determined that there are problems with the operation of the use and that new or revised conditions are needed~~ to offset land use impacts not addressed in the city code. (P&Z) (SUP #21-0076)

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F - finding

Transportation & Environmental Services:

F-1 The previous conditions shall be carried forward with this minor amendment. There are no further comments. (T&ES)

Code Enforcement:

C-1 A building permit is required for increasing occupants and for the change of use from church (A-3) to daycare (E or I-4).

Health Department:

C-1 An Alexandria Health Department Permit is required for all regulated facilities that are serving and/or preparing food. A permit shall be obtained prior to operation, and is not transferable between one individual, corporation or location to another.

C-2 Construction plans shall be submitted to the Health Department located at 4850 Mark Center Drive and through the Multi-Agency Permit Center. Construction plans shall be submitted and approved by the Health Department prior to construction. There is a \$200.00 plan review fee payable to the City of Alexandria.

C-3 Construction plans shall comply with Alexandria City Code, Title 11, Chapter 2, The Food Safety Code of the City of Alexandria. Plans shall include a menu of food items to be offered for service at the facility and specification sheets for all equipment used in the facility, including the hot water heater.

C-4 A Food Protection Manager shall be on-duty during all operating hours.

C-5 The facility shall comply with the Virginia Indoor Clean Air Act and the Code of Alexandria, Title 11, Chapter 10, Smoking Prohibitions.

Parks and Recreation:

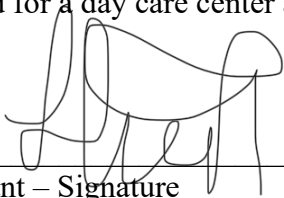
No comments received.

Fire:

C-1 The additional rooms to be added and used by the preschool shall meet the code/fire protection requirements for this use group.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

The undersigned hereby agrees and consents to the attached conditions of this Special Use Permit #2025-00023. The undersigned also hereby agrees to obtain all applicable licenses and permits required for a day care center at 322 North Alfred Street.



Applicant – Signature

/8/20

Date

Herdawit Balcha

Applicant – Printed

5/13/2025 | 08:44 PDT

Date