

Planning Commission Meeting
September 15, 2011
Verbatim Excerpt

SEA 96-B-010-02 – TRINITY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Decision Only During Commission Matters
(Public Hearing held on July 28, 2011)

Commissioner Harsel: On Thursday, July 8th (*sic*), we had a public hearing for a Special Exception in the Braddock District. And it concerned Trinity Christian School. Trinity Christian School has been in the Braddock District since 1996; they came in. And at that time, they had a good history of working with the community and with the neighbors. There were, you know, problems. They were resolved. We passed that Special Exception. Well, that was in 1996. They've come back for an amendment which wasn't that important. Now, they were back before us - - they had reached almost their limit of the students they can have. They are in the Occoquan. No question, they did the septic tanks. And they wanted - - they're not building anything else - - they're putting a second story on the building; but it's there. But they wanted the approval to remove some of the conditions of the original Special Exception, namely being - - they wanted to have the ability to rent out during the evening the unused school rooms for community type things like boy scouts, girl scouts, ESL, tutoring, maybe some college tutoring, because community space as such is at a premium in this area. They also wanted the ability to possibly sign a lease and rent on Sunday their main building to a place of worship. We had the public hearing. We had a community meeting beforehand. And the nice thing about the Braddock District is, the people that came in '96 came back in 2011. We have the same neighbors. So - - we have one new neighbor. We had a couple new ones, but we have one new one. And we met - - the applicant met with them. We had meetings in the Supervisor's office between these neighbors, between these applicants. We had a public hearing. And I would like to say that at the public hearing - - I'm going through because I really feel the school has not disappointed us. They're the same wonderful group that we dealt with in '96. When they heard the problems that came, there was no dragging of the feet; there was no "Nope, I won't do it. I've got the land," which we hear in many cases in other districts. This organization went to each of these neighbors that complained and they said, "Let's try and fix it." I'm happy to reply that what we have before us tonight, I can very wholeheartedly recommend approval of. One of the loudest objectors, Jonathan Meisner, who backs right up to it and said it borders on them, met with him yesterday and he had nothing but words of praise for how wonderful the school was, that they came to him, they talked to him. And I think we have new conditions that you all received. You can see where the school has fine-tuned a lot of them. I just want to call your attention to a couple that I feel that are some things that they really addressed. One of the things that - - the complaints that came in at our public hearing was the fact that they had promised to do some landscaping and it wasn't done. The arborist has gone out. We have attached to this the landscaping that was agreed upon. Another complaint that came out from one of the speakers was, "Well! They just did this; they did this..." So this time they had very nicely put all of the conditions in. They have Port-A-Johns. They have drawn those in. We have recognized those. The carpooling has really been refined. It's a wonderful little document that's included. It's included, so we won't be going by "He said, she said;" "They promised, they didn't promise." The one thing that came out from many of the objectives - - all except one - - was the fact of the fields in the back, and the use of the fields, and the tournaments, and blah, blah, blah - - this applicant, to address those concerns, has said - - and I think this is remarkable - - on weekends,

non-school-related outdoor games shall be limited to either two on Saturday or two on Sunday. There will only be two games on the weekend. They have their choice. And the Sunday games can't start until one o'clock, and it's from one to nine on Sunday. So I think that takes care of the fear that any of the neighbors would have concerning soccer tournaments going on there. Like I said, the school response - - they're not trying to pull anything over - - and I'm just, I'm very pleased that they have continued to be the good neighbors that they were. And they realize that they're with a residential. And they realize that they're looking. And they - - if they're going to really go forth as their program grows - - which I hope it does - - that they're going to have to find other places to do some of the loud things. They did mention to me the other day, they've got an agreement with a big church down the road to use for shuttling and stuff. I think what people fail to realize - - just two doors east of where this is located is George Mason University and their 2,000-slot parking lot. So, I mean, in my mind this little school with 700 students, K through 12, next to George Mason, is sort of like, if you'll pardon the pun, David and Goliath. I think David's done a good job - a better job than Goliath has done - in responding to the neighbors. I really appreciate what this applicant has done. And I would like to enter into the record the letters that we received regarding this case. They came in via the internet. To my knowledge we haven't received any by regular US Postage mail, but the letters are from James and Barbara Hill, Gerald (*sic*) and Cathy Dache, Paul and Deborah Petzrick, and there is a letter of complaint by a Jeremy Epstein. Now let me say this; all of the people that testified, all of the people that had objections, received on Friday a copy of the new proposed development conditions with a follow up by the Supervisor's office. If you have any problems, any questions, any concerns, please notify us. Outside of Mr. Meisner, no one notified us. And Mr. Meisner said he was so pleased to think that someone listened to him. He was really excited that - - so I don't know where he came from - - but we told him that in Braddock we listen to our citizens and the applicants do also. The reason I'm wandering on is it has an October date, so Jeanette is not going to stay up all night tonight typing this verbatim. But I feel it's gone so long that... Yes, it has - both the verbatim and the case. Mr. Chairman, it is with great pleasure -

Vice Chairman Alcorn: Ms. Harsel.

Commissioner Harsel: I MOVE IN THE CASE OF SPECIAL EXCEPTION AMENDMENT 96-B-010-02, approval - - THAT WE RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS THAT THEY APPROVE SEA 96-B-01-02 (*sic*), WITH THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT CONDITIONS DATED SEPTEMBER 9TH, 2011.

Commissioner de la Fe: Second.

Vice Chairman Alcorn: Seconded by Commissioner de la Fe. Any discussion on that motion? All those in favor of recommending to the Board of Supervisors approval of SEA 96-B-010-02, subject to the development conditions dated September 9th, 2011, please say aye.

Commissioners: Aye.

Vice Chairman Alcorn: All opposed? That motion carries, and unfortunately the Chairman has to abstain; was not present at the public hearing.

Commissioner Donahue: Mr. Chairman?

Vice Chairman Alcorn: Yes.

Commissioner Donahue: I also was absent.

Vice Chairman Alcorn: And Commissioner Donahue –

Commissioner Donahue: Also abstain.

Vice Chairman Alcorn: Two abstentions.

Commissioner Harsel: And I forgot to add one of the new things. And Mr. Hart, they did look at your concerns. They are showing a storage place and they're making it very clear to any place of worship that rents - - if they die or get married it has to be between nine and one on Sunday. Otherwise, forget it. And they can't use the grounds, the soccer field, for the reception. They're going to make sure that every lease that is signed has a copy of these conditions.

Commissioner Hart: I wasn't – Mr. Chairman, I wasn't necessarily objecting to that. I thought the conditions should reflect what they were doing, if they needed to do it, the conditions should contain it.

Commissioner Harsel: It is. It is.

Commissioner Hart: Nothing wrong with funerals or weddings at other times of day.

Commissioner Harsel: But the applicant felt very strongly, nine to one. Mr. Chairman, I have three other motions –

Vice Chairman Alcorn: – Harsel, please.

Commissioner Harsel: – and they're just supposedly waivers. I MOVE THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS APPROVAL OF THE WAIVER OF THE BARRIER REQUIREMENT ALONG ALL PROPERTY LINES IN FAVOR OF THAT SHOWN ON THE SEA PLAT.

Commissioner de la Fe: Second.

Vice Chairman Alcorn: Seconded by Commissioner de la Fe. Any discussion on that motion? All those in favor of the motion, say aye.

Commissioners: Aye.

Vice Chairman Alcorn: All opposed? That motion carries. Commissioner Harsel.

Commissioner Harsel: Furthermore, Mr. Chairman, I MOVE THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMEND to the Board - - THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS APPROVE A MODIFICATION OF THE TRANSITIONAL SCREENING REQUIREMENT ALONG ALL PROPERTY BOUNDARIES IN FAVOR OF THAT SHOWN ON THE SEA PLAT.

Commissioner de la Fe: Second.

Vice Chairman Alcorn: Seconded by Commissioner de la Fe. Any discussion on that motion? All those in favor of the motion, say aye.

Commissioners: Aye.

Vice Chairman Alcorn: All opposed? That motion carries. Same abstentions, though, for all these.

Commissioner Harsel: And lastly, Mr. Chairman, I MOVE THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMEND THAT THE Board of Supervisors direct the - - please - - THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS PLEASE DIRECT THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES TO WAIVE THE REQUIREMENT FOR INTERPARCEL ACCESS TO FOREST DRIVE.

Commissioner de la Fe: Second.

Vice Chairman Alcorn: Seconded by Commissioner de la Fe. Any discussion on that motion? All those in favor of the motion, say aye.

Commissioners: Aye.

Vice Chairman Alcorn: All opposed? That motion carries. Same abstentions.

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(The motions carried by votes of 8-0-2, with Commissioners Alcorn and Donahue abstaining; Commissioners Hall and Murphy absent from the meeting.)

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