

be made from the public regarding the issue at hand. One should be sure that if he has any comments that he does it during the 20-minute segment of the meeting.

At this time Harvey Smith called the first order of business.

CONDITIONAL USE & CONCURRENT VARIANCE

13-0124

CU2013-005576 & CV2013-00577

ILM ACADEMY/ HAMMAD SOPHIE

1200 Grimes Bridge Road

Land Lot: 487

Brad Townsend stated that this is a conditional use as well as a concurrent variance for the subject property at 1200 Grimes Bridge Road. The applicant is requesting that the portion of the property that is zoned OP to allow them to remove the parking and install a green space and a play area for children that are going to be occupying the school. As one will recall, this is the old post office location. It was owned at one time by the city of Roswell, and then owned by Grady Hospital. Grady Hospital has sold it to the school and they are allowed to occupy the current building for a school. Their request is to locate in the blue portion, which is the OP section of the zoning on the property for them to place a play area and green space. This would remove the parking in this location. As one can see in the development of the site plan, the existing parking and loading area is all to the rear or to the west of the current building. There is parking along the other three sides of the building, access points on Colonial Drive, access points on Grimes Bridge Road and two access points on Maxwell. Townsend presented a preliminary sketch as to how the green space area would be utilized. This is a conceptual site plan that the applicant is requesting.

Staff is recommending approval of this application with three conditions.

1. The site plan is used conceptually.
2. The perimeter fence as well as the landscape/play area should both be reviewed and approved by the Design Review Board.
3. Staff recommends approval of the concurrent variance that allows them to enclose the current loading area of where the loading building is located. It is just too close to the existing R2 designated area. If one looks at the building area of that location he will see the current loading area and the current R2 designated property. It is just existing too close and they want relief to be able to enclose this loading area.

Brad Townsend asked if there were any questions of staff from the Planning Commission.

Bryan Chamberlain asked that in converting the OP portion to park area how many parking spaces would be given up? Townsend stated 33. Chamberlain asked how many parking spaces would be remaining. Townsend stated 66-67. Chamberlain asked how

 **DRAFT**

those 66 remaining spaces compare to what is required for the property in its newly configured...Townsend stated that they could probably remove another 30 spaces and still meet the requirements. The school calculation, its teachers, administrative staff and whatever overflow for parents and things of that nature but it is also staff's understanding that some of the teachers are also parents so there wouldn't need a double space for that type of calculation either.

Bryan Chamberlain asked if there has been any thinking in terms of morning drop off and delivery, afternoon pickup. Has there a traffic flow plan developed for this relative to one major street and two minor streets? Car pooling?

Brad Townsend stated that there has not been something like that submitted to the city.

Harvey Smith asked if there were any other questions for Brad Townsend. Hearing none, Smith asked the applicant to come forward and make his presentation.

Michael Kidd stated that he was the landscape architect for the project and he is going to speak briefly about the concept plan that they have. As it was mentioned, this is currently a little more than 18,000 square feet of impervious pavement for a parking lot. That is all going to be removed for a multi-purpose outdoor play space and green space. The intent is to provide activities for play and recreation, physical activities for the kids as well as outdoor classroom space and educational opportunities. They are trying to design as many things as they can with multi-purposes.

Just to kind of walk through the design real quick, this is Colonial Park Drive up here, the main school building would be here and they have created a primary entry point right here in this area which might end up with some sort of arbor structure to signify kind of the gateway into that play space. Some of the elements they are still working through in terms of budget and how this is going to play out. But the basic structure of the site plan is pretty set. But coming through that arbor, one would have an initial outdoor classroom space, a small space next to the vegetable garden, which is up here along the north side of that space. The primary reason for that location is that it will receive pretty direct sunlight, almost all day, which one would need for the vegetable garden. They would provide a landscape buffer on the north side of that between the garden and the road. And at the far end in the corner where the Dumpster is currently located, they are proposing a small little utility area for that garden, which would consist of a little utility shed, possible a cistern to collect rainwater from that utility shed to be used in the garden itself, and then a small compost area to recycle to green waste from the garden.

The primary element of the green space is a six-foot wide pathway that runs along the side of the garden and then loops down around the lawn area. That provides kids kind of a loop path to walk around during recess, or jog or do some physical activity. That also connects all of the other elements in the plan. They are looking at some play elements that would go in the lawn such as a four-square court or a labyrinth, things of that nature, which are fairly easy to build and do not cost a lot of money and still provide that kind of

multi-use for the children. The first garden element that one would see coming into the space is a pollinator garden which is essentially like a butterfly garden planted with native plants that attract pollinators for the garden itself, bees, butterflies, things that will pollinate the vegetables that are planted in the garden.

On the very western edge, this area in yellow, that would be the area designated for the play structures themselves and these are most likely going to be small elements that might end up being built by the school itself or with volunteer labor. Probably, primarily out of wood, lower structures that would basically just provide some balance and physical activity for the children.

In the southern portion of the loop trail they are proposing a small grass berm with a little stage area in the middle that could be used for an outdoor classroom space as well. And then further around that there is a smaller outdoor classroom space between the lawn and the building. Finally they are proposing a small rain garden to help treat some of the storm water runoff from the existing parking lot and/or the roof of the building as well as provide an educational component for the children teaching them about storm water and the importance of treating that and the different elements that are out there to do that.

On the very southern edge they have the 40-foot tree buffer which currently has some existing vegetation. They are proposing for that to stay and to increase that vegetation in that area. The existing site plan currently has a 10 to 12-foot wide strip of parking that is in the tree buffer now. So, that would be removed and that grass berm would also serve essentially as an earthen berm to provide for noise mitigation for the residential property on that side.

Michael Kidd asked if there were any questions from the Planning Commission.

Harvey Smith stated that he thinks it is a nice plan. He asked if any of the Commissioners had questions for Michael Kidd.

Hearing none, Harvey Smith stated that he thinks Kidd did a good job. He will move on to the next portion of the meeting.

Smith asked if there was anyone in the public who would like to come forward that is in favor of the project. Seeing that there is no one here tonight to speak in favor, Smith asked if there was anyone here in opposition to the project. For the record no one is present to speak against the project. At this point Harvey Smith closed the public portion of this topic and will move on to the Commissioners.

Smith asked the Planning Commissioners if they had any questions or comments for staff or for the applicant.

 **DRAFT**

Joe Piontek stated that he is thrilled with this use. Turning that post office into a school and tearing up what looks like about 20,000 feet of concrete or asphalt and turning it into a park, this is a good outcome.

Bryan Chamberlain stated that one of the concerns or questions that he has really if the whole traffic flow as it relates to morning and afternoon drop-off and pick-up of students. Some of the private schools that are in existing shopping center spaces have a lot of parking lot where the staging of the cars for pick-up in the afternoon . And the backing up of cars coming through and dropping off in the morning is not impeding traffic flow. What Chamberlain is seeing here is not a lot of space to stage cars, therefore the assumption he has is the cars are going to spill out onto one of the three side roads if not all of them depending on how the movement of traffic flows through the property. He is curious as to how that is being addressed.

Hammad Sophie stated that he was part of the board of the school. He stated that they are a small school. Right now they have about 120 or so students, which come from close to 75 or so families. Out of the 120 students about 50 percent are siblings, that is from the same family and about 10 or so families carpool to their current location and will most likely carpool to this location as well because it is a little bit further from where they are right now. They are located right across from the hospital in the Roswell Business Center right now off Alpharetta Hwy. He thinks that on a daily basis they get about 30 to 40 cars for pick up and for drop off at this point. They intend to keep the school a small school. They are not going to go to a 500 or 600-student school. At the max he thinks they would probably go up to 180 or 190 students. And again, a lot of those are from the same families.

Hammad Sophie stated that he would like to thank the staff for the approval recommendation on this thing. He did notice that there weren't any comments from the transportation department regarding any traffic and he does not believe they were asked to submit anything for traffic. The building itself is commercially zoned so if it weren't for the fact that they wanted the playground in the back, school use would have been an allowed use for this property.

What the applicant has been doing is they met with the neighbors at the neighborhood meeting a few weeks ago and the neighbors also raised some concerns about traffic in the area. Sophie stated that they welcome those concerns and they welcome the fact that they would like to work with them and either minimize or eliminate traffic going through the residential road, which would be Maxwell Road down here. They did talk about some of the strategies that they could use to have the maximum number of cars on the lot itself to avoid traffic backing up on the streets itself.

At this point they don't have a final plan but they have some different strategies that they could use. One of the things that they were suggesting was for traffic to come in on Colonial Park Drive through this north entrance and drop off here in front of the school building. This is where the drop-off is going to be and leaving on this exit on Maxwell



DRAFT

Road and making a left actually onto Grimes Bridge Road. As stated, most of their families at this point are north of the school and they will have to take Alpharetta Hwy. south to get to the current location. That is one of the proposals but again, it depends. They will try different things when the school starts to see what is the best efficient way that they can use the property. But again, Sophie believes that if they can get cars in on the Colonial Park Drive side they have this whole site on Grimes Bridge Road and possibly if that is even a problem they could connect this parking lot on this side with this parking lot and have even a bigger flow around,

One of the other things that would effect this would be if they are not granted the conditional use for the playground in the back, they would still want to put a playground somewhere on the property. And if they were to put it one the Colonial Park side or on the Grimes Bridge Road side that would create actually a bigger problem with traffic flow on the property in Sophie's opinion. That is why they thought the back area which is kind of isolated would be the best area for the park and the playground.

Hammad Sophie stated that he hopes that addresses the issue with the question that was raised.

Bryan Chamberlain stated that at this point it is kind of a "we'll see what happens once the cars flow."

Sophie stated that they are thinking about some of those different approaches, to come in on Colonial Park Drive and then exit on Maxwell Road. That would be one approach.

Chamberlain asked what the building load for students was. Brad Townsend stated that was figured by the fire marshal. Townsend does not know that number. Chamberlain asked if this approach overloads at 180 students. Townsend stated that he did not know.

Hammad Sophie stated that their architect is present so he could probably answer that question.

Abdul stated that he was the architect for the project. The occupancy load for this building is 489 and this occupancy has been determined by the code and by the fire marshal but they know right now that the existing school doesn't even exceed maybe 200. But the building can take up to 489.

Bryan Chamberlain stated that he had seen in the architect's notes that there was a possible future consideration of an additional building. He was trying to determine where would that building go if the applicant added an additional building in the future.

Hammad Sophie stated that they were thinking about a longer term plan to put maybe a gym or something like on this lot. At this point what they will do is in addition to the play area in the back, they will use this probably as a makeshift basketball, half-corners and things like that for the older students. But that would be a possible expansion for the



DRAFT

future or they could add a second floor on the existing building. That would also be a possibility. That is what the applicant is thinking of.

Bryan Chamberlain asked if it was the plan to have this K-8 forever, or are they also wanting to have a high school. Sophie stated that at this point it is K-8.

Harvey Smith stated that he had a comment on the traffic question. He had an office on Colonial Park Drive and when it was used as a post office, he can imagine regarding the traffic, this is probably going to be a less intense use for that piece of property than when the post office was there. There were people constantly coming and going throughout the day. Smith stated that he had a question for Michael Kidd or maybe Hammad Sophie could answer it.

On the fencing, Chamberlain knows that the Design Review Board will look at that but did the applicant talk about the fence on the playground area, the proposed fence, or did Chamberlain miss that. What type of fence are they proposing?

Michael Kidd stated that he didn't mention that in the original presentation but the perimeter fence around the playground, what they are proposing right now would be a simple four foot aluminum picket fence similar to what one would see around a pool for the safety of the children. It is a fairly common solution for playgrounds and pools and things of that nature. And it is probably the least expensive option that they can do that would achieve the goal of safety and provide something that is still relatively aesthetic.

Harvey Smith stated that along with landscaping that is going to help screen it and beautify it so to speak. That is for Design Review Board.

Michael Kidd stated that they will have to present the specs and the elevations of that fence to the Design Review Board and they will work with them to make sure that that meets their needs.

Harvey Smith thanked Michael Kidd. Smith asked if there were any further comments or questions for the staff or the applicant from the Commission. If there are no further comments or questions, Smith called for a motion.

Someone spoke from the public, but Smith reminded her that the public portion has been closed.

Motion

Joe Piontek made a motion that the Planning Commission recommend approval of the conditional use and concurrent variance CU2013-00576 and CV2013-00577 at 1200 Grimes Bridge Road.

Lisa DeCarbo seconded the motion.

 **DRAFT**

Harvey Smith called the question.

Brad Townsend stated that for clarification to the motion, adding the three staff conditions. Joe Piontek stated that he stood corrected.

Harvey Smith clarified that the motion includes the three staff conditions.

Smith asked that the record shall reflect that the motion passed unanimously. 4-0

PRELIMINARY PLAT

13-0233

2013-01109

ROSWELL MANOR

JEH HOMES/JIM JACOBI

1580 Old Alabama Road

Land Lot: 611 and 612

Brad Townsend stated that this was a preliminary plat for an actual rezoning that the Planning Commission saw a couple of months ago. This is for Old Alabama Town Homes that was actually converted to a single-family development that major discussion at the board was the requirement for two sidewalks on both sides of the street. It was conditioned by mayor and city council for them to include sidewalks along the inner circle. The actual plat has a couple of fewer lots once they engineered everything and determined it. So they have actually fewer homes on the preliminary plat than were approved as part of the rezoning.

Staff recommends approval of the preliminary plat. It was approved for 81 lots; the preliminary plat has 73 lots.

Bryan Chamberlain stated that during the Planning Commission's review of this there was discussion of lots being given up to the city of Roswell or used for access to green way trails. What became of that?

Brad Townsend stated that a lot of discussion related to cutting through the property. At some time they were looking at cutting along the northern property line. Once transportation actually went out and walked the site the grades and the topography are just too difficult for that to take place so they are looking at other locations farther up Big Creek for that connection to maybe take place but for this particular development there is a common parcel located right here. This is a drainage area. They will create a walking path with probably steps in graded to this location that will allow them to get out to Big Creek right away. One would not have to go out of the development to at least walk to the sidewalk to ride a bike or something of that nature.

 **DRAFT**