

March 5th, 2013

City of Roswell
38 Hill Street, Suite G-10
Roswell, GA 30075



Subject: Letter of Intent for Conditional Use Application and Concurrent Variance at 1200 Grimes Bridge Road, Roswell.

We are a small, non-profit, private elementary school that recently purchased the property on 1200 Grimes Bridge Road for our use as a school. We intend to start using the property - after renovations are complete - for the academic year starting in August 2013.

We are submitting the following application for your consideration and approval:

- a. A Conditional Use Application for the O-P portion of our property; and
- b. A Concurrent Variance to extend and enclose the Loading Dock Area

A. Conditional Use

While approximately 3/4ths of the property is zoned C3, the remaining 1/4th is zoned O-P. The school intends to convert the O-P area - which is currently a parking lot - into an eco-friendly green space/park suitable for various outdoor activities. Currently, this portion of the property does not allow for any school related use under current O-P zoning.

History:

The property under proposal was a United States Post Office until 2000/2001. It was transferred to Fulton-Dekalb Hospital Authority in 2006. FHDA did not use the property during its ownership. As such the property has been vacant and unused for the last 13 years and is in a state of disrepair.

Project Details:

ILM Academy, which has been doing business in Roswell since August 2008, purchased the 1200 Grimes Bridge property in December 2012 through donor support. The school had been searching for a suitable property in the vicinity of our current location since early 2012. A new facility was needed to accommodate growth in our student enrollment, reduce operating costs (rent), and enhance our student learning experience by providing a larger school building. Most importantly, the new facility was needed to provide outdoor learning and play spaces for our students - who had been using indoor spaces and occasional trips to Roswell public parks for outdoor activities.

ILM Academy intends to renovate the current old, vacant, dark, ill-maintained building into a vibrant, attractive, cheerful, sunny school house with an accompanying green space/park on the rear side of the property. The area under proposal (the O-P part of the property) is the most suitable place for the park on this site. Not being able to convert this area from parking to park would seriously inhibit the school's business, growth and prospects for long term ownership of the property.

The following elements are being considered as part of the conceptual design of the green space: play structures, walking trail, picnic/eating tables, water fountain/pond, greenhouse and/or vegetable/fruit patch, outdoor meeting area.

B. Concurrent Variance:

The existing building has a covered loading dock and concrete pad site in the rear, which is 23' inside the 50' building setback. The loading dock poses a serious student safety concern and has no use for the school as is. We are requesting a concurrent variance to enclose the existing dock area and if possible, to allow extending the building onto the concrete slab.

We look forward to going through the conditional use and concurrent variance process and hope for approval on both of our applications.

ILM Academy has engaged the services of AME Architects for architectural services. AME is working in parallel to complete the design documents required for various permits related to building renovation. The school will finalize contractors in the next few weeks.

Thank You,



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Written Justification for Concurrent Variance:

An applicant requesting consideration of a Concurrent Variance to any provision of the Zoning Ordinance shall provide written justification that one or more of the following condition(s) exist:

- 1. There are extraordinary and exceptional conditions or practical difficulties pertaining to the particular piece of property in question because of its size, shape, topography that are not applicable to other lands or structures in the same district.**
- 2. Any information whereby a literal interpretation of the provisions of this ordinance would effectively deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties of the district in which the applicant's property is located.**
- 3. Any information supporting that granting the variance requested will not confer upon the property of the applicant any special privileges that are denied to other properties of the district in which the applicant's property is located.**
- 4. Any information that the requested variance will be in harmony with the purpose of the intent of this ordinance and will not be injurious to the neighborhood or to the general welfare.**
- 5. Any information that special circumstances are not the result of the actions of the applicant.**
- 6. Any information that the variance request is the minimum variance that will make possible the proposed use of the land, building, or structure in the use district proposed.**
- 7. Any information that the variance shall not permit a use of land, buildings, or structures, which is not permitted by right in the zoning district or overlay district involved.**

We are a small, non-profit PreK-8 private school that intends to renovate the current old, vacant, dark, windowless, ill-maintained building into a vibrant, attractive, natural light filled school with an accompanying green space / park / recreational area in the back. We have submitted an application for conditional use to build a green space on the O-P portion of our property. In addition, we are requesting a Concurrent Variance to extend and enclose the rear open dock area as part of the school.

#2:

The open loading dock is a security and safety issue for our students since we will be operating an elementary school on the property. In addition, this variance would increase the usable square footage for the school, by creating much needed space for the school's future program and enrollment needs.

Furthermore, the L-shaped setback on the property not only cuts into part of the existing structure, but also makes enclosing the dock+pad area more expensive. Furthermore, it creates an undesirable back elevation for the building that doesn't match with the other elements of the property - the park and the rest of the structure. If granted a variance, the school keep the overall look/elevation of the rear similar to that on other sides.

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The property is within the Commercial Corridor and Opportunity Zones for Roswell. Renovating an empty, unused building to house a high performing, non-profit, school on this C-3 property aligns well with City ordinances and the 2030 Development Plan.

