

AN ORDINANCE GRANTING APPROVAL OF A SPECIAL USE FOR PRIVATE MONTESSORI SCHOOL AT 2720 KIRCHOFF ROAD

WHEREAS, Janis Smith, Still Waters Preschool Co-Op and Educational Services (“Petitioner”), with authorization from the owner, Community Church of Rolling Meadows (“Owner”), petitioned the Planning and Zoning Commission (“PZC”) to consider approving a special use for a private Montessori school located on the property legally described in Ordinance Exhibit 1, and commonly known as 2720 Kirchoff Road (“Premises”); and

WHEREAS, the PZC, after notice of public hearing as required by law, conducted a public hearing on April 5, 2022 at a regular meeting; and

WHEREAS, after taking and considering all testimony presented at the public hearing, the PZC accepted the Special Use findings of fact enumerated below and recommended that the City Council approve a special use for a private Montessori school:

Special Use Standards

All special uses are required to show evidence that the standards listed in the Code are met. Each standard is listed below in **bold**, with the finding for that standards listed in *italics*.

Standard 1: Potential impact: The special use shall not unduly impact adjacent or nearby properties or the general health, safety, and welfare of the general area and overall community. Impacts to be considered include ingress and egress to the site, potential traffic impacts from cars and trucks, and impacts to the appearance and character of the area.

Findings:

Traffic impacts from this site will be minimal. There will likely be a maximum of 15 cars on site at any given time, and the lot opens onto one of the City’s main thoroughfares. There is enough capacity to manage the few cars on site.

Standard 2: Consistency: The proposed special use shall be in keeping with the recommendations and intent of the City's Comprehensive Plan, Official Map, and all other plans and policies adopted by the city.

Findings:

This lot has been acknowledged by the Comprehensive Plan to be a religious use location. The requested Montessori use is not accessory to the Church, but is in a similar vein – religious education. No additional modifications or changes are being requested. As such, this use is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Standard 3: Trend of development: Special uses should be a logical extension of the trend of development in the area around the subject site and not interfere with the use and development of adjacent or nearby properties.

Findings:

No changes are proposed to the site. The use will not impact any nearby development.

Standard 4: Public facilities: Adequate public facilities and services shall be available to serve the special use and the property on which it is located; including, without limitation, storm water, sanitary sewer, water service, public safety service, and waste disposal services.

Findings:

Adequate utilities are already located on site.

Standard 5: Site design: The on-site development design shall be understandable to users, safe, and maintainable in terms of road and pedestrian patterns, preserve natural features and incorporate such features into a maintainable development, and provide adequate parking, loading, and site maintenance.

Findings:

No changes to the site are being proposed. It is already used as an assembly use in much heavier conditions than this one being proposed.

and;

WHEREAS, the PZC has submitted its report and recommendation to the Mayor and City Council of the City of Rolling Meadows, which report has been considered by the Mayor and City Council; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has received and reviewed the recommendations and findings of fact of the PZC; and

WHEREAS, the City Council accepts the findings of fact recommended by the PZC and has determined that approving a special use for a private Montessori school will not impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property, or unreasonably increase the congestion in public streets, or increase the danger of fire, or endanger the public safety, or unreasonably diminish or impair established property within the surrounding area, or in any other respect impair the public health, safety, comfort, or welfare of the inhabitants of the City; and

WHEREAS, the Corporate Authorities of the City of Rolling Meadows have determined that it is advisable, necessary and in the best interest of the City to approve a special use for a private Montessori school.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Rolling Meadows, Illinois:

Section 1: The recitals set forth above are incorporate herein by reference.

Section 2: A special use is approved for the Petitioner for a private Montessori school on the Premises, consistent with the information and details attached hereto as Exhibit 1.

Section 3: All ordinances or portions thereof in conflict with this ordinance are hereby repealed.

Section 4: Should any provision of this Ordinance be declared invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining provisions will remain in full force and effect the same as if the invalid provision had not been a part of this Ordinance.

Section 5: This Ordinance shall be printed and published in pamphlet form by order of the City Council of Rolling Meadows, Illinois.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the City Council of Rolling Meadows, Cook County, Illinois this 10th day of May, 2022.

AYES: Reyez, Sanoica, McHale, Budmats, O'Brien, Vinezeano, Bisesi

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 0



Joe Gallo, Mayor

ATTEST:



Judith Brose, Deputy City Clerk

Published this 11th day of May, 2022.



Judith Brose, Deputy City Clerk

**Ordinance Exhibit 1
Legal Description of Premises**

Commonly known as: 2720 Kirchoff Road

PINS: 02-36-210-023-0000

LOT "N" IN ROLLING MEADOWS UNIT NO. 5, BEING A SUBDIVISION OF PART OF THE NORTH HALF OF SECTION 36, TOWNSHIP 42 NORTH, RANGE 10 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN IN COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

Exhibit 1

Introduction

Greetings. I am Janis Kay Smith, president of the board of the non-profit, 501(c)(3), Still Waters Preschool Co-op & Educational Services. Our parent participation preschool began in 2006 under the umbrella of Covenant Presbyterian Church as Covenant Preschool Co-op. Children ages three to six years old participated in the classroom which never had more than 16 students and usually two parents with one or two teachers. It was a unique joining of the building code restrictions for programs for early childhood and our goal to model to parents the kinds of things they can expect of and teach their own children. A parent or their representative for each family was required to stay on the property during the hours of operation. These parents scheduled to rotate into the preschool classroom to observe and practice the Montessori and other methods we use for teaching in what might be considered a normally functioning preschool program that includes Bible literacy and Montessori methods.

Changing Locations

In 2017 Covenant Presbyterian Church notified us that the next school year would be the last that they would be able to host the preschool simply because in their use of their own building it was determined they needed the classroom for their youth and had no other space to offer us. A friend and former preschool family discovered a possible place at their church for us to re-start in the town of Forest Park. We moved there in June of 2018 and set up a beautiful classroom. We established a transformed non-profit from the previous iteration giving Still Waters Preschool Co-op & Educational Services the legal standards and protections we had under Covenant Presbyterian Church. We held sample classes, hosted open houses, placed signs and flyers in locations where parents with young children frequent, talked with neighbors, attended church community events, and even drew attention with my pet macaw. The location, visibility, parent participation vs. drop-off aspect, neighborhood demographics, public school system preschool options, local churches dwindling, all seemed to be negative factors as we tried to find a small core of families from which to build. During COVID, not being a daycare but a parent participation option, we could not do anything especially because the church hosting us had closed their building to any outside groups.

In February 2021 our host church in Forest Park notified us that they had changed their building plans for reopening after COVID and had determined their youth needed the room where our classroom was located. Therefore, by May 1st of 2021, we had moved Still Waters Preschool Co-op & Educational Services classroom furniture and teaching materials either to the Sunday school room that my current church uses at Community Church of Rolling Meadows, to my basement and garage, or to a Public Storage unit we had rented.

At a Crossroads

I spoke to anyone I knew about possibilities for a new place and about the possibility that it was just time to let go of this preschool service idea. The interim pastor at Community Church of Rolling Meadows had observed my impromptu Sunday school lessons for a few of our young children at Christ Covenant Church of Chicago in the entryway before our regular afternoon worship services, intended primarily to keep the children positively occupied while the adults prepared the building. That pastor suggested that I write a letter to Community Church of Rolling Meadows describing our need and our program. That I did believing that I should look first to relationships and opportunities nearest at hand before seeking a place with those whom I did not yet know.

Churches Empty During Weekdays

As with many churches across our land, Community Church of Rolling Meadows has much activity every Sunday and additional activity on evenings when various groups gather and for special events throughout the year. Yet these buildings are largely unused during the week in the daytime because they cannot qualify for drop-off preschools without millions of dollars spent to remodel. Our parent participation program allows such buildings to become alive with little children and parents with younger or older siblings gathering to learn at various levels in a small community of mutual support.

A New Home Possible in Rolling Meadows

Community Church of Rolling Meadows offered Still Waters Preschool Co-op & Educational Services a new home. It would be centered in shared use of classroom #111 right next to the room #110 which is used as a study for our pastor and a Sunday school room for our children at Christ Covenant Church of Chicago. In addition to the child-sized furniture and the wealth of learning materials brought out of storage and creatively arranged in room #111, our future little students would have well-supervised access to the grassy yard where the children might plant a small garden off to the side, enjoy their child-prepared snacks outdoors on warmer days, and release butterflies they watched grow from little caterpillars. The room #108 would be available to parents with their babies, toddlers, and/or older homeschooled children when these parents are not serving in the classroom. The restrooms for the preschool are near this parent room. As a 'co-op' the days we meet would be determined largely by the needs of our participating families. Previously, we have met Tuesdays and Thursdays mainly in the mornings. Community Church of Rolling Meadows has not restricted the number of weekdays we could use that shared space and we only have spoken of daytime use.

Summary

Still Waters Preschool Co-op & Educational Services is unique. We trust that in this community of Rolling Meadows there will be at least a small number of families who will be drawn to the program we offer. Of first importance to us, is teaching Bible stories and all of life from a biblical worldview of joy and gratitude. Growing out of that is learning about all of life as an expression of God's good creation worthy to be respected and cared for in a proper ordering of priorities. People as God's image bearers have a special place in that creation and so we must learn to respect one another and honor those whom God has given to us for instruction and training. Parents are the first and best teachers for their own children so as teachers we want to model and advise and learn from them as well. Montessori materials can provide a peaceful internalization of concepts of various kinds and aids in learning self-control, respect, and honor even of material things and especially in sharing in a learning community. Every new place brings new people and new learning. We look forward to being able to begin learning through Still Waters Preschool Co-op & Educational Services in a new home in Rolling Meadows at the Community Church.

Hours of operation

Still Waters projects that initially it will operate two mornings per week from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Set up and take down may take an additional 2 hours before and after especially on the first and last class days of the week because this is a shared space with other groups meeting in these rooms in the evenings or weekend. Starting with Tuesday and Thursday leaves open the possibility of maximizing the program by having a second session on Monday/Wednesday or Wednesday/Friday serving a different group of families and doubling the number that could be involved. Beyond that, negotiating extra space would depend upon Community Church of Rolling Meadows.

Room Use Details

Room #111 (676 sq.ft.) is the main classroom. Estimated occupancy is up to 12 preschool children, 1 or 2 teachers and 1 or 2 parents.

Children gather on a circle rug in the middle of this room for full group activities with teachers. They choose their own activities from the open shelves, display benches, special low cabinets, etc. and carry these to individual "work rugs" and tables for smaller group or individual learning practice. Children help prepare a snack which they serve "family-style" after setting the table with tablecloth, napkins, and dishes. Children participate in cleaning up after the snack including washing dishes. These are all normal activities for a Montessori-influenced preschool classroom.

This room contains 8 open shelf cabinets (4' wide, 1'3" deep, 2'8" high) with casters, a musical keyboard used by another group, a stack of 14 adult chairs and three 8' long folding tables used by other groups (stored behind our open shelf cabinets), a shared refrigerator (2'6" x 2'10", 6' high) and tall storage cabinet (2'6" x 1'9", 6' high) owned by CCRM, a built-in counter with storage cupboards (11' x 2'2", 3' high) belonging to CCRM but used by the preschool, 3 tables for learning

activities and eating snack (4'x2', 1'4"-1'8"-1'10" high), a food preparation table (5'x2', 2' high), 2 benches used as materials display shelves (3'1"-4'x1'-10", 1'7"-1'4" high), 10 small chairs and 3 low stacking stools, a few other low, small cabinets and a shelf for particular learning materials [geometric cabinet (1'6"x1'3", 10" high), continents map puzzles cabinet (2'x1'6", 1'6" high), cylinder block shelf (1'9"x1'2", 2' high), metal insets self (2'7"x7", 2'6" high), self-serve water dispensers, cleaning supplies cabinet (1'8"x1'9", 2'10" high)]. By each of the 2 windows is a wicker plant holder (2'4"-2'6"x11", 2'6" high) with live pothos plants.

Room #110 (494 sq.ft.) is a Sunday school room with open shelves of Bible teaching materials used by both the Sunday school teacher and children (Christ Covenant Church of Chicago) and the preschool children led by their teacher. Unfortunately, this room is the only storage space for extra tables, chairs, book displays, and various other items used for both Sunday school and preschool activities. It is to be used as an overflow room for parents with babies or homeschooled children. There is a steel door between Rooms #111 and #110. Both rooms have doors to the hallway Room #101. The teacher for both Sunday school class and preschool is the same person currently.

Room #108 (494 sq.ft.) is the mothers' room for the preschool where mothers have a workspace while they stay on site during the preschool hours to care for their babies, teach their own older children, or do private work. There could be up to 10 adults with 6 babies or toddlers and 6 school age children. This room has 3 adult 4' diameter tables with 12 folding chairs belonging to CCRM that must be left in place and many Sunday school teaching materials that preschool families are not to touch. The preschool will move in as needed a toddler table (2'6" square, 12" high) and 2 little chairs, a rolling open shelf (4'x1'3", 3' high) with activities and toys for babies, toddlers, and school-age children, and a small schoolwork table (2'x1'8") with 2 chairs.

Room #101 (7' wide, 153' long from glass doors off the parking lot at east end of hallway to locked double doors leading to the main church building). This is the hallway into which all rooms in the annex open. The preschool uses such a long hallway that leads to the restrooms for large motor activities such as walking on balance boards (1 oak board 8'x4", 2 thick foam boards 10'x6" placed 2' from door wall and never blocking any door) and for 2 book displays (3'x1'7", 2'8" high) from which families can check out books for home use. Between doors for Rooms #111 and #110 there is a large cabinet on wheels which holds individual bins for each child (6'x1'6", 3'1" high) and stays in the hallway. Beside this is a long, low bench (5'10"x9", 1'1" high) over a boot tray where the children sit to remove their boots or shoes. During class hours a (2'x6') mat in front of the large cabinet is where children sit/step to put on or off "inside" shoes or slippers. Near door to Room #111, beside the large cabinet, is the Good Shepherd rolling shelf (1'8"x1'3", 3' high) which contains materials for retelling our signature Bible lesson Psalm 23. Also in the hallway is a small coat rack (3'x1'5", 3'1" high). All items in the hallway are on the wall shared with doors to classrooms and positioned to never obstruct the doors.

Classroom doors are steel, 2'7" wide, which open out into the hallway (Room #101).

Restrooms are standard adult facilities where safe stepstools will be placed for children's comfortable access.

Two external emergency exits from hallway, Room #101, are one at the far east end, double glass doors with crash bars about 6' wide, leading to the parking lot; one across the hallway a little beyond door to Room #111, 3'4" wide, of wood or unknown material, leading to grassy yard.

Access to the basement in the main church building under emergency conditions will be made available to teacher through the double doors just past both Room #111 and exit to grassy yard.

Further descriptions of our previous program with photos are available at stillwaterspreschoolco-op.weebly.com.