



# City of Aurora

44 East Downer Place  
Aurora, Illinois 60505  
www.aurora-il.org

## Legistar History Report

**File Number: 15-00692**

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**Type:** Resolution

**Status:** ATS Review

**Version:** 3

**General Ledger #:**

**In Control:** Planning & Development Committee

**File Created:** 07/31/2015

**File Name:** Montessori School / Liberty St. / Final Plan

**Final Action:**

**Title:** A Resolution Approving a Final Plan for a Montessori School on Lot 1 of Meijer Subdivision located at 4393 Liberty Street.

**Notes:**

**Agenda Date:** 10/15/2015

**Agenda Number:**

**Sponsors:**

**Enactment Date:**

**Attachments:** Exhibit "A-1" Final Plan - 2015-10-05 - 2015.058.pdf, Exhibit "A-2" Landscaping Plan - 2015-10-05 - 2015.058.pdf, Exhibit "A-3" Building and Signage Elevations - 2015-09-24 - 2015.058.pdf, Exhibit "A-4" Fire Access Plan - 2015-10-05 - 2015.058.pdf, Property Research Sheet - 2015-03-12 - 2015.058.pdf, Land Use Petition and Supporting Documentation - 2015-07-30 - 2015.058.pdf, Access Easement Agreement - 2015-07-30 - 2015.058.pdf, Plat of Survey - 2015-07-30 - 2015.058.pdf, Legistar History Report - 2015-10-05 - 2015.058.pdf

**Enactment Number:**

**Planning Case #:** NA21/2-15.058-Fpn

**Hearing Date:**

**Drafter:** tvacek@aurora-il.org

**Effective Date:**

### History of Legislative File

Ver- sion:	Acting Body:	Date:	Action:	Sent To:	Due Date:	Return Date:	Result:
1	Committee of the Whole	08/04/2015	Forward to Planning Council	DST Staff Council (Planning Council)			
	<b>Action Text:</b> This Petition was Forwarded to the Planning Commission to the DST Staff Council (Planning Council)						
1	DST Staff Council (Planning Council)	08/11/2015					
	<b>Notes:</b> <i>Mr. Sieben said this already went through a Special Use and Preliminary a few months ago, so now they are in for Final. The Petitioners were not able to be here today for the first meeting. They plan on making a presentation next Tuesday on the 18th, so they will be here to go over in detail this proposal.</i>						
	<i>Mrs. Vacek said I will be taking a look at this also and start reviewing it.</i>						
	<i>Mr. Krientz said we looked at it and we've got a few comments.</i>						

Mr. Sieben said they will be here, like I said, next week and we can go over it in person with them if you want.

1 DST Staff Council 08/18/2015  
(Planning Council)

Notes: Representatives Present: Salim Ali, Feras Sweis

I'm Feras Sweis with FHA Design Build.

I'm Salim Ali. I'm the managing partner of the group.

Mr. Sweis said I want to color an updated site plan design because this has gone through an original site plan, or pre-approval plan design, so this is more of a finalized site plan. The difference in this site plan versus what was originally submitted is we added a 3,600 square foot gym in the back of the building. This is a 2 story. I want to say the total building square footage is about 39,000 square feet.

Mr. Sieben said now we talked about this, on the preliminary you did have an outline of a possible addition.

Mr. Sweis said correct. It was a possible 10,000 square foot addition.

Mr. Sieben said and this is 3,600.

Mr. Sweis said this is only 3,600 with the parking. So we have our detention and that's over to the left side and then right to the north in that whole corner is the exterior play area, which is a basketball court. There is some gymnasium in that round circle on top of the basketball court. Those smaller circles are other smaller features for play areas. Then over to the right, that little kidney shaped piece, is a splash pool, splash pad. They do it, I think every Friday for about 15 or 20 minutes and then they go home for class, so it is really kind of limited for a Friday use just in the summertime. So the entrance is going to be on the main back of Meijer Road, but the main entrance is going to be the furthest entrance to the west and the exit is going to be toward Liberty Street. At first we had an entrance and an exit. With communication, there was the issue for backing into Liberty Street and so the comment was to bring that entrance, but from a security standpoint the developers really just want to have one entrance and one exit from a control standpoint for security cameras so in case someone picks up a child or not it is really easy to control the whole entrance and exit of that property, which is why we only have one entrance and one exit coming in.

Mr. Sieben said do you want to touch on parking count?

Mr. Sweis said yes. I don't know if I have that actual calculation, but basically we did provide, because it is a 2 story building and the addition of the gym, we provided the code requirement of 1 parking spot for every 250 square feet of the building.

Mr. Wiet said 160 parking spaces.

Mr. Sweis said correct.

Mr. Sieben said so he meets 100% of that requirement.

Mr. Sweis said correct.

Mr. Seiben said I wanted that on the record.

Mr. Sweis said we are not asking for a parking variance or any of that. We strictly designed the parking and the building for what is required. We are going to monitor the use in the future and see how much is actually going to be used for the parking.

Mr. Ali said which is not going to be as much with all the experience they have.

Mr. Sieben said but you may events, you may have functions at times where a lot of the parents are all there, so that's the time.

Mr. Ali said that's the reason we did not go for the variance. We had the land too.

*Mr. Sweis said graduation, Christmas parties and stuff like that. There might be a need for most of that parking, but on those special times is probably when they will use most of the parking.*

*Mr. Frankino said how is the site going to get served by sanitary sewer? I don't see an immediate connection right to the property.*

*Mr. Sweis said sanitary sewer, at the southwest corner, there is a sanitary manhole that we are working on an easement to get connected to. There is a manhole, so the sanitary is coming out from the building on that south end and it is going to the southwest corner and we are making that connection over there. All other utility connections are being connected on through Liberty.*

*Mr. Frankino said Dan, did you say there would be an easement, or did you say something about an easement?*

*Mr. Sweis said I think they are working on an easement to the sanitary connection because the other storm connection would have been somewhere all the way up north on Liberty and closer to 59. It would have been simpler and easier to make that connection down on that manhole.*

*Mr. Frankino said and that was my point about the sanitary sewer is not to the site, so any service going through someone else's property would have to be (inaudible).*

*Mr. Sweis said Woolpert is working on that easement and we're going to work on having that finalized pretty soon. But there is also, I believe, an easement with Meijer for access to the road and a curb cut as well.*

*Mr. Feltman said there might even be a blanket easement across that common space property. It is pretty common for those townhome units. A lot of times there are blanket easements over the common space, so that might be available as well.*

*Mr. Sieben said do you want to comment on the elevation real quick?*

*Mr. Sweis said that's just the basic floor plan with the entry and the toddlers are on that first floor. On the left side, there are conference rooms, office rooms and then there are 8 classrooms on the right side. Then upstairs, there are classrooms. It is elementary. So on the left side it is toddlers. On the right side it is, I want to say, up to 6 years old. Then upstairs it is 7-12 elementary class areas. I don't know if this makes much of a difference, but the developers are electing to get this certified by DCFS and the State, although it is not a requirement for a Montessori School since they are registered, but it is something that they are electing to go above and beyond just for credibility, but also a lot of availabilities that they are going to be able to get in the future from the State for funding or other type of projects. So we are going the extra step to get those approvals.*

*Mrs. Vacek said I'll be the planner that's working on your case. I'll be reviewing it and sending you out comments. I think you are next on my list to start reviewing, so probably within the next week or so you'll get comments from us.*

*Mr. Feltman said we are in review right now, so we'll get you detailed comments within a week or so.*

*Mr. Sweis said is that in addition to the building permit review or is it separate?*

*Mr. Feltman said sorry, for Engineering.*

*Mr. Sweis said so when we submit, the Building Department is not going to send you drawings. Basically you have what you need.*

*Mr. Feltman said we have what we need. Once we are done with the review, what we would expect is your engineer to just submit right back to us directly. I just wanted to add one more thing. The splash pad is not recycled water, so it is literally just like having a sprinkler on, so it is going to run off, I believe you said it was just going to run off right into the storm sewer.*

*Mr. Sweis said correct. We touched base with the Health Department and the State regarding the pools and stuff, and recirculating water versus not and it really came down to amount of usage and after discussing how much they are going to us it, it really wasn't that much for them to recirculate that whole system. We're not talking millions of gallons of water. It is just a couple of classrooms a couple*

of hours every Friday a couple months out of the year.

Mr. Ali said the weather is a factor too because this is in Illinois. That's in Houston, so the use would be a lot less, I guess.

Mr. Feltman said it is not a pool. It is a splash pad.

Mr. Sweis said it is not a pool at all. All it is, is a pad with just elements that just splash water so kids run underneath it.

Mr. Feltman said but you keep referring to it as a pool.

Mr. Ali said no standing water period.

Mr. Sweis said there is no standing water at all. It is just running. It's got 2 storm drains. All the water will go right to the storm drains. That's one of the differentiations we have to make with the Health Department and the State as well, which is why we really studied the equipment and the use of it. It is just like you said, a splash pad, not a pool.

Mr. Frankino said initially there was a communication with one of the gentlemen on your team, but still at that time they were contemplating a connection to the sanitary or the storm. We always prefer something like this is storm automatically with big floor drains.

Mr. Sweis said well it makes sense to go to the storm since the detention pond is literally much closer than the sanitary and then tying it into the building then it makes sense because the sanitary is coming all the way out to the southwest, so it makes just a lot more sense to go directly to the storm than the sanitary.

Mr. Frankino said our questions were did it operate like a pool? Was there filtration? And the backwash from a filter, that can go into the sanitary because it is a waste water, but it sounds like that is all taken care of.

Mr. Feltman said you will need to have an RPZ.

Mr. Sweis said we'll have an RPZ. That will be in the water meter room where we'll split off. We'll split off for the sprinkler, we'll split off for the domestic water use, and then we'll split off for the splash pool, splash pad.

- 1 DST Staff Council 08/25/2015  
(Planning Council)

**Notes:** Mrs. Vacek said I am finishing up my review. There are mainly just landscaping review comments on this and some formatting comments. I will be getting those out. This will be going tentatively on October 7th.

Mr. Feltman said we sent out our review comments. There wasn't anything of major substance, but I do think they need to clarify how they are addressing in the pond with landscaping. It's not really clear.

Mr. Krientz said I sent a couple of comments that are pretty mild. I also spoke with them and they are correcting those.

- 1 DST Staff Council 09/01/2015  
(Planning Council)

**Notes:** Mrs. Vacek said I sent out comments last week. I'm just waiting for revisions.

Mr. Feltman said we sent out comments last week, I believe.

Mr. Krientz said I sent out a few comments too last week.

- 1 DST Staff Council 09/08/2015  
(Planning Council)

**Notes:** Mrs. Vacek said I have sent out comments on this one. I am waiting for revisions.

Mr. Krientz said I had some comments on that too. We haven't received anything either.

Mrs. Vacek said I believe Engineering also sent out comments and they have not received anything back.

1 DST Staff Council 09/15/2015  
(Planning Council)

Notes: Mr. Sieben said I think Tracey has sent comments out on this.

Mr. Feltman said Engineering sent out comments as well.

1 DST Staff Council 09/22/2015  
(Planning Council)

Notes: Mrs. Vacek said I sent out comments a while back. I'm just waiting for revisions.

Mr. Feltman said Engineering sent out comments as well. We are waiting for revisions.

1 DST Staff Council 09/29/2015 Forwarded Planning 10/07/2015 Pass  
(Planning Council) Commission

Action Text: A motion was made by Mrs. Vacek, seconded by Mr. Krienitz, that this agenda item be Forwarded to the Planning Commission, on the agenda for 10/7/2015. The motion carried by voice vote.

Notes: Mrs. Vacek said I did receive a resubmittal for this. This is going to the October 7th Planning Commission, so I do make a motion to move this forward. I may have some landscaping conditions based on the resubmittal that I received yesterday.

Mr. Feltman said Engineering sent out comments, but have not received a resubmittal.

Mrs. Vacek said do you need any conditions added then?

Mr. Feltman said let me talk to Souts and find out. I don't think there were any major issues.

Mr. Krientz seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2 Planning Commission 10/07/2015 Forwarded Planning & 10/15/2015 Pass  
Development Committee

Action Text: A motion was made by Mr. Engen, seconded by Mrs. Anderson, that this agenda item be Forwarded to the Planning & Development Committee, on the agenda for 10/15/2015. The motion carried.

Notes: Mrs. Vacek said in September of 2014 the City Council actually approved a Special Use for the Montessori School as well as the Preliminary Plan. They are back now for their Final Plan proposal, which consists of the construction of a 39,383 square foot 2 story Montessori School building with an outdoor play area. Stormwater detention is being constructed at the northeast corner of the property. The Petitioner also has secured the easement from Meijer to utilize the existing private drive to the east located on Meijer's property to provide access to the site. There is a total of 160 parking spaces, which does meet the city's requirement as well as landscaping is being implemented throughout the site, which also meets the city's requirement. I will let the Petitioner go into a little about the building elevations as well as a little bit on the whole drop off and everything for them.

Good evening. My name is Feras Sweis with FHS Design Build. We are the architects and general contractors hopefully for this project. With me is one of the developers of the property, Salim Ali. Basically I'll do a more detailed rundown of the site plan. Basically, we have a 2 story, 39,000 square foot facility, a Montessori School. It is going to house kids from 18 months to elementary school on the second floor, so the first floor is 18 months to 2 years and then the second floor is elementary kids. There is also a 3,600 square foot gymnasium building that's interior and there is also a basketball court/tennis court, a playground area, and a splash pad area that's on the northeast corner of the property. Our main entrance to the property is going to be south on Liberty Street and you are only going to be able to exit on the north driveway. You won't be able to enter on the north driveway. You will just enter on that south and exit on the north. There are a couple of reasons for that. One is for cars and stacking and more importantly it is for security reasons. The developers want to be able to make sure there is only one point of exit so the security camera could watch the license plates, God forbid anything happens to a kid or an abduction or something like that. It worked both for stacking along with the security portion. In the back of the building we have kind of a coy pond with some learning garden areas and that's what this back area is with the sand. So this enlarged area, the concrete area is an exterior play area. That box on the inside is a sandbox for the kids. These circular areas are going to be like a water fountain and coy pond garden area, a learning garden area for the kids along with some bridges. These areas here, that would be the basketball court, the gymnasium equipment. These are all water features and then that big oval kidney shape is also a water feature/splash pad that in the summertime every Friday the kids go play for 15 to 20 and then their

parents pick them up and then they go home. At this time, I'm going to show the elevations on the building design. We spent a lot of time on really putting a really nice building that really pops up into the character of the area. We're proposing the building to be, the lower 2/3 of the building are 2 colors of brick and the top half of the building is either an architectural wall panel cord or a stucco type portion. As of now, we are proposing the building to have a standard seam roof. However, we're studying the budgets right now. We just got the bids back in and we're contemplating possibly doing an asphalt shingle roof versus a standard seam roof. We've got our signage on the main street and then the main signage here is on Liberty Street with the address and a drive through overhead canopy. That's basically the thrust of the design development.

Mrs. Anderson said I have a comment. This is one of the biggest Montessori Schools I've ever seen.

Mr. Sweis said this is a third of many. The first one that was built in Houston, we went out there to Houston and took a look at it, it is almost 2 stories, but it is not a full 2 story. That one is only 24,000 square feet and they are building a second one now in Houston, I believe, that's also the same 2 story building. This is a third one of that same group that's developing this one and I believe they are planning on developing a couple more.

Mr. Ali said we just added a gym. Other schools have a gym inside. We had the land, so we just put it in the back because of the construction coming in so it took us a little longer time to plan it, but we wanted to plan it in such a way that we can look toward the future.

Mr. Sweis said in Houston they started to realize that what they planned for, that second story space, which was kind of half of this space, were we took the full space, they are starting to max out occupancy and that's less than a year from when they built. They want to plan for making sure that they are not going to have that problem where they are going to develop and not have enough classrooms and the need is going to be there. They feel very strongly that the need is going to be needed in this area. It is a beautiful building.

Mrs. Anderson said what's the oldest grade level that will be there?

Mr. Sweis said the highest elementary grade, I believe, 5th or 6th grade.

Vice Chairman Truax said it seems to me when this came through a year ago or so there were questions about the drop off area were there not?

Mr. Ali said that was addressed the last time when we came in. I remember when we were coming in it was from the north entrance. We had cars coming from the north entrance. Now it is not like that. We are coming all the way up and making a turn and coming out only through the north entrance. That's the difference for the stacking also. That question was raised, so we addressed that.

Vice Chairman Truax said so now there is no necessity for children to ever cross the parking lot or the driving isle?

Mr. Ali said no.

Mr. Sweis said so basically this will be the main entrance and then they will come and drop off the kids here and we have a canopy right there so this drop off and pickup and then they will exit that way. You can't come in from that north side. You can only come in from this side.

Mr. Engen said is that still going to cause a problem? Because when I look at it, I know it is maybe easier that way, but just like a School District, when you are dropping children off you always want to drop them off to the right side to the curb. Now you are asking them to cut in front of cars or behind cars. Is that going to be monitored correctly?

Mr. Ali said yes. They have 2 schools. One school is kind of set up where the teachers take the kids from the car, so they will be standing outside. The teachers help. We'll be picking the kids up. For one small period when it is a rush hour in the morning, the car stops, the teacher takes the kid and the car drives off. So there will be no crossing of any kind. Children would not be on the ground. They would just be picked up and taken inside.

Mr. Engen said I hope it runs smoothly that teachers take them in. What would maximum enrollment be if after a number of years you get to full capacity? What's the number of students you are talking about?

Mr. Ali said the capacity at this one is right around 600, but it will take a while to get there, but definitely we have the capacity.

Mr. Engen said that's a lot of cars coming in with students being dropped off.

Mr. Sweis said part of it too is the way they stage the different classes and toddlers. There is certain timing of who gets dropped at what time, so it is not all these cars at the same time. You'll get a 1 hour period from 7:30 to 8:30 and then an 8:30 to 9:30 and then the drop off too, there is a lot of, in some of these rooms there is like an after school care as well in the toddlers area, so there is also extended time, so after school a lot of kids stay there and then you also have that timing as well, so it is staged according to like the classes and the kid areas as well so you are not getting that whole flutter of cars and all that stacking at the same time.

Mr. Ali said all the kids do not come in for all hours. They come in for 4 hours also and 6 hours also, so they are staggered. We even have one feature where we have a room if a child becomes sick where the parents would come in and they would enter that room and get out to the parking lot where the car would be so the kids don't spread anything.

Mr. Sweis said it is an isolated first aid room, so once a kid enters that room the parents come directly from outside so they are not bringing them back into the main space of the school and stuff. It is kind of like an isolation room once they realize a kid is ill.

Mr. Cameron said Illinois has several guidelines about the younger elementary school aged children being located on second floors. Have you taken that into account?

Mr. Sweis said we have taken that into account. We've worked diligently with the State Fire Marshall. As a Montessori School, if you are licensed by International Montessori School, one of those schools which they are certified by, you're not required by the Illinois State to be licensed by the State. However, they want to go above and beyond and get licensed from the State to be able to do as much as they can so they have all the certifications and licenses that they have. We have submitted for permits and we've been back and forth with the Fire Marshall. We finally got our second comments from the Fire Marshall. They are the ones that regulate the state licensing and we have been working with them. We have 3 stairs on the inside of the building to make sure we have our exit counts and I think that was the thrust of what was required. The first plan, because of the age groups, we have 2 exits. We have exterior doors on each one of those rooms and a door inside the corridor because they are requiring us to have 2 exits. Upstairs they are requiring us to have 1 exit under a certain amount of occupancy and we have 3 stairs, 2 on the bookends of the building and 1 in the middle of the elevator so the travel distances are very minimal. They are wide stairs. They are almost 5-6 feet wide stairs so they will be able to get the capacity of those kids out. We've took that into consideration.

Mr. Cameron said the crucial thing is you don't want to have the little kids being trampled by the 5th graders if something is occurring.

Mr. Sweis said so design-wise if something did occur from an operational standpoint, the teachers would know that on the floor level downstairs they would use the exterior doors that are right within the room and not have to flood the corridor and then the upstairs kids would take the stairways and go outside those back doors or the main door, so those are 3 main exits of the building.

Mrs. Vacek said staff would recommend conditional approval of the Resolution approving a Final Plan for the Montessori School on Lot 1 of Meijer Subdivision located at 4393 Liberty Street with the following condition:

1. That the revised engineering plans be provided directly to the Engineering Division and that Final Engineering approval must be obtained prior to any building permit issuance.

MOTION OF CONDITIONAL APPROVAL WAS MADE BY: Mr. Engen

MOTION SECONDED BY: Mrs. Anderson

AYES: Mrs. Anderson, Mr. Bergeron, Mr. Cameron, Mrs. Cole, Mrs. Duncan, Mr. Engen, Mr. Pilmer, Mr. Reynolds

NAYS: None

Mr. Sieben said this will next be heard at the Planning and Development Committee meeting on

*Thursday, October 15, 2015, at 4:00 p.m. in the 5th floor conference room of this building.*

Aye: 7 At Large Bergeron, At Large Cameron, At Large Cole, At Large Pilmer,  
Aurora Twnshp Representative Reynolds, At Large Anderson and At  
Large Engen

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