



**City of Coconut Creek  
Planning and Zoning Board Meeting  
November 8, 2023  
Minutes – Excerpt**

---

**4. LUNA CHRISTIAN ACADEMY: A SPECIAL LAND USE APPLICATION FOR THE OPERATION OF A KINDERGARTEN THROUGH EIGHTH GRADE SCHOOL TO BE LOCATED AT 3720 COCONUT CREEK PARKWAY, SUITE J. (QUASI-JUDICIAL)(PUBLIC HEARING)**

Deputy City Attorney Mehaffey asked for any ex-parte disclosures related to Agenda Item 4. Board Member Jeffrey Light disclosed that he had done some research on the requirements to open a private school. There were no other disclosures.

Principal Planner Lizet Aguiar presented the item, noting the applicant was proposing to operate a parochial school located at 3720 Coconut Creek Parkway, Suite J, at the Associated Builders Plaza. She explained the property was approximately 4.5 acres and had a land use designation of Commercial and zoning of B-3, Commercial Shopping. She noted a parochial school was not specifically listed as a permitted use in B-3, however, they were permitted in any zoning district as a special land use. Ms. Aguiar advised the applicant was proposing to occupy a 7,728 square foot vacant tenant space, which was also previously used as a school. She summarized the Development Review Committee's (DRC) review of the application, and noted that the applicant held community outreach meetings, which summaries of both meetings were included in the backup materials for the meeting. She noted staff found that the application complied with the Special Land Use requirements in the City Code and was compatible with the Comprehensive Plan. She stated staff recommended approval subject to the conditions listed in the staff report.

Mr. Light asked whether it was typical to issue the Special Land Use to the tenant rather than to the property owner. Ms. Aguiar explained the Code was specific to the user and the location. Mr. Light asked whether the property owner had provided consent. Ms. Aguiar stated there was an Agent Authorization Letter included in the backup. Mr. Light expressed concern that the Special Land Use was being issued personally to the applicant, rather than to a company or entity. Deputy City Attorney Mehaffey confirmed Luna Christian Academy was a Limited Liability Corporation (LLC) and that the entity would be identified in the ordinance considered by the City Commission.

Luna Raphael, Director, Luna Christian Academy, stated she had been a public-school teacher for 23 years and had recently been called to start her own private school. She shared a brief *PowerPoint* presentation, highlighting her background, the mission and vision of the school, curriculum, admission, and tuition.

Chair Barker opened the public hearing on the item.

Dolores Ferguson, 1211 Bahama Bend, E2, Coconut Creek, stated she had received a letter about the application, but other members of her Homeowners Association Board had not. She expressed concern with additional traffic and the number of children attending the school. She asked whether there would be buses.

Chair Barker stated the application showed the maximum number of children allowed was 100. He asked staff to address the traffic analysis.

Sustainable Development Assistant Director Justin Proffitt explained the City's Traffic Planner had reviewed the application and the number of students did not make a significant change to what was previously permitted and the uses existing on the property to necessitate further traffic study. He noted the DRC had reviewed the drop off and pick up pattern, as well as circulation on the site, and found it acceptable as presented. Mr. Proffitt addressed concerns related to notice briefly. He stated Ms. Ferguson had received a letter because notices were sent to property owners within 500 feet, and in this case, 344 notices were mailed. He noted with the size of the Wynmoor community, sometimes the calculation does not include every residence in a neighborhood. He reviewed other types of advertising utilized.

Ms. Raphael clarified that the school would be very small, with an expected enrollment in the first year of 20 students. She noted she would not be using public school buses but may explore a van to get multiple people there with less cars. She asserted the school would not interfere with traffic in the plaza.

There were no further questions or comments from the public, and Chair Barker closed the public hearing.

Board Member Nancy Fry asked for clarification on the grade levels. Ms. Raphael explained she was currently accepting applications for first grade through third grade but had plans for kindergarten through eighth grade in the future. Ms. Fry asked how many students were needed to keep the school open. Ms. Raphael stated she did not have a minimum and noted she had not begun recruitment at this time. Mr. Proffitt provided additional information on the application process and the need to anticipate maximums in the future when making requests to avoid multiple recurring applications to address minor changes.

Board Member Alfred Delgado inquired as to the response from the neighboring businesses. Ms. Raphael stated she had communicated with the tenants in the neighboring businesses, and Back in Action came to the community meeting. She advised they were supportive and familiar with a school being on the site. Mr. Delgado asked whether there were any incidents with the former school, Premier Academy. Ms. Raphael stated there were discipline issues, but the target students were different. Ms. Aguiar added that staff was not aware of any incidents with Premier Academy, involving Code Enforcement or the Police Department. She stated the owner of the plaza had shared their excitement with staff about having a school back on the site.

Mr. Light asked when Ms. Raphael anticipated opening. Ms. Raphael stated she was ready to open as soon as she gets the final approval. She noted the Florida Department of Education approval was in place.

Staff nor the applicant had closing remarks.

**MOTION:** Fry/LaPlant – To recommend approval of Agenda Item 4, as presented.

**Upon roll call, the Motion passed by a 5-0 vote.**