

September 1, 2005

Mr. William J. Mueller,  
Village President, and  
Board of Trustees  
Village of Lombard

**Subject: PC 05-31: 536 N. Columbine Avenue**

Dear President and Trustees:

Your Plan Commission transmits for your consideration its recommendation regarding the above-referenced petition. The petitioner, Lombard Church of the Nazarene, requests that the Village approve a conditional use for a planned development within the R1 Single-Family Residence District. The petitioner is also requesting a use exception to allow a Montessori preschool and kindergarten on the subject property.

After due notice and as required by law, the Plan Commission conducted a public hearing for this petition on August 15, 2005. Jerry Bimber, 519 E. Maple, presented the petition. The Church of the Nazarene has been at its current location for four years. They are interested in a conditional use for a planned development so that they can accommodate a Montessori school. The school will occupy less than 10 percent of the building and the dominant land use will remain a religious institution.

Chairperson Ryan then opened the meeting for public comment. There were no comments in favor of or in opposition to the proposal. Chairperson Ryan then requested the staff report.

Jennifer Backensto, Planner I, reiterated the requested actions and summarized the IDRC report. She noted that the Fire Department/Bureau of Inspectional Services had a number of comments related to life safety issues, and these would need to be addressed prior to the school occupying any space in the church.

The existing use complies with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan and the property is surrounded by single-family homes, as is typical of the majority of religious institutions within the Village.

September 1, 2005

PC 05-31

Page 2

Ms. Backensto stated that several religious institutions within Lombard have become planned developments as they have either made physical improvements or expanded the scope of their services. By creating a planned development, Lombard Church of the Nazarene will have greater flexibility to accommodate any growth or changes that may occur in the future. Although preschools and kindergartens are not listed as permitted or conditional uses within residential districts, at least eight religious institutions in Lombard offer preschool and/or kindergarten. Also, private elementary, middle, and high schools are conditional uses within all residential districts, so it is merely the age of the students that triggers the need for a use exception. The Zoning Ordinance considers early childhood education programs not associated with an elementary or secondary school system to be day care centers rather than schools. The Montessori school will occupy less than 10 percent of the existing floor area of the building and no exterior improvements are proposed. Staff believes that the incorporation of a Montessori school will not have a negative impact on the surrounding neighborhood and, therefore, recommends approval of this petition.

Chairperson Ryan opened the public hearing for discussion and questions by the Plan Commission.

Commissioner Sweetser asked if the school would have any outdoor activities. The petitioner stated that they would have access to the open area behind the building and the use of the gymnasium when it is raining. Commissioner Sweetser stated that any outdoor play areas should be fenced.

Commissioner Burke stated that traffic had not been addressed. Although the current use of the property does not occur during rush hour, the school would. Route 53 is only one lane in each direction at that location and we should investigate what type of impact this will have. Chairperson Ryan suggested that a condition be added making the traffic situation subject to the approval of the Director of Community Development.

Commissioner Sweetser asked if there was an estimate on the number of students. The petitioner stated that the school has been in a church in Downers Grove for the past 14 years, but that church is now remodeling and the school needs someplace to go. Right now they have a total of 20 children. He understands the traffic problem, as it is sometimes difficult to get in and out of the property. The church has already given up land to accommodate the expansion of Route 53 and would like to do its best in this case.

Chairperson Ryan asked if there was sufficient room to accommodate the vehicles. The petitioner stated that he did not think there would be any problem since 40 cars could probably be stacked in the drive.

Commissioner Burke stated that the question is traffic on Route 53 where there is no deceleration lane and no left turn lane.

September 1, 2005

PC 05-31

Page 3

Commissioner Flint stated that a typical classroom is 750-800 square feet. Accordingly, there could be 60-70 kids in 1,700 square feet.

Commissioner Sweetser asked if this would be temporary until the Downers Grove renovations are completed. The petitioner stated that, if approved, the school would be in Lombard for at least one year, but after time he could not say if both the church and the school would want to continue their relationship.

Chairperson Ryan asked what types of state regulation apply to Montessori schools. William Heniff, Senior Planner, stated that Montessori schools are not regulated by DCFS.

Commissioner Sweetser made a motion for approval of the petition, which was seconded by Commissioner Burke.

After due consideration of the petition and the testimony presented, the Plan Commission found that the petition complies with the standards required by the Lombard Zoning Ordinance. Therefore, the Plan Commission, by a roll call vote of 4-0, recommended to the Corporate Authorities **approval** of PC 05-31, subject to the following amended conditions:

1. The Montessori school and any other day care functions may not occupy more than 1,700 sq. ft. of the building.
2. All comments in the Inter-Departmental Review Committee Report and any other life safety requirements shall be satisfactorily addressed.
3. Perimeter fencing shall be installed around any outdoor play areas associated with the Montessori school.
4. Any traffic conflicts along Columbine Avenue (IL Route 53) that may be created as a result of this petition shall be addressed to the satisfaction of the Director of Community Development.

Respectfully,

**VILLAGE OF LOMBARD**

Donald F. Ryan  
Lombard Plan Commission

c. Petitioner  
Lombard Plan Commission