



# MEMORANDUM

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TO: Planning Commissioners  
FROM: Katie Peterson, AICP, Senior Planner  
RE: Review of Revised Plans to COFA-03-23-017836  
DATE: 10/25/2023  
CC: Kevin Icard, AICP, Director of Growth Management

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**BACKGROUND** - On June 28, 2023, the Town of Bluffton Planning Commission tabled COFA-03-23-017836, a Certificate of Appropriateness to permit the landscape, lighting and architecture for Big Blue Marble Academy, an 11,293 SF one-story childcare facility including an outdoor child play area and associated parking, located at the intersection of Mill Creek Boulevard and Okatie Highway (SC HWY 170) off Slater Street in the Jones Estate PUD, within the Cypress Ridge Master Plan (Attachment 1).

In response to the Planning Commission's request, the Applicant provided revised drawings (See Attachment 2). Upon review of the resubmitted documents, Town Staff has identified in underlined red (8,19,20,21,24,26) the items which either administratively should carry forward with the approval or have not yet been completed/addressed. The full list of areas identified by the Planning Commission at their June 28, 2023 meeting are as follows:

## **Landscape**

1. Per Section 4.24.2.2.E. of the ZDSO, Landscape Plan must be revised to include a broad-leaf tree in each peninsula.
2. Per Section 4.16.3.A of the ZDSO, the shrubs screening the Transformer at the southern corner of the building must be increased in height to fully screen it from view of Highway 170.
3. Per Section 5.3.7.C. of the UDO, additional landscape screening must be added to the area between the parking lot and Slater Street. This should be a continuous planting area, as it is the street buffer.
4. Reconsider the shrub choices – especially at the sidewalk near the accessible parking space as they are sharp and/or potentially irritating to skin/problematic if consumed.
5. Double check planting heights vs. gallon sizes as they conflict. Please note the height minimums must be met – the gallon sizes should be updated to be reflective of those heights.
6. Revisit the locations of some of the overstory trees filling in the buffer as they relate to the existing large trees – specifically near the SE corner as there is a large oak there which proposes another large canopy tree planted very close to it.
7. Plantings should be added around the dumpster enclosure to screen it better.

## **Architecture**

8. Per Section 4.16.2.A. all roof mechanicals are shown on the front elevation, facing Highway 170, and must be revised. While the hood system is shown as screened on the front elevation, building code requires the exhaust to be no less than 10 feet horizontally from parts of the same building, and the intake, if vented at an angle away from the wall(s). It could be 5 feet of clearance from the wall(s) if angled away, but still requires 10 feet of clearance from the intake. This is not able to be met in the space provided and will need to be redesigned.
9. Per Section 4.16.3.A. the electric meter is shown on front elevation, facing Highway 170 and must be revised or be fully screened with an architectural feature.
10. Per Section 4.24.3.A.3. of the ZDSO the dumpster enclosure must be revised from unfinished Split Face CMU to a permitted material.
11. The Applicant should consider revising the pedestrian door operation on the dumpster enclosure to minimize conflict with pedestrians entering from the building.
12. Information on the proposed metal fence must be provided for review as not enough information has been to complete the review. Ensure gate locations are shown on the landscape and site plans.
13. The fence location at the southeast corner of the building must be revised to remain passable when the door is open.
14. Per Section 4.23.3.A., the dormers should be relocated to be centered over the elements beneath them. Roofs need to have a minimum 4:12 pitch. – Might consider increasing the pitch of the primary mass to 6:12 (recommendation not requirement, but the dormers will need to feel appropriate on the main mass)
15. Per Section 4.23.3.A., the Front (Highway 170 facing) elevation should be reconsidered to better address the street.
16. Reconsider the main entrance location as the entrance is at the dead-end portion of the parking lot. Even with kids being walked in, parents are more likely to enter and turn that direction, which will cause challenges with circulation.
17. Revise door lite pattern on rear elevation to match for consistency. Also take a look at the doors for the electric rooms on the front if they are to remain on that elevation as they appear as service doors – on the front elevation, which is problematic.
18. Consider revising the muntin patterns on windows to be square or vertical rather than creating horizontal lites as vertical/square lite patterns are more typical of the Lowcountry Vernacular.
19. Pull the fence away from the columns on the front elevation.

## Lighting

Note: No changes have been made to the light plan, however, the landscape plan has been revised to eliminate conflict.

20. Per Section 4.23.3.C.2.a.2. of the ZDSO, the Planning Commission must determine the appropriateness of the use of LEDs as a substitute lighting type for those listed in the Ordinance.
21. Per Section 4.23.3.C.2.a.2.1. of the ZDSO, additional information is required to ensure all fixtures will be cutoff luminaires.
22. Light poles need to be relocated to eliminate conflict with required Landscape Island overstory trees.
23. Photometric exhibit must be revised to ensure it remains in compliance with the revised pole locations.

## Additional Requirements

24. All comments must be addressed, and a Final Development Plan must be approved prior to issuance of the Certificate of Appropriateness – HCO.

25. Per the Applications Manual, a letter of approval from the Cypress Ridge Declarant for the Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions must be provided.
26. Signage Permits must be submitted to the Town of Bluffton for review and approval for the signage proposed at each site in the proposed development.

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTIONS:** As granted by the powers and duties set forth in Section 2.2.6.C.6. of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), the Planning Commission has the authority to take the following actions with respect to this application:

1. Approve the application as submitted by the Applicant;
2. Approve the application with conditions; or
3. Deny the application as submitted by the Applicant.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** It is the charge of the Planning Commission to assess and interpret the standards and guidelines set forth in the UDO as they pertain to applications using the review criteria established in the UDO and to take appropriate action as granted by the powers and duties set forth in Section 2.2.6.C.

Town Staff requests that the Planning Commission consider the requirements of Section 3.17.3. of the Unified Development Ordinance as they review the application.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Previously Submitted Plans
2. Revised Submittal