



## AURORA HIGHLANDS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

March 10, 2023

Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Boulevard  
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Members of the Arlington County Board,

The request for a use permit renewal at the Veritas Collegiate Academy at 935 23rd Street South was a topic of discussion at the March 8, 2023 meeting of the Aurora Highlands Civic Association.

Even though the current Use Permit and Certificate of Occupancy are for 25 students, the County staff reports that there are 110 students currently enrolled. The notice posted on the poles also states the permit is for 25 students. Neighbors wondered how there could be such a significant discrepancy and why neither the County nor the applicant takes the terms of the use permit seriously. What are the sanctions for such an egregious violation of use permit terms? Why is Veritas again requesting a permit for 25 students if there are 110 students? And if they do ask for higher occupancy, we hope that the county will do the due diligence and assess the adequacy and safety of the facility for the increased number of students and for faculty and staff.

Neighbors are concerned about issues such as ADA compliance, fire safety, lack of bike parking, and adequacy of the recreational facilities for a K-12 student population.

Some additional concerns of our members include:

- The approved plan states grades K-8, yet the Veritas application states K-12. Their Veritas website also promotes K-12 education. Does the school in fact have 9-12 students currently enrolled? If so, what changes to the school plan will the County require?

- Outdoor recreational space seems inadequate, especially for older students. If you look at the photos in the application, Veritas is promoting the spaces behind the building(s) that were probably appropriate for the earlier church school and elementary Waldorf program, although we note that Waldorf students also frequently used the County parks.
- They have no bike parking, and they say they don't need it. Why?
- Is the building fully accessible by today's standards? The floorplan of the school is a bit odd. Are there elevators, ramps? Will firefighters be able to access the classrooms, and will they be aware that the number of students is 110 and not 25?
- Parking/PUDO: According to the County report, they are required to have only 5 parking spaces - and they have 13. However, the 5-space requirement was based upon only 25 students - if they are approved for over 100, do they have adequate spaces (during a recent visit 12 of the 13 spaces were occupied)? Are some upper grade students driving to school? PUDO plan is great since they have the existing church parking lot - it's easy to drive west on 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, enter the parking lot, drop off the students, and drive back out onto South Joyce Street. However, during recent visits, the PUDO was happening on 23<sup>rd</sup> Street rather than in the parking lot.

In sum, there are a lot of outstanding questions surrounding this request, and we request that the County Board defer a decision until there is greater clarity. Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Veritas permit renewal.

Sincerely,



Cory Jacobbe

President

Aurora Highlands Civic Association