



CITY OF FORT PIERCE

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

REBECCA GROHALL, AICP, PLANNING MANAGER
COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING ♦ DEVELOPMENT REVIEW
HISTORIC PRESERVATION ♦ URBAN DESIGN ♦ URBAN FORESTRY ♦ ZONING

TO: Members of the City of Fort Pierce Planning Board
THROUGH: Rebecca Grohall, AICP, Planning Manager
FROM: Vennis Gilmore, Planning Analyst
SUBJECT: **Conditional Use**
St. James Christian Academy Expansion
4300 Okeechobee Road
DATE: November 2, 2015

STAFF REPORT

Owner: Orange Blossom Investment, LLC
4146 Okeechobee Road
Fort Pierce, FL 34947-5412

Applicant: St. James Christian Academy
4300 Okeechobee Road
Fort Pierce, FL 34947-5412

Representative: Don Bergman, Architect
P.O. Box 13537,
Fort Pierce, FL 34979

Requested Action: Approval of a conditional use permit to expand the operation of a private school in the C-3 Zoning District

Location: 4300 Okeechobee Road

Parcel ID: 2418-431-0001-000-0

Current Zoning: C-3, General Commercial Zone

Current Future Land Use: GC, General Commercial

Surrounding Zoning:

North	East	South	West
R-4	C-3	C-3	C-3

Parcel Size: 8.36 acres

Staff Analysis:

The applicant, St. James Christian Academy, is requesting Conditional Use approval for the expansion of its current private school facility by 22,932 square feet; for a complete total of 65,188 square feet. The location is zoned General Commercial (C-3), with a General Commercial (GC) future land use.

The City Commission, in 2008, initially approved a Conditional Use request by Toussaint L'Ouverture International School, Inc. to establish a charter school within a portion of the east anchor unit of the Orange Blossom Business Center. Toussaint L'Ouverture International School, Inc. later vacated the facility, therefore St. James Christian Academy utilized the opportunity to relocate to the site; operating their private school within the approved area during the 2012/2013 St. Lucie County School year. In 2013, St. James Christian Academy was granted a Conditional Use to expand the original facility.

The current school facility is approximately 42,256 square-feet, consisting of 16 classrooms, offices, and a cafeteria / auditorium without a commercial kitchen or food preparation area. Meals for the students and employees are catered. Current enrolment includes approximately 530 students, extending from Pre-school through 12th grade. Staff consists of 65 teachers and faculty members, as well as school administration.

The expansion plan includes the addition of 22 classrooms, offices, a multi-purpose room, a ballet studio, restrooms, and a breakroom. The recent expansion encompasses growth for grades K-4th, with the opportunity for increased space for established grades and subject labs. The expansion further provides the appropriate separation of age groups, and learning activities, guided by Department of Children & Families standards.

The school will maintain separate entrances and exits dedicated specific for the school students, employees, and a designated visitor entrance. An emergency access from the school into the interior of the shared anchor building is provided for an additional emergency escape route.

The proposed expansion will provide adequate parking, featuring an expansion to the short-term bicycle parking for students and faculty. The established access points on Okeechobee Road and Hartman Road will remain unaltered. The expansion represents an investment of over 1 million dollars in the St. James Christian Academy campus.

All affected Departments have reviewed the proposed Conditional Use and have approved it based on it meeting the requirements of the City Code.

Technical Review Committee

The proposed Conditional Use has been approved based on compliance with applicable Codes.

Staff Comments:

Staff recommends that the Planning Board forward a recommendation of **approval** to the City Commission with the following conditions:

- 1) The applicant adheres to the proposed landscape improvements to install a vegetative hedge along Hartman Road. City Code Section 22-194 d(4) requires installation within 60 days after conditional use approval; and
- 2) Provide an updated traffic report displaying any traffic impacts of the school expansion.