



**TO:** Nicholas Mimms, P.E., City Manager

**THROUGH:** Rebecca Grohall, AICP, Planning Director

**FROM:** Brandon Creagan, LEED Green Associate, Planner

**RE:** **Application for Conditional Use with No New Construction  
 Advanced Scholars Christian Academy  
 616 Orange Avenue**

**DATE:** February 24, 2017

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**STAFF REPORT**

**Property Owner/Applicant:** First United Methodist Church of Fort Pierce Inc.  
 616 Orange Avenue  
 Fort Pierce, FL 34950

**Representative:** Sherria Baptiste  
 1038 SW Barbarosa Avenue  
 Port Saint Lucie, FL 34953

**Requested Action:** Approval of a Conditional Use with No New Construction to operate a private K-8 school with 135 students at First United Methodist Church of Fort Pierce

**Site Location:** 616 Orange Avenue

**Parcel ID:** 2410-606-0007-000-4

**Parcel Size:** .51 acres

**Current Zoning:** C-3, General Commercial

**Future Land Use:** GC, General Commercial

**Surrounding Zoning:**

North	East	South	West
C-3	C-3	C-3	C-3

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## **Staff Analysis:**

In accordance with Section 22-76 of the City Code, the applicant is requesting approval for a Conditional Use with No New Construction to operate a private school (Advanced Scholars Christian Academy) at the First United Methodist Church of Fort Pierce

The proposed private school will be located at 616 Orange Avenue. The proposed property that the private school will operate on is owned by the First United Methodist Church of Fort Pierce Inc. The applicant for the project is Sherria Baptiste. The subject property is zoned C-3, General Commercial with a Land Use Designation of GC, General Commercial. The properties to the north, south, east, and west are all zoned C-3, General Commercial.

The school will operate on the first floor of the First United Methodist Church, with future plans to utilize the second floor when more grades are added in later years. The school will open the 2017-2018 school year with grades Kindergarten to Fifth, and an anticipated enrollment of 60 (sixty) students. During the first year there will be 6 (six) classrooms that will have at least 12 (twelve) students. The future plan is to have no more than 20 (twenty) students per classroom and 9 (nine) classrooms. After the first year in operation the school plans to grow by one grade level each year until they have a fully functioning K-8 school. The plan is to advance the first year's 5th grade class to the next grade level each subsequent year until they reach 8th grade. The final anticipated enrollment will be 135 (one hundred thirty five) students when the school has grades Kindergarten to Eighth.

The staff will consist of 6 certified Teachers, 1 Principal, 1 Receptionist, and 1 Floater. All meals will be catered as no meals will be prepared on site. The school will be in operation from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. They are also partnering up with MRC Family (Multi-Cultural Resource Center) for before and after care services. The before and after care services will be in operation starting at 7:00 a.m. in the morning and continue after school until 6 p.m. in the evening. The before and after care services will be held on site. Besides parent drop off and pick up, there will be bus drop off and pick up in the morning and evening. The school is working with A&S Transportation to acquire one bus for the first year. A covered entrance for student drop off and pick up is provided on site.

The building is designated as a historic structure. Any signs that will be placed on the building, onsite, or any facade alterations will require an application to be filed with the Historic Preservation Division. Planning staff notes that the landscaping on the site is deficient and will need to be brought to compliance with City Code 22-187 (4), which requires the addition of trees and a landscape strip. The trees and landscape strip will need to be placed on the eastern end of the parking lot. There will also need to be verification that site lighting meets the requirements of City Code 22-60 (j).

## **Technical Review Committee**

All affected Departments have reviewed the submittals and provided comments regarding the proposed private K-8 school based on compliance with the requirements of the City Code. The Fort Pierce Building, Police, and Planning departments submitted comments. There were also comments from FPUA Water/Wastewater and the St. Lucie County Fire District. In response to the Fort Pierce Police Department the applicant will install directional signage on the property that details student drop off and pick up locations and will install signs to notify drivers that Avenue A is a one way street. In response to the St. Lucie County Fire District, Fort Pierce Building Department, and FPUA Water/Wastewater, signed and sealed drawings will be obtained that will show a change of use to an "E" occupancy. This will also help the Fort Pierce Building Department to determine if a fire alarm and sprinkler system will be required. The

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applicant will address the Fort Pierce Planning Departments comments with landscape improvements, a lighting plan, and a striping plan.

**Planning Board:**

At their February 14, 2017 meeting, the Planning Board voted (8-0) to approve the application for a Conditional Use with No New Construction to operate a private K-8 school with 135 students at First United Methodist Church of Fort Pierce.

**Property Owner Response Summary:**

A total of 42 notifications for the proposed Conditional Use with No New Construction were mailed to the owners of properties located within 500 feet of the subject property. As of February 24, 2017, 7 letters have been received in support, 0 letters have been received in opposition, and 2 letters have been received that are neutral to the project. An update will be given at the City Commission meeting.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff recommends that the City Commission **approve** the Application for Conditional Use with No New Construction to operate a private K-8 school that will accommodate 135 (one hundred thirty five) students. In finding of consistency with the Land Development Code and compatibility with the City's Comprehensive Plan, staff recommends the following conditions:

1. Landscape improvements must be made to the property to bring the site into compliance with City Code 22-187 (4). This improvement must be completed prior to receiving a Certificate of Occupancy.
2. A pavement marking plan that implements the traffic flow plan must be submitted with the building permit.
3. A lighting plan or photometric survey must be submitted that verifies lighting in the parking lot in accordance with City Code 22-60 (j). This plan must be submitted with the building permit.
4. Signed and sealed drawings that are to scale must be submitted with the building permit that shows the change to an "E" occupancy.
5. The applicant coordinates and permits appropriate crosswalk and school zone signs along the Avenue A corridor to notify drivers of an active school zone. This must be completed before a Certificate of Occupancy can be issued.