

REQUEST	Current Zoning: INST(CD), institutional, conditional Proposed Zoning: INST(CD) SPA, institutional, conditional, site plan amendment
LOCATION	Approximately 2.70 acres located on the southeast corner of the intersection at Rama Road and Sardis Road. (Council District 6 - Smith)
SUMMARY OF PETITION	The petition proposes to expand an existing conference center by adding a maximum 12,500 square feet within four buildings.
PROPERTY OWNER PETITIONER AGENT/REPRESENTATIVE	Michael T. Whitehead and Elizabeth M. Whitehead Michael T. Whitehead and Elizabeth M. Whitehead N/A
COMMUNITY MEETING STATEMENT OF CONSISTENCY	Meeting is required and has been held. Report available online. This petition is found to be consistent with the <i>South District Plan</i> and to be reasonable and in the public interest, based on information from the staff analysis and the public hearing, by a 4-2 vote of the Zoning Committee (motion by Commissioner Walker seconded by Commissioner Labovitz).

ZONING COMMITTEE ACTION	<p>The Zoning Committee voted 4-2 to recommend APPROVAL of this petition with the following modifications:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The petitioner has clarified the total square footage for the existing and proposed buildings. Staff has rescinded the request to provide the gross square footage for the existing-story conference as parking is based upon assembly area. 2. The petitioner has modified the required parking to accurately reflect what is proposed on the site plan. Thus, the total number of required spaces is now 93 (versus required 91 spaces previously noted). 3. The petitioner is working with Planning Department staff towards the approval of an alternate buffer along the property line that abuts the development zoned R-8MF(CD). The petitioner has added a note on the site plan acknowledging the alternate buffer. 4. The petitioner has added Streetscape and Landscaping Note 6f stating that plantings proposed in the sight triangle are low lying and will not obstruct visibility. 5. Petitioner has amended Architectural Note 5d to state that dumpsters and roll out containers will be screened with gated enclosures. 6. The petitioner has provided front and rear perspectives of the new events building. 7. Staff has rescinded the request regarding the existing storage shed as it is out of the 20-foot buffer required with the 2005 site plan. The petitioner has added a note that states all other improvements (i.e. gravel parking area and other improvements) will be removed from this buffer area. 8. A note has been added to the site plan that states the parking agreement will be filed in the Register of Deeds prior to issuance of any permits. 9. The Fire Department comment has been addressed regarding access through the gate having a minimum of 16 feet in width for fire apparatus and 20-foot clear access road.
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VOTE

Motion/Second:	Walker/Labovitz
Yeas:	Labovitz, Lathrop, Low, and Walker
Nays:	Allen and Ryan
Absent:	Dodson
Recused:	None

ZONING COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Staff presented this rezoning to accommodate the expansion of the Whitehead Retreat Center to the Zoning Committee. Staff noted the major issues addressed with the revised site plan, including removal of the required buffer out of telephone easement, a proposed alternate buffer, reduction in square footage and height of the proposed events building, inclusion of building elevations, and a parking agreement with the Sardis Baptist Church. Some Committee members expressed concern about intensifying a site currently dealing with parking issues, and questioned what is deemed appropriate intensity. The Committee discussed the abutting rights-of-way and inquired about how users would travel between the facility and Sardis Baptist Church where some of the required parking will be provided. Staff responded by stating the revised site plan identifies a pick-up/drop-off area for shuttle service between the retreat center and the church.

Committee members discussed concerns regarding safety of pedestrians walking along and across high speed arterials in order to access off-site parking. A Committee member noted the number of institutional uses in the immediate area and suggested that pedestrian oriented improvements that focus on a walkable community center and reduces inaccessibility be considered for this area. Staff responded that Transportation commitments are highly contingent upon funding availability.

Committee members inquired about the parking agreement and the implications if the Church no longer wishes to be part of the agreement. Staff responded that the parking lease agreements are typically for a certain number of years and are written in such a way so as to address ending such agreements. Staff also noted that the facility currently has an agreement with the church.

MINORITY OPINION

The minority of the Commissioners expressed concerns about further intensification of a site with existing parking problems, and potential pedestrian activity between the facility and church along and across high speed arterials with challenged intersections.

STAFF OPINION

Staff agrees with the recommendation of the Zoning Committee.

FINAL STAFF ANALYSIS
(Pre-Hearing Analysis online at www.rezoning.org)

PLANNING STAFF REVIEW

- **Background**

The property was rezoned from R-3 (single family residential) to INST (CD) (institutional, conditional) in 2005 (rezoning petition 2005-100), in order to allow the establishment of a conference and retreat center. The approval allowed for the preservation of the existing 4,059-square foot house and the construction of a new 5,500 square-foot retreat center. Weddings and wedding receptions were prohibited.

A site plan amendment was approved in 2012 (rezoning petition 2012-039), to add weddings and wedding receptions as permitted uses.

- **Proposed Request Details**

- The site plan amendment contains the following changes:
 - Construction of a one story events building containing a maximum of 6,150 square feet with up to 3,000 square feet of assembly space. The new building will have an exterior covered porch.
 - Construction of three new one story enclosed break-out rooms (Break-Out Rooms A, B, and C on the site plan) ranging in building area from 300 square feet to 540 square feet.
 - Addition of new upper and lower patios to the existing manor house.
 - Construction of a new gazebo, and events or dining deck.
 - New gated gravel parking area containing two parking spaces with gravel driveway, located in front of the proposed one story building.
 - Proposed bus/shuttle pick-up and drop-off area (able to accommodate an eight-foot by 30-foot vehicle) with waiting area. This new area will result in the removal of two existing parking spaces.
 - Modifications to existing parking areas in order to accommodate fire access requirements and a new pick-up/drop-off area. Modifications will result in an increase in the number of on-site parking spaces from 41 to 47.
 - Installation of internal walkways.
 - A total of 93 required parking spaces, of which 47 will be provided on-site. An additional 50 spaces are proposed to be leased off-site.
 - A note committing that the design and placement of proposed structures, and building materials, will serve to enhance existing structures and overall character of the site.
 - A 15-foot Class C buffer along the eastern property line reduced from 20 feet with installation of a six-foot fence or wall.
 - Proposed alternate buffer along the property line abutting residential development zoned R-8MF(CD) (multi-family residential, conditional). Development note provided on the site plan acknowledging this alternate buffer requiring approval by the Interim Zoning Administrator.

- **Public Plans and Policies**

- The *South District Plan* (1993), as amended by the 2005 rezoning and subsequent 2012 site plan amendment, shows the subject property as institutional.
 - The petition is consistent with the *South District Plan*.
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DEPARTMENT COMMENTS (see full department reports online)

- **Charlotte Area Transit System:** No comments received.
 - **Charlotte Department of Neighborhood & Business Services:** No issues.
 - **Transportation:** No issues.
 - **Charlotte Fire Department:** No issues.
 - **Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools:** Not applicable.
 - **Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Services:** No issues.
 - **Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities:** No issues.
 - **Mecklenburg County Land Use and Environmental Services Agency:** No issues.
 - **Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Department:** No issues.
 - **Urban Forestry:** No issues.
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ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE SITE DESIGN (see full department reports online)

- **Site Design:** The following explains how the petition addresses the environmentally sensitive site design guidance in the *General Development Policies-Environment*.
 - This site meets minimum ordinance standards.
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OUTSTANDING ISSUES

- No issues.
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Attachments Online at www.rezoning.org

- Application
- Pre-Hearing Staff Analysis
- Site Plan
- Community Meeting Report
- Charlotte Department of Neighborhood & Business Services Review
- Transportation Review
- Charlotte Fire Department Review
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Services Review
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities Review
- Engineering and Property Management Review
- Mecklenburg County Land Use and Environmental Services Agency Review
- Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Review
- Urban Forestry Review

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