

**RECOMMENDATION
TO THE
PINE BLUFF PLANNING COMMISSION**

SUBJECT: Use Permit on Review request to add a building to the existing school site at 1021 E. 2nd Avenue in order to expand enrollment and classroom space.

APPLICANT: There is Hope DBA Hope Academy Charter School

ZONING AND LAND USE:

ZONING:	North:	R-4 Residential	LAND USE:	North:	Martha Mitchell Expressway
	South:	R-4 Residential		South:	Single Family Residential
	East:	R-4 Residential		East:	Small Picnic Park, then a house
	West:	R-4 Residential		West:	Church

REVIEW COMMENTS

- The applicant is requesting to add a 30-foot by 64-foot building to the subject location and additional classroom space. They have stated they desire to expand their enrollment.
- The applicant was given a UPOR last year to develop the school in an existing building. Under a UPOR permit, they are only allowed to proceed with plans approved under the UPOR request. In order to alter or expand the use as approved, they must receive approval by the Planning Commission. The existing approval was for the conversion of the existing building for school purposes and parking only.
- The subject site is located adjacent to busy streets. Not only is the Martha Mitchell Expressway located at the rear of the parcel, its east-bound on-off ramp is located on the east side of the subject lot. E. 2nd Avenue is classified as a minor arterial street, in that it is used to access the Courthouse, the Expressway on-ramp, and Port Road.
- The existing site contains 16 off-street parking spaces. There is no loading/unloading space for students other than the drive-way aisles for the parking spaces. During several visits to the site, the highest number of unused parking spaces was three – the two handicapped spaces, which are required, and one regular space. The site plan shows that while they would be adding classroom space, they would be reducing the number of parking spaces. Obviously they need all of the existing spaces for the current use, and with the expansion, they would need additional spaces, not less.
- There are several safety issues in considering expansion of the facilities and enrollment.
 1. First, according to the site plan, the proposed new addition would be located only 26 feet from the on-off ramp and 20 feet from the Expressway. These accesses are

highly utilized by large trucks as well as other vehicles, and if there is a problem with a truck or vehicle, the proposed building could easily be hit. We cannot recommend a building, particularly a school building being located so near a potentially dangerous intersection.

2. Second, while many of the children are currently bused to the site, this is not always the case and an expansion would cause more cars trying to drop off and pick up children on a busy road without have a loading or unloading location off the street.
3. Third, the proposed classroom is shown as being only seven feet from the existing school building. This is insufficient separation not only for air and pedestrian circulation but for emergency personnel access.

RECOMMENDATION

The staff recommends denial of the UPOR request.

Our staff does not profess to know all matters pertaining to land use law. We serve the City of Pine Bluff in an advisory capacity only, and any comments or recommendations contained herein are based on good planning principles and the Zoning Regulations as we interpret them. If you have questions on any legal issues that might occur due to this matter, please contact the Pine Bluff City Attorney.