



Memorandum

To: Board of Zoning Appeals
From: Matthew Glassman, Chair of the Planning Commission *mg*
Meeting Dates: January 14, 2026; January 28, 2026; February 11, 2026
Re: Recommendation on Amendment to Conditional Use Permit
Green Hedges School - 415 Windover Avenue NW

Summary

The Planning Commission reviewed the Green Hedges School request to amend its existing Conditional Use Permit (CUP) over the course of three meetings held on January 14, January 28, and February 11, 2026.

The January 14 meeting included staff presentation, applicant presentation, and receipt of public testimony. On January 28, the Commission reviewed revised materials submitted by the applicant and continued discussion of buffering, noise mitigation, enrollment, and operational conditions. At that meeting, the Commission deferred action to allow additional clarification and written submissions.

On February 11, 2026, the Commission resumed deliberations for the purpose of formulating a recommendation to the Board of Zoning Appeals regarding the proposed CUP amendment. After extensive discussion, the Planning Commission voted **4-3 to recommend denial** of the proposed amendment to the Conditional Use Permit.

Proposal Overview

The applicant initially requested an increase in enrollment from the current cap of 190 students to **225 students**. Following discussion at the January 14 meeting and public testimony, the applicant reduced the request to **217 students**. After additional feedback at the January 28 meeting, the request was further reduced to **210 students**.

In addition to the proposed enrollment increase, the CUP amendment sought to:

- increase associated staffing from 42 to 50 employees;
- revise and consolidate operational conditions;
- establish updated conditions related to noise mitigation, buffering, parking, and hours of operation; and
- supersede prior CUP approvals with a single consolidated order.

The request is interrelated with proposed site improvements and modifications of zoning requirements that were considered separately by the Commission and forwarded to Town Council under a separate recommendation.

Key Discussion Points

The Commission's deliberations over three meetings focused on the statutory findings required for approval of a conditional use permit and whether the record supported those findings. Under Section 18-824.5.B., the Board must determine whether the proposed use, as conditioned, will not:

- adversely affect the health or safety of persons residing or working in the neighborhood;
- be detrimental to the public welfare; or
- be injurious to property or improvements in the neighborhood.

The Commission's vote to recommend denial reflects a nuanced and divided deliberation. While Commissioners expressed support for several proposed operational and mitigation measures, there was significant division regarding whether the record supported the affirmative findings required for approval of a CUP amendment.

Commissioners ultimately expressed a variety of viewpoints:

- Two commissioners expressed that the proposed amendment is fundamentally incompatible with the future health of the neighborhood;
- Three commissioners had concerns about noise and/or compliance issues but were supportive of the amendment, if accompanied by conditions to mitigate the concerns; and
- Two commissioners did not support the amendment in current form. One commissioner expressed that noise mitigation should be fully implemented prior to any enrollment increase, and one commissioner expressed that, based on the record before the Commission, there was insufficient technical information to make the statutory findings affirmatively, particularly with respect to noise mitigation and its measurable effectiveness.

There were three primary issues of concern for the Commission.

1. Noise Impacts and Mitigation

Noise associated with outdoor play and activities was the central issue raised by nearby residents and extensively discussed by the Commission.

The applicant proposed installation of acoustic fencing and enhanced landscaping within expanded buffer areas. While Commissioners generally supported the installation of such measures, discussion centered on:

- whether the record included sufficient technical analysis demonstrating that the proposed measures would achieve the applicant’s stated target sound level and associated sound reduction goals;
- whether mitigation should be fully implemented and demonstrated effective prior to any enrollment increase; and
- how compliance with noise mitigation commitments would be measured and enforced.

Commissioners expressed concern that, without clearer evidence of projected outcomes and enforceable performance standards, the Commission could not confidently conclude that the amended CUP would satisfy required findings.

2. Enrollment Increase

The progression of the enrollment request – from 225 students to 217 students, and ultimately to 210 students – was discussed as evidence of responsiveness to community concerns.

Commissioners recognized that the final requested increase to 210 students represents a more modest change than initially proposed. However, several members expressed that the question before the Commission was not solely the magnitude of the increase, but whether the impacts of any increase had been sufficiently mitigated and documented.

During deliberations, a majority of Commissioners indicated conceptual openness to an enrollment increase under appropriate and clearly supported conditions. However, that support did not align with a concurrent majority prepared to approve the CUP amendment as presented.

3. Institutional History and Compliance Concerns

Commissioners referenced concerns raised by neighbors regarding past compliance and buffering conditions.

While recognizing the current applicant team’s engagement, several Commissioners emphasized the importance of clear, enforceable conditions supported by measurable standards. Several commissioners noted that noise is not just a hypothetical concern about an expansion of the school, but also a current problem in the neighborhood.

Though the applicant stated its intention not to seek to further increases in enrollment beyond the current submission, several Commissioners noted the applicant had previously been approved for enrollment increases with similar intentions.

Planning Commission Recommendation

On February 11, 2026, the Planning Commission considered a motion to recommend denial of the amendment to the Conditional Use Permit.

Motion: Commissioner Noble
2nd: Commissioner Chakrapani
Roll Call Vote: 4-3

Matthew Glassman, Chair	Aye
Douglas Noble, Vice Chair	Aye
Keith Aimone	Nay
Deepa Chakrapani	Aye
Stephen Kenney	Nay
David Miller	Aye
Jessica Plowgian	Nay

Closing

The Planning Commission respectfully submits this recommendation and the full meeting record for the Board of Zoning Appeals' consideration.

The recommendation of denial does not reflect opposition to the institution itself, nor to site improvements considered separately. Several Commissioners supported establishing an updated consolidated CUP order with many of the proposed conditions submitted by the applicant. However, the majority determined that, based on the information before the Commission at this time, it could not make the required findings under Section 18-824.5.B. to support approval of the amendment.

The Commission acknowledges the applicant's responsiveness throughout the review process and encourages continued engagement should the applicant seek future review supported by additional technical documentation and demonstrated mitigation effectiveness.