

**From:** [beth whitaker](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** 5702 South Hill Drive , 2/26/24 Plan Co. isaion agenda Item 5  
**Date:** Sunday, February 25, 2024 11:21:33 PM

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Commissioners,

I am writing to express agreement with Elliot Meyerson's written comments regarding the applicant's employment practices, which appear to illegally discriminate against LGBT+ people in an intentional and systematic way. This is contrary to the general welfare of the public. I have no interest in interfering with the sale of the property and rather would like to see the applicant alter its employment practices to comport with the law.

Second, I would be grateful if the labyrinth in the front lawn of this building continued to exist and be open to the community, as it has been while the Methodist Church occupied the property. I am attaching photos of the labyrinth and associated signage. As the sign indicates, it is intended to facilitate contemplation of the sacred that we all share. I know community members use it regularly in this spirit. Could the Commission ask the applicant's representatives whether they would voluntarily continuing to share this wonderful feature with neighbors?

Beth Whitaker  
5818 Anchorage Avenue









## Cleveland, Julie

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**From:** David Ludwig <davidalbertludwig@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 22, 2024 1:20 PM  
**To:** Plan Commission Comments  
**Subject:** Public Comments on 5702 South Hill Dr. Conditional Use Permit Application of Charis Classical Academy

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January 22, 2024

Madison Plan Commission

Re: Comments on Conditional Use Permit Application of Charis Classical Academy, Inc.  
5702 South Hill Dr.  
File # 81555

Dear Commissioners:

We are writing to provide comments on the application of Charis Classical Academy, Inc, for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). Charis intends to purchase the former Wellspring United Methodist Church property, located at 5702 South Hill Drive, and convert the building into a K-12 private school. It needs a CUP because the property is located in a residential neighborhood, zoned SR-C1, in which schools and churches are conditional uses. We each reside in that neighborhood. We all oppose the issuance of a CUP to this organization.

Section 28.183, Madison General Ordinances, governs the issuance of CUPs. Section 28.183(6), MGO, establishes approval standards and prohibits the Plan Commission from granting a CUP application unless it finds that every one of 17 conditions has been met. The first mandatory condition is:

1. The establishment, maintenance or operation of the conditional use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety or general welfare.

Sec. 28.183(6)(a)1., MGO.

Charis operates a school that fails this standard because it engages in overt practices of outright discrimination. In fact, Charis is blatantly bigoted against members of Madison's queer community. The way Charis conducts its business is detrimental to the public health, safety and general welfare of large groups of Madison citizens, including members of the neighborhood that it now is seeking permission to enter. Evidence of Charis's bigoted behavior is prominent on its own website, [www.charisclassical.com](http://www.charisclassical.com). For example, consider these parts of the "Application For Teacher" that Charis requires job applicants to complete, attached to its website at <https://charisclassical.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/teacherapp.pdf>.

The Teacher Application begins with these highlighted words: "**Charis Classical Academy does not discriminate against applicants on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin.**" (CCA Teacher Application, page 2.) But notice what is prominently missing: no reference to LGBTQIA+ status. That's because Charis does discriminate against this group.

The Application includes Charis's Statement of Faith expressing its ten fundamental beliefs. Belief 10 prescribes as follows:

10. Marriage and Sexuality. We believe that God has created mankind in His image, male and female, **that marriage is the union of one man and one woman**, and that all forms of sexual immorality inside or outside of marriage are forbidden by Scripture.

(CCA Teacher Application, page 11; highlight inserted. Also on <https://charisclassical.com/about-us/>) Charis brooks no dissent from this mandate. Below the standard, Charis declares: "Faculty, staff and the Board of Directors **must be in agreement** with the Charis mission statement and statement of faith." (CCA Teacher Application, page 11; highlight inserted.)

Charis probes every prospective teacher's perspective on this prejudice further. The Teacher Application directs each applicant to describe his or her "personal convictions as a Christian" toward "divorce and remarriage, abortion and **homosexuality.**" (CCA Teacher Application, page 8; highlight inserted.) Charis hasn't merely adopted a philosophy of "this is who we are, can you fit in." This isn't just "don't ask, don't tell." Charis is demanding that applicants divulge their perspective, so it can weed out and reject queer applicants.

Job applicants must also sign a Declaration of Moral Integrity that includes this statement:

I declare that during the past year I have not engaged in, at the current time I am not engaging in, and promise that I will not during the term of my employment or volunteering, engage in inappropriate sexual conduct. **Inappropriate conduct is deemed to include**, but is not limited to, such behaviors as the following: . . . **homosexual or lesbian sexual activity**.

(CCA Teacher Application, page 13; underlining in original and highlight inserted.) On its website Charis also includes a Teacher Job Description (<https://charisclassical.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/jobdescription.pdf>). A list of the Charis teacher's "Essential Personal Qualities" is part of that document. It states that every teacher shall be "committed to God's biblical standards for sexual conduct." (Teacher Job Description, page 1.)

One word bluntly describes how Charis operates its school: hatemongering. Charis is trying to bring outright hostility against LGBTQIA+ members into our neighborhood. Its chosen location will be next to a public grade school, giving Charis the opportunity to spread that hostility not just to its own students but to public school children generally.

In our country, a private body like Charis is free to hold and express close-minded discriminatory opinions. But the city of Madison is not in the same position. The city must protect the welfare of the public as a whole and its CUP ordinance makes this responsibility clear. Section 28.183(6)(a)1., MGO prohibits the issuance of a CUP for any operation that is detrimental to or endangers the public health, safety, or general welfare. Because Charis's bias and bigotry are plainly contrary to the general welfare, this ordinance prevents the city from issuing a CUP to Charis.

For these reasons, we submit that the Plan Commission cannot grant Charis's CUP application. Please accept these comments and enter them into the public record.

Sincerely,

David Ludwig  
5 Beach St.

Nancy Ludwig  
5 Beach St.

Anne Kunen  
5801 Anchorage Ave.

Lorraine Stoltzfus  
5810 Anchorage Ave.

Karen Rahmeier  
5810 Anchorage Ave.

Nora McCormick  
5802 Cable Ave.

Patrick McCormick  
5802 Cable Ave.

Chris Junkins  
5802 Cable Ave.

Rachael Drechsel  
5710 Anchorage Ave.

Colleen Michelson  
5710 Anchorage Ave.

Ruth Crump  
5814 Anchorage Ave.

Steve Pollack  
5814 Anchorage Ave.

Sara Christiansen  
5802 Anchorage Ave.

George Christiansen  
5802 Anchorage Ave.

Anita Gallucci

6002 South Hill Dr.

Thomas McGregor  
6002 South Hill Dr.

Nancy Norcross  
117 Frigate Dr.

Robert Norcross  
117 Frigate Dr.

Kathy Golos  
5709 Anchorage Ave.

Ted Golos  
5709 Anchorage Ave.

Rita Reffner  
5705 Dogwood Pl.

Kallan Benjamin  
5706 Anchorage Ave.

Elliot Meyerson  
5706 Anchorage Ave.

Julia Greenleaf  
5734 Dogwood Pl.

Andy Bach  
5734 Dogwood Pl.

Brent Ashley  
5721 Dogwood Pl.

Casey Callies  
5721 Dogwood Pl.

Madison WI 53705



ReplyForward

Add reaction

**From:** [Elliot Meyerson](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** 5702 South Hill Drive: CUP Application Comment  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 14, 2024 5:13:42 PM

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You don't often get email from [elliottmeyerson@gmail.com](mailto:elliottmeyerson@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Commissioners,

I am writing regarding the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) application of Charis Classical Academy (Charis) in our neighborhood (at 5702 South Hill Drive).

It is clear from the Charis website that they have discriminatory hiring practices with respect to applicant sexual orientation (<https://charisclassical.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/teacherapp.pdf>; reached from [charisclassical.com](http://charisclassical.com) -> Employment -> CCA Teacher Application; accessed 2/14/2024).

These practices appear clearly unlawful under the Wisconsin Fair Employment Act (<https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/er/civilrights/discrimination/sexualorientation.htm>; Accessed 2/14/2024).

Unless there is some kind of exemption from this law that Charis can claim (and I am unaware of any precedent for such an exemption in Madison), a CUP approval would be effectively approving the site for unlawful use. It would encourage the spread of these kinds of unlawful practices to our neighborhood, which should be in the interest of neither the neighborhood nor the city at large.

I'm not sure what steps, if any, can be taken by Charis to rectify this issue, since, from the publicly available information on Charis' own website, this form of discrimination is deeply integrated into the organization's identity (<https://charisclassical.com/about-us/>; reached from [charisclassical.com](http://charisclassical.com) -> About Us; accessed 2/14/2024).

Thank you for considering this comment,

Elliot Meyerson  
5706 Anchorage Ave  
Madison, WI 53705