

Good evening. I would like to take this opportunity to submit written comments for the upcoming October 21, 2024 hearing regarding the Conditional Use Approval for Bright Beginnings Day School at 8402 Castle Pines Drive in Madison, WI.

On behalf of the Junction Ridge Neighborhood Association, its board members, members at large, and neighbors, I would like to state that we are strongly opposed to the approval of Bright Beginnings Day School (BBDS) in our neighborhood.

To provide a little background on this issue, the house at 8402 Castle Pines was sold to 11Eleven LLC at the end of March 2024. When our neighborhood association learned that the home was sold to an LLC, we tried to find information about the group to ascertain what the plans for the house might be. We were unable to find any information about the group that seemed connected to the city of Madison and as we were not informed of any business plans there, we assumed that perhaps the group was a property manager of some type and would be renting the home to a family. However, as early as May 2024, neighbors began to learn that the home was to become another location for BBDS and were quick to reach out to the city. One neighbor requested information several times, in May, from our Alder, Nikki Conklin, who never responded. As the home is not zoned for a business, he then reached out to the City Attorney's Office only to be told that the office doesn't deal with individuals, only "departments." Neighbors then turned the Junction Ridge Neighborhood Association to join them in their pursuit of information and oversight of city policy being followed. At the end of June, I reached out to Alder Conklin who reported not knowing anything about the property and later forwarded an email from Matt Tucker, DPCED, stating that the city was familiar with the property owner, Sarah Tuttle and her daycare business, and that she would indeed need conditional approval to operate her business in the residential home. Yet Ms. Tuttle began operating the daycare center in early July, **despite the lack of approval and despite the many attempts made from neighbors to various city officials to alert them to the zoning violation.**

When looking at the approval standards from the city of Madison, we have a number of specific concerns we would like to bring attention to.

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

-As the property at Castle Pines is not zoned for business, it is not well suited for business use. There are real concerns, that have been realized as the business has operated for the last several months, about increased traffic, parking problems, speed of vehicles, and lack of stop signs. Castle Pines Drive meets with Oakmont Drive to form a "horseshoe" shaped road for which one must make a turn to enter. There are no stop signs at either of the two intersections to enter or leave the "horseshoe." It is a road that, up until now, has only really been used by its residents and delivery vehicles, familiar with the layout of the subdivision and the increased need

to be observant where there is a lack of signage. The neighborhood is heavily walked and biked and we believe that increased traffic, especially where there are no stop signs, poses a real risk to pedestrians, drivers, and bikers. Up until recently, the “horseshoe” served as an MMSD bus stop and since their routes tend to change, may be used once again. Having elementary school students walk from their homes to the bus stop at the same time and location as frequent child care drop offs are happening poses a risk to the safety of our neighborhood children.

Neighbors report that when parents are dropping off their children at BBDS, or when employees are arriving for the day, they are driving too fast, not looking for residents as they pull out of their own driveways, and are cluttering the street with parking which can obstruct views for the safe crossing of the street and safe driving on the street.

“3. The uses, values, and enjoyment of other property in the neighborhood for purposes already established will not be substantially impaired or diminished in any foreseeable manner.”

-While there has been a great deal of noise and traffic related to BBDS completing landscaping and interior constructional changes, we understand and appreciate that that is temporary. However, some long-term concerns have already arisen. Loud children’s music can be heard playing from the property from time to time, as far as two streets away, due to the way sound travels through the neighborhood. Neighbors also report not being able to let their dogs outside for periods of time (as they are accustomed to doing) because the dogs will bark at the children gathered outside and the barking bothers neighbors. These include neighbors who have taken the time and expense to fence their yard for the purpose allowing their pets outside.

“4. Adequate utilities, access roads, drainage, internal circulation improvements for pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit and vehicles, parking supply (in cases with minimum parking requirements) and other necessary site improvements have been or are being provided.”

-This issue harkens back to point #1. We have concerns for how the increased traffic and parking impacts pedestrians, bicyclists, and public vehicles. Thinking forward to the winter, the “horseshoe” road will suffer in the quality of snow plowing it receives due to the numerous cars parked on the street. (So far, it has been observed that no parking from staff or parents happens in the driveway, only on the street). There is also the potential for making trash pick up difficult as the garbage trucks need to maneuver around an increased number of parked cars.

Further concerns we would ask the Plan Commission to consider include:

1. The city of Madison reports a housing shortage and city officials run on addressing this issue. Sarah Tuttle operates her business out of six single family homes. We believe that Madison residents should be afforded as many housing options as possible to suit their family needs and **every time BBDS opens another location, an option for a family is removed from their consideration.** Madison families need homes.

2. 8402 Castle Pines is zoned as Suburban Residential and we think it is a very reasonable expectation that home owners who choose to live in an area zoned as such, not expect to live next door to a business. In fact, they rely on zoning laws and local government officials to protect their residential neighborhood from wealthy entrepreneurs who seek to alter the culture of their neighborhood by moving their businesses in. This is perhaps truer than a neighborhood zoned as Traditional Residential. The area surrounding Castle Pines already houses a number of adult-care living facilities and there is concern that the neighborhood will suffer “a death of a thousand papercuts” if more and more businesses are approved to operate out of homes.

3. **Since the property is zoned for suburban residential use, neighbors expect neighbors to live there. Frankly, a business is not a neighbor.** There are a number of key differences between a true family run daycare (FRD) and BBDS. In a FRD, the house is purchased by a family, not a business owner. The family is part of the community, neighborhood, and is in relationship with neighbors because they live in the home. Having Castle Pines occupied by an employee (which there doesn't seem to be evidence of) and having the home run as a business changes the dynamics of the neighborhood. The house is filled with a rotation of staff and children with unknown parents coming and going for drop off and pick up. This is very different from a stay-at-home-parent who opens their door to a handful of neighborhood children. In a FRD, the children served are often *from* the neighborhood. BBDS informs applicants that if their child is admitted to their program, they are placed wherever there is space. This “local” business is owned a woman who lives outside of Madison and does not specifically serve families in our neighborhood. Our neighborhood is a special place, offering opportunities for meaningful connection. It is the hope of neighbors to see this house once again occupied by a family that might seek those connections out and continue to make our community strong, vibrant, and personal.

4. We can appreciate the need for child care in our community, however, since Ms. Tuttle sold one location at the same time as opening Castle Pines, this daycare center does not provide *more* care for children, it simply moves it.

When Ms. Tuttle purchased the Castle Pines house, she did not do her due diligence as a business owner to make sure she was in compliance with city policy. After she was informed that she would in fact need approval, she sold one of her daycare locations (on Pleasant View) and updated her website to notify families that Castle Pines served to replace her Pleasant View location. The confidence in which she has operated this location, without approval, comes across, quite frankly, as disrespectful to the neighborhood, city policy, and the process in which countless other business owners take the time to go through. We sincerely hope that the Plan

Commission considers these comments with great reflection as they conclude their position on the matter.

Respectfully and on behalf of the Junction Ridge Neighborhood Association,
Dayla Stapleton, JRNA President

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