

**CITY OF PALM BEACH GARDENS
CITY COUNCIL
Agenda Cover Memorandum**

**Meeting Date: December 1, 2011
Ordinance 21, 2011
Resolution 64, 2011**

Subject/Agenda Item:

Ordinance 21, 2011 and Resolution 64, 2011 – Howell Watkins Middle School Rezoning

Second Reading and Adoption: A request by the School District of Palm Beach County to rezone the Howell L. Watkins Middle School site to a Planned Unit Development (PUD) Overlay and request one (1) waiver to allow a monument sign. The Howell L. Watkins Middle School is generally located on the east side of MacArthur Boulevard, approximately one-quarter mile north of Northlake Boulevard.

**Recommendation to APPROVE with one (1) waiver
 Recommendation to DENY**

<p>Reviewed by: Director of Planning & Zoning</p> <p>_____ Natalie M. Crowley, AICP</p> <p>Assistant Director of Planning & Zoning</p> <p>_____ James Golden, AICP</p> <p>Development Compliance</p> <p>_____ Bahareh Wolfs, AICP</p> <p>City Attorney</p> <p>_____ R. Max Lohman, Esq.</p>	<p>Originating Dept.: Planning & Zoning: Project Manager</p> <p>_____ Kathryn DeWitt, AICP Planner</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quasi – Judicial <input type="checkbox"/> Legislative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing</p>	<p>Finance: Accountant</p> <p>_____ Sarah Varga</p> <p>Fees Paid: <u>N/A</u></p> <p>Funding Source:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Operating <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <u>N/A</u></p> <p>Budget Acct.#: <u>N/A</u></p>	<p>Council Action:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> App. w/ Conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Denied <input type="checkbox"/> Rec. Approval <input type="checkbox"/> Rec. App. w/ Conds. <input type="checkbox"/> Rec. Denial <input type="checkbox"/> Continued to:_____</p>
<p>Approved By: City Manager</p> <p>_____ Ronald M. Ferris</p>	<p>Advertised: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Required <input type="checkbox"/> Not Required Date: 11.16.2011 Paper: Palm Beach Post</p> <p>Affected parties: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notified <input type="checkbox"/> Not Required</p>	<p>Attachments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location Map • Development Application • Resolution 188, 2003 • Ordinance 21, 2011 • Resolution 64, 2011 • Signage Exhibit • Site Plan 	

BACKGROUND

The Howell Watkins Middle School was originally constructed in 1957. It was named after the seventh Superintendent of Palm Beach County Schools, Mr. Howell L. Watkins.

In 2003, the City Council passed Resolution 188, 2003, which approved a Major Conditional Use allowing the expansion of the Howell L. Watkins Middle School site (see attached *Resolution 188, 2003*). The expansion included the construction of approximately 172,749 square feet of new school space and the demolition of certain existing buildings on the site.

Under the subject petition, the School District is requesting to rezone the middle school site to a Planned Unit Development (PUD) Overlay. The existing zoning designation of Public or Institutional (P/I) will remain unchanged. In addition, the Applicant is requesting waivers from the City’s sign code to permit a monument sign in front of the Pew Leadership Development Center, located on the north end of the school site.

The Pew Center is used by the School District’s Department of Professional Development (DPD) to hold seminars and training classes for its staff. The programs offered by the DPD serve new and veteran administrators. The focus of the programs is to provide challenging and relevant leadership training and support for aspiring and current leaders with the hope of improved student achievement.

LAND USE AND ZONING

The subject site has a Public (P) future land-use designation and lies within a Public and Institutional (P/I) zoning district. The Applicant is requesting approval to rezone to a Planned Unit Development (PUD) Overlay. The underlying Public and Institutional (P/I) zoning designation will remain unchanged.

Table 1. Existing Zoning Land Use Designations

EXISTING USE	ZONING	LANDUSE
<u>Subject Property</u> Howell L. Watkins Middle School	Public and Institutional (P/I)	Public
<u>North</u> Plat 1	Residential Low Density-3 (RL3)	Residential Low (RL)
<u>South</u> Lake Catherine Sports Complex	P/I with a PUD Overlay	Recreation Open Space (ROS)
<u>West</u> Lake Catherine Community	Residential Low Density-2 (RL2) & P/I with a PUD Overlay	Recreation Open Space (ROS)
<u>East</u> C-17 Canal Hilltop Gardens	-- General Commercial (CG-1)	-- Commercial

CONCURRENCY

The subject petition does not propose any modifications to the existing concurrency approvals.

PROJECT DETAILS

Site Details

The subject school site is approximately 20 acres and is located on the east side of MacArthur Boulevard, approximately one-quarter mile north of Northlake Boulevard. The Pew Leadership Development Center building is located on the northern end of the school site and is separated from the middle school by an aluminum fence that surrounds the property.

Signage

One (1) monument sign was approved for the Howell L. Watkins School. The sign is located near the southern drop-off entrance. The site has sufficient linear footage for a second monument sign as per City Code Section 78-285; however, the subject monument sign, which currently exists in front of the Pew Center, does not meet the City's signage regulations in terms of the sign height and solid base. The sign is approximately 18.5 feet tall; whereas, Section 78-285 allows a maximum height of 10 feet. The sign width and copy area are within the code allowances. The changeable copy sign type is also permitted by City Code Section 78-285, as the site has a zoning designation of Public/Institutional.

The existing sign does not have the required three- (3) foot solid base; however, the Applicant has submitted an exhibit showing that the base will be added to bring this aspect of the sign into compliance (see attached *Signage Exhibit*). The existing sign is cream in color with powder blue panels and black lettering. The proposed three- (3) foot stucco base will match the cream-colored sign.

Landscaping

The Applicant is proposing to plant an 18-inch Cocoplum hedge around the monument sign, which will be maintained at a height of two (2) feet. The proposed hedge will greatly enhance the aesthetic quality of the existing sign. The width of the proposed landscape hedge will be approximately two (2) feet.

Waiver Request

The Applicant is requesting one (1) waiver with this petition.

	Code Section	Requirement	Proposal	Waiver	Staff Support & Discussion
1	78-285, Table 24, Changeable Copy Ground Sign	10 ft max. height	18.5 feet	8.5 feet	Approval

1) The Applicant is requesting a waiver from City Code Section 78-285. Table 24.

Permanent Signs. to exceed the maximum height allowed for a ground sign by approximately 8.5 feet. The Florida State Requirements for Educational Facilities (SREF) requires that a six- (6) foot fence be constructed around the perimeter of all School District properties. The existing sign was designed so the text portion of the sign was located above the perimeter fence to ensure visibility. If the sign was constructed with a height of ten (10) feet, as required by City Code, it would be obstructed by the fence. Because the sign is vital to the School District's operations, key information that is valuable to the public is displayed on the subject sign. The school programs held at the Pew Center provide a public benefit to the City, making their ability to communicate with the public through their signage crucial. Furthermore, the Applicant has agreed to install the required three- (3) foot solid base in order to bring the sign into compliance with the City's sign code (*see attached Signage Exhibit*). In addition, a Cocoplum hedge will be planted around the entire base of the sign. Staff supports this waiver request.

REZONING ANALYSIS

The proposed rezoning to a Planned Unit Development (PUD) with an underlying zoning of Public/Institutional (P/I) is consistent with the City's Land Development Regulations (Section 78-154, PUD) and Comprehensive Plan (Objective 1.1.3, Objective 1.1.4, Objective 1.2.3, and Objective 1.2.4). The school use with the underlying zoning of P/I is not changing and has been in place since the school was constructed in 1957. The PUD Overlay will allow for more flexibility in the future with regard to property regulations. Many other schools within the City have a PUD Overlay, including William T. Dwyer High, Watson B. Duncan Middle, Timber Trace Elementary, Palm Beach Gardens High, the Benjamin School, the Weiss School, and St. Mark's Episcopal School.

Section 78-154(a). The purpose and intent of the PUD Overlay District is to permit and encourage more efficient and creative development or redevelopment of property.

Rezoning the subject site to a PUD Overlay will allow for more flexibility and design innovation in the event there is future redevelopment of the school.

Section 78-154(e). Permitted uses. Unless otherwise established by a PUD development order, the uses permitted in the PUD district shall be governed by the uses permitted in the underlying zoning district.

The public school use is classified as a major conditional use in the P/I zoning district. The conditional use approval for the school was granted by the City Council in 2003 through Resolution 188, 2003 (*see attached Resolution 188, 2003*).

Section 78-154(f). Unified control. All land included within a PCD or PUD shall be owned or under the control of the Applicant. The Applicant shall document unified control of the entire area within the proposed PUD. The Applicant shall agree that the PUD will be developed in accordance with the master development plan approved by the City.

The subject site is under the sole ownership of the School Board of Palm Beach County.

Section 78-154(g)(7). Development area. Minimum development size for PUDs in the subject area is one (1) acre.

The subject site is approximately 20 acres in size.

COMMENTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE (DRC)

On September 6, 2011, the subject petition was reviewed by the DRC. At this time, all comments related to the project have been satisfied.

PLANNING, ZONING, AND APPEALS BOARD (PZAB)

On October 11, 2011, the PZAB recommended approval of the subject petition to City Council by a vote of 7-0.

CITY COUNCIL

On November 3, 2011, the City Council approved Ordinance 21, 2011 on first reading by a vote of 5-0.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends **APPROVAL** of Ordinance 21, 2011 and Resolution 64, 2011 with one (1) waiver.