

## Maggie Barszewski

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**From:** Daniel Keester  
**Sent:** Friday, April 26, 2019 1:53 PM  
**To:** Maggie Barszewski  
**Cc:** David Recor; Jennifer Gomez  
**Subject:** RE: Islamic Center of S FL open house  
**Attachments:** Flyer ICOSF community invitation.doc

**Categories:** Red Category

Maggie,

Last night, I attended the Islamic Center's open house, where they discussed the proposed rezoning with the community. I thought it was well attended (at least 50 people) and productive. Below you will find an outline of the program and items of concern identified by the Community:

- The President of the Board, introduced himself and provided an overview of the proposal (Rezoning from RM-12 to CF).
  - Stated that the Islamic Center has been a part of the Community since the 80s.
  - Listed some of the services that they offer to the community, because part of their mission as Muslims is to give back/serve the Community:
    - Provide "Saturday School" (equivalent of "Sunday School) for their parishioners
    - Hold Monthly Health Screenings (open to any member of the public, not exclusively members of the Mosque)
    - Donate to Food pantry, and coordinate with Markham Elementary
  - Explained the Program/ layout of the Mosque
    - There are two buildings on-site: (1) the Prayer Center, (2) the Daycare / School
    - When they were designing/ building the mosque, they were told that if they wanted to have a school there, that they would need to rezone the property. The property allows for daycare, but not for grade school, middle school or high school.
  - Explained that they want to apply for the rezoning so that in the future, if there is a demand to operate a daily / regular Islamic private school that they would be able to. The President stressed that there are no immediate plans to operate a school, and that there are no long term plans to build any addition or expansion to operate a school. They intend to use the 2-story building with the ~14 classrooms.
- The President took questions and listened to the concerns of the community, and tried to answer questions:
  - Will the school be in one of the existing buildings? Yes.
  - Is it the intention of the Mosque to buy any of the surrounding Properties? No.
  - Why are they rezoning the property, if they already have the buildings constructed? The zoning doesn't allow for a full-time school at this time the zoning allows them to do their Saturday School/ Childcare.
  - Will this be a public or a private school? Private.
  - Will you be hurting or helping Markham Elementary by having a school right next door? Not hurting! Hopefully helping...
  - Will you be offering teaching jobs to the Community? Yes, if there are qualified teachers, when the need arises we may be adding jobs for the school.
  - What is the maximum number of students that you anticipate? The existing building with the existing classrooms, as an estimate, would not allow for more than 180 – 200 student capacity.
  - Do you have a timeline, as far as when you might start enrollment for a school? No.
  - Comments:
    - Be mindful of the security of the area. Lately schools are under attack & an Islamic School would only seem like a greater target.

- The difference between your proposal and your neighbors proposal is that they won't be evolving into a Middle School or High School, and you will. You can't compare yourself to Markham Elementary. That school was built for the children of migrant farmers.
- "We know that you are connected to the Convenience Store operators on MLK Blvd, and you are allowing drugs into our neighborhood." *We are not connected to the businesses. Not all Muslims in the area come to this church. Not all people that identify as muslims, are following the teachings of the Qur'an – just like not all "Christians" follow the teachings of the Bible.*
- Dr. Khalilah Camacho Ali, former wife of Muhammad Ali, spoke to those in attendance about the similarities between the Muslim religion and the Christian religion.
- Beverly Perkins thanked the Islamic Center for opening their doors to the Community to allow them to better understand the proposal.
- The President gave a walk-thru of the 2 buildings.
- The Islamic Center hosted those in attendance for dinner.



Please be advised, effective August 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Hours of **City Hall** will be open: Monday – Friday, 7 AM – 6 PM  
**Individual Work Schedules may vary, I will be in the office:** Tuesday – Friday, 7 AM – 6 PM