

Item M3

Ridgetop Baptist Church

“A Place to Call Home”

Mark Gardner, Pastor / June Gardner, Music Leader

708 East 51st Street – Austin, TX 78751

Email: ridgetopbaptistchurch@yahoo.com

Office: 512.451.1607 / Cell: 512.921.8852

May 1, 2017

City of Austin-Development Services Department
Leane Heldenfels
Board of Adjustment

Reference:

Case Number: C15-2017-0023

5111 Eilers Avenue

Personally as pastor of Ridgetop Baptist Church and on behalf of Ridgetop Baptist Church, I am writing to voice my personal and the church's full support of the variance requests for the property located at 5111 Eilers adjacent to the church. During the last three years, Chinese with Meggie Language School and Mike Osborne have been a positive and strong asset to the church and to the neighborhood.

The language school has brought new life to the area of 51st Street and Eilers as well as to the church. Neighbors have talked with me about enjoying seeing and hearing the children during the week as they come and go. Our insurance agent along with church members and service personnel have mentioned how “good” it is to see the church and the neighborhood revitalized.

Since beginning to lease space from the church, Meggie Chou and Mike Osborne have been very responsible, cooperative, reliable and cordial in working with the church. They have kept the church and myself very informed in all phases of the development of the language school as well in the purchase of the property at 5111 Eilers Avenue.

From the very start of their looking into that property when it was put on the market, their goal was to keep the original integrity of the house on that property in tact. And that they have done as they remodeled, converted and enhanced a run down old house into a very beautiful, efficient and useable house. In so doing, they have kept the integrity of Eilers Avenue and the Ridgetop neighborhood in tact as well.

But I also want to add a word about the impact of the school itself. Having experienced Meggie and the teachers “in action” day in and day out interacting with the students and the parents, I can testify to the great job they do in teaching Chinese not only to children but to adults as well. Chinese with Meggie is truly a wonderful program benefiting not only this area but the whole city of Austin.

The school, Mike and Meggie certainly have the church's and my support, and we ask that you approve their variance requests.

Sincerely,

Rev. Mark V. Gardner
Pastor – Ridgetop Baptist Church



Meggie Chou [REDACTED]

Little Tiger Chinese Immersion School - 5111 Eilers Avenue, 78751

1 message

J Segura [REDACTED]

Mon, May 8, 2017 at 9:49 AM

To: [REDACTED]

Good Day Board Members,

Our daughter has attended the Little Tiger Chinese Immersion school for the last two years. In that time not only has her spoken Mandarin blossomed into fluency, but she is well on her way to literacy as well. It is still amazing to me that my six year old daughter can speak, read, and write in Chinese. I don't think it would have been possible without the Little Tiger school.

Unfortunately, she is soon to age-out if the program unless additional room can be made for the higher grade levels. While English and Spanish are ubiquitous in Texas, Mandarin is not and the community's options are very limited. We are extremely fortunate that not only does Little Tiger provide a Chinese immersion education, it is also an excellent program that our daughter loves.

I strongly encourage the Board to approve the variances needed for the school. They have been good neighbors and a benefit to the City. The new classroom structure has been restored and is still in keeping with the character of the neighborhood. The school also improved the classrooms within the church, and the playground, further demonstrating their commitment to the neighborhood.

Thank you for your consideration of these variances.

J & Ella Segura
6901 Chelsea Moor
Austin, Texas 78759



Meggie Chou [REDACTED]

Support for CWM

Tracy McCreight [REDACTED]
To: Meggie Chou [REDACTED]

Sun, May 7, 2017 at 10:44 PM

Meggie,

We are writing this email to ensure that the City of Austin knows what a special and unique program Chinese with Meggie is, and to ensure that our daughter has access to this school for many years to come.

As you know, we adopted our daughter from China in September 2016. Since then, she has been attending Chinese with Meggie pre-school, and will attend the Little Tiger Program beginning in September. It is important to us that our daughter grows up learning Chinese and has school and work opportunities related to China. There are no other programs in Austin just like Chinese with Meggie and you are providing a valuable service to the community by offering this school. Your school is one of the things that makes Austin a unique and special place to live in Texas. Furthermore, your expansion of the school is very important to its long-term growth and continued learning for your students.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Best Regards,
Tracy & Greg McCreight

—
Tracy McCreight
mobile | [512.431.3224](tel:512.431.3224)
email | [REDACTED]



Meggie Chou [REDACTED]

CWM / LTP: Letter of Support

Learn [REDACTED]

To: M [REDACTED]

Sun, May 7, 2017 at 10:09 PM

To Whom it May Concern,

It is my hope this letter will provide some insight into the proposal concerning 5111 Eilers Avenue, Austin Texas 78751.

Our daughter has been studying Mandarin with Chinese with Meggie for the last 4 years starting at the age of 5. She is now almost 9 and about to complete 3rd grade. Mandarin is her third language, along with English and Spanish.

Chinese with Meggie has built a unique educational experience in Central Austin. Over the last 10 years, their commitment to quality Mandarin instruction has resulted in their growth from a private home to encompass the Ridgetop Baptist Church Campus. This growth was established largely by word of mouth from very happy families within the Austin community. Chinese with Meggie has sought to develop, not only their own private education, but to enrich the public education system through with their partnership with AISD. This program brings student teachers from China to Austin to gain teaching experience by instructing Mandarin within the Austin public school community. Their commitment to maintaining the culture of Austin is evident in their acquisition of 5111 Eilers Avenue. Rather than demolish the home on this property and construct a building that would be out of character with the surrounding neighborhood, Chinese with Meggie chose to store the home and maintain the intimate feel of the community it surrounds. Chinese with Meggie understands the value of community and seeks to enrich the environment of those they serve within Central Austin.

Regards,

The Woodrums



Meggie Cho [REDACTED]

CWM / LTP: Letter of Support

Tere [REDACTED]

To: M [REDACTED]

Sat, May 6, 2017 at 11:13 AM

RE: 5111 Eilers Avenue, Austin, TX 78751

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing in support of the variance at 5111 Eilers Avenue, Austin, TX 78751. My children have been pupils at Chinese with Meggie since she began her business. I feel that the education my children are receiving at Chinese with Meggie has been a great addition to their education by creating a deep interest in other cultures and the world and will additionally serve them well as adults. I think allowing this new use will provide more Austin children an opportunity to broaden their understanding of the world and to be competitive as adults in the global economy. Chinese with Meggie is a unique business and its success reflects Austinites desire to be inclusive and open to all cultures.

As far as the building in question, I visited the previous owner of the home once so I can attest to the significant repairs and upgrades Meggie has completed. I admire the commitment that was made to restore the house in a manner so it fits in with the other homes. I think it is a valuable asset to the neighborhood and this investment shows the commitment Meggie has made to the area.

Besides the much needed repairs to 5111 Eilers, Meggies' investment in her business and the neighborhood has aided Ridgetop Baptist Church in making repairs to their building. Essentially, through Meggie's success another community asset has benefited. Additionally, another neighbor has committed to the neighborhood by remodeling their home (instead of moving) while keeping the character of the original home intact. I feel the positive investment of Chinese with Meggie may have made the decision easier on the homeowner. They knew the home across the street was staying in keeping with their home so the uncertainty of who was going to be their new neighbor was removed making investment in their home palatable.

In my experience, Meggie is a conscientious person who is very sensitive to and interested in adding value the community. It is vital for Austin to encourage businesses that add value to neighborhoods and I think Chinese with Meggie adds value and is a good fit for the area.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Teresa Macron
512-394-7503

[Quoted text hidden]



Meggie Ch [REDACTED]

CWM / LTP: Letter of Support

Lyanne Mill [REDACTED]

Sat, May 6, 2017 at 1:21 PM

To: Meggie C [REDACTED]

Dear Board Members

I am writing in support of the Ridgetop Baptist Church campus, not because I am a Baptist, but because my daughter is a student at Chinese with Meggie and Olas Spanish Immersion. We live in Lakeway and every Saturday we leave our house at 8am to make class at 9am. This is a big commitment for our family to make, but we do so because our daughter, Summer is passionate about learning Mandarin and Spanish and although she is only 9yrs, she has shown real commitment to attending this school, on her Saturdays, and she loves it!

This campus is a very important educational facility for our daughter's on-going learning, which she cannot get at her school, and we are very happy with all the progress she has made. To have the quality of language experts that are on the Ridgetop campus is truly unique and we're so grateful to have this type of educational facility in central Austin.

I would ask that you please review this facility favorably. My daughter would be lost without this resource and the friendships she maintains at this facility.

The address of the facility I am referring to is: 5111 Eilers Avene, ATX 78751.

Regards

Lyanne and Summer Greystoke

[Quoted text hidden]



Meggie Cho [REDACTED]

Letter of Support

Jie [REDACTED] Sun, May 7, 2017 at 9:58 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]

Board of Adjustment

City of Austin

Re: 5111 Eilers Avenue, Austin, TX 78751

May 7, 2017

Dear Board Members:

I am writing to support the request for variance from the zoning requirement for 5111 Eilers Avenue by Chinese With Meggie (CWM). My children have been attending CWM for mandarin instruction classes for three years. CWM purchased the property at 5111 Eilers Avenue to be converted into a classroom to extend its mandarin immersion program into elementary school. We are excited about this continued mandarin immersion opportunity. From what I understand, the property at 5111 Eilers Avenue would have been torn down by many other developers. The restoration and conversion of the property into a classroom is a win-win-win solution for the neighborhood, the students, and the school. The unique educational experience at CWM prepares the students to become global citizens with appreciation and mastery in Chinese language and culture. It has been no small feat for many children who started the CWM program with no prior mandarin exposure to gain confidence in speaking, reading, and writing in Chinese. The incoming First-Graders are eagerly waiting to start the new school year at 5111 Eilers Avenue in August. Your expedited approval for CWM's request would be greatly appreciated, as such decision would allow the elementary school to start without delay.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to reach me at [773-501-8523](tel:773-501-8523).

Sincerely,

Jie Li



Meggie Chou [REDACTED]

Letter of Support

Jennifer Pan [REDACTED]
To: Meggie Chou [REDACTED]
Cc: Stephen [REDACTED]

Sun, May 7, 2017 at 9:55 PM

To the Members of the Board of Adjustments,

We are so happy and appreciative for the experiences our children have at Chinese with Meggie and the Little Tiger Chinese Immersion School since the summer of 2015. As an Asian-American family, we feel lucky to find such a wonderful language and cultural education for our kids in central Austin. Through this school, our son has acquired Mandarin at an unbelievable rate, which thoroughly impresses his grandparents from Taiwan. Additionally, he had the opportunity to spend 2 weeks in Beijing with a partnering school. We have also hosted 2 foreign teachers in our home, which was such a wonderful way for our whole family to learn more about the complex culture of China.

During our time at the school, we have seen great improvements to Ridgetop Baptist Church, including the addition of a shaded play ground, new gardens and landscape, fruit trees, new parking lot paint, maintenance repairs, pest control, and general cheer in the hallways with the display of children's hard work. We have witnessed wonderful conversations between the church and school staff that is always positive and respectful.

We are emailing you a letter of support for Chinese with Meggie and the Little Tiger Chinese Immersion school for the necessary variances from the city to use the house adjacent to the church for educational purposes. The renovations to the house have been a great improvement, and it's always nice to see a restoration over a tear-down. We know Chinese with Meggie and the Little Tiger Chinese Immersion School are committed to the neighborhood, education, and sharing the Chinese culture and language to families in Austin.

Thank you,
Dr. Stephen and Mrs. Jen Pan
1611 Juliet Street
Austin, TX 78704
[512-771-2097](tel:512-771-2097)
[512-826-1206](tel:512-826-1206)

Meggie Chou 

CWM / LTP: Letter of Support**Audrey Kuan**
To: Meggie C 

Mon, May 8, 2017 at 7:05 AM

To whom it may concern:

We humbly submit this letter in support of Chinese With Meggie/Little Tiger Chinese Immersion School. We moved to Austin a year ago with our three children because my husband was recruited by Dell Medical School to serve as the Executive Director of the Design Institute of Health. I am currently working as a physician with CommUnity Care Clinic, including its ARCH site.

We are so happy to have found Little Tiger Chinese Immersion school for our son, Toby. He has been attending their Kindergarten program over the last year. The school has given him an excellent foundation in Chinese, and we have found a wonderful and warm school community. We have been especially impressed with the strong, high caliber curriculum and the caring and dedicated, top-notch teachers.

We truly believe that the strength of a community lies in its people. We see how the Ridgetop Baptist Church Campus has brought together a wide and diverse group of families wanting to enrich their children with a bilingual education. How wonderful that central Austin offers such progressive educational opportunities. And we are so excited and thrilled that the school continues to thrive, and will be expanding its offering to include first grade. The property at 5111 Eilers Avenue, Austin TX 78751 will be a wonderful addition to its school and will allow Little Tiger to continue to grow and expand, giving more children a chance to learn Chinese.

Warmest regards,
The Chang Family
Stacey, Audrey, Maddy (12), Katie (10), Toby (5)

CWM / LTP: Letter of Support

David Baldez [REDACTED] 2:48 PM

To: Meggie [REDACTED]

Cc: Jiao L [REDACTED]

This letter is in support of Chinese with Meggie / Little Tiger Immersion School. We were more than delighted

when we found out a language immersion school existed in our area of town. Our daughter, Madeline Baldez,

has been attending Chinese with Meggie and the Little Tiger Immersion school for the last three years. She has

been able to learn with a diverse body of students. We were happy to hear last year that the school purchased a

house adjacent to the Ridgetop Baptist Church campus and remodeled it so that it could be made suitable for

instructing a small group of students. The house was structurally improved and the interior remodel is very

charming as a school house. I walk by the house every day. It feels like a natural addition to the existing campus. This school is locally grown--something local Austinites pride themselves on. Alongside

Ridgetop

elementary, this campus brings in a real atmosphere of vibrancy to the surrounding neighborhood.

David & Yi-Ling Baldez

From: YiShaun Yang
Date: May 8, 2017
To: Meggie Chou
Cc: Jiao Li
Subject: Re: CWM / LTP: Letter of Support

May 8, 2017

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in support of Chinese With Meggie / Little Tiger Chinese Immersion School.

For the past school year, my son has been attending Little Tiger Chinese Immersion School for preschool.

When we moved to Austin in January 2016 for my husband's job as a cardiothoracic surgeon, we searched for a nurturing and cultural school for our son.

Our family has found the school and the teachers to be very caring and supportive. Whenever I voice a concern to the teachers as it relates to my son's education and his experience at Little Tiger, I find the teachers to be very receptive and proactive in addressing my concerns. In fact, I will be sending two more of my children to Little Tiger for preschool this fall.

Chinese With Meggie / Little Tiger now has the opportunity to expand their school at **5111 Eilers Avenue, Austin, TX 78751**. I wholeheartedly support this and request the Board of Adjustments do everything in their power to allow Chinese With Meggie / Little Tiger to expand their facilities into the new space.

Sincerely,

YiShaun Yang

To the Austin Board of Adjustments,


This letter refers to the property at 5111 Eilers Ave, 78751. I am writing in support of the Chinese with Meggie (CWM) and Little Tigers Chinese Immersion Program. This school has provided both of my children with a unique educational experience. They have learned the fundamentals in typical education subjects, but they can get that in many locations, including our fine public schools in this area.

What I have appreciated the most about the experience with CWM is the exposure and appreciation for many cultures and how my children are curious and interested in different viewpoints rather than fearing or rejecting differences in others. In our current divisive political climate, I think that sort of learning and level of understanding is more important than ever, particularly in the next generation.

I would also like to note the changes we have seen over the years to the Ridgetop Baptist Church and its grounds. I will admit I was a bit nervous about the facility when we first started there, but the steady and continuous improvements both to the grounds and inside the facility have been tremendous. My young children take a lot of pride in how much it is improved and how much the staff there has included their input and well-being into what comes next.

We've seen the same with the house next door, which went from a source of concern due to the condition of the building to another learning friendly space for young children. I cannot think of a better benefit to the community than having another such beacon of education and diversity. If there are any other questions or other concerns I can help with, please contact me at andy19il@yahoo.com. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy Bitner', written in a cursive style.

Andy Bitner