

July 9, 2026

ITEM NO.: 8

FILE NO.: Z-10318

NAME: Arkansas Baptist College – POD

LOCATION: North Side of W. 17th Street (1400 Block), Between Marting Luther King Drive and S. Pulaski Street

DEVELOPER:

Arkansas Baptist College (Owner)
1600 Dr. Martin Luther King Drive
Little Rock, AR 72202

OWNER/AUTHORIZED AGENT:

Phillip Lewis Engineering (Agent)
23620 Interstate 30
Bryant, AR 72022

SURVEYOR/ENGINEER:

Jacobs
10816 Executive Center Drive, Ste. 300
Little Rock, AR 72211

AREA: 0.82 acre

NUMBER OF LOTS: 3

FT. NEW STREET: 0 LF

WARD: 1

CURRENT ZONING: C-3/R-4

BACKGROUND:

Arkansas Baptist College (ABC) is a private, Baptist-affiliated Historically Black College (HBCU). Founded in 1884 as the Minister's Institute, while later renaming it to its current name in April 1885, ABC was initially funded by the Colored Baptists of the State of Arkansas. It is the only historically black Baptist school west of the Mississippi River. The Main Building on its campus, built in 1893 was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976.

Arkansas Baptist College was accredited by the Higher Learning Commission in 1987. ABC offers diverse academic curriculum to students, men's and women's athletics and social programs. The college is located within the Central High School Neighborhood Historic District.

A. PROPOSAL/REQUEST/APPLICANT'S STATEMENT:

The applicant is requesting to rezone a 0.82 acre site from C-3/R-4 to POD to establish the Booker T. Washinton Workforce Village, expanding the current thriving university campus. The Village will contain trade schools, administrative offices and support faculty and staff to enhance student learning on the campus.

B. EXISTING CONDITIONS:

Subject property is located between W. 16th (north) and W. 17th (south) Streets, and between Dr. Martin Luther King Drive (west) and S. Pulaski Street (east). Properties in the general area contain C-3 and R-4 zoning and uses.

C. NEIGHBORHOOD NOTIFICATIONS:

All owners of property located within 300 feet of the site and all neighborhood associations registered with the City of Little Rock were notified of the public hearing.

D. ENGINEERING COMMENTS (PLANNING & PUBLIC WORKS):

1. All engineering requirements will be addressed by applicant at the time of building permits.

E. UTILITIES/FIRE DEPARTMENT:

1. All utility and fire department requirements will be addressed by applicant at the time of building permits.

F. BUILDING CODES/LANDSCAPE:

1. All building codes and landscape requirements will be addressed by applicant at the time of building permits.

Planning Division:

Land Use Plan:

The request is in Planning District 8, the Central City Planning District. The development principles of this district include strengthening the existing development and better defining single-family and non-residential use areas by neighborhood oriented commercial uses. The Land Use Plan shows Public/Institutional (PI) for the application area. The

Public/Institutional (PI) category includes public and quasi-public facilities that provide a variety of services to the community such as schools, libraries, fire stations, churches, utility substations, and hospitals.

To the north of the application area are areas designated for Neighborhood Commercial (NC) uses and Residential Low Density (RL) uses are characterized by a sit-down restaurant, single-family residences, and duplexes. East and west of the application area are areas designated for Public/Institutional (PI) uses and are characterized by vacant lots and a single-family residence to the east and the Arkansas Baptist College campus to the west. South of the application area is area designated for Residential Low Density (RL) uses and is characterized by single-family residences and duplexes.

This site is not located in an Overlay District.

Master Street Plan:

West 16th Street and West 17th Street are Local Streets on the Master Street Plan. Local Streets are roads designed to provide access to adjacent property with the movement of traffic being a secondary purpose. The standard Right-of-way is 50'. Sidewalks are required on one side.

Bicycle Plan:

West 16th Street and West 17th Street are not shown on the Master Bike Plan with existing or proposed facilities in this area.

Historic Preservation Plan:

The subject property is the site of two historic structures addressed at 1315 W. 16th Street. These structures were relocated to this site from nearby neighborhood lots circa 2015 by Arkansas Baptist College and are incorporated in the proposed development plan.

The subject property is adjacent to the Duplex at 1611-1615 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, the House at 1602 S. Pulaski Street, the House at 1324 W. 17th Street, and the Duplex at 1608 S. Pulaski Street. All four structures are eligible for listing to the National Register of Historic Places in a district context. The subject property is approximately 544 feet to the east of the Main Building at Arkansas Baptist College, which is individually listed to the National Register of Historic Places as a strong example of the Second Empire style, for its association with Black history in Arkansas, and for its association with Dr. Joseph Booker.

The Historic Preservation Plan advocates for increased effectiveness and coordination with the review of development plans. Staff advocates that the

proposed conversion of the site to accommodate a new use consider its potential adverse impacts to adjacent historic sites.

H. ANALYSIS:

The applicant is requesting to rezone a 0.82 acre site from C-3/R-4 to POD to establish the Booker T. Washinton Workforce Village, expanding the current thriving university campus. The Village will contain trade schools, administrative offices and support faculty and staff to enhance student learning on the campus.

Subject property is located between W. 16th (north) and W. 17th (south) Streets, and between Dr. Martin Luther King Drive (west) and S. Pulaski Street (east). Properties in the general area contain C-3 and R-4 zoning and uses .

Arkansas Baptist College (ABC) Booker T. Washington Workforce Village will contain training classrooms and faculty offices. The facility will operate Monday-Friday (varying hours, night classes will be available), weekend hours/classes are possible (staff hours vary, but similar to most college campuses).

The applicant states the mission goal is *“Providing exceptional, next-level education and training for the local and surrounding communities for various construction trades.”*

The Workforce Village amenities will include student walking paths & greenspace courtyard in the northern portion of the site.

The applicant provided the following site specifications regarding campus development:

1. Building Footprints: Classroom Pod Area (Each) = (+/-) 2310 square feet.
2. Classroom Pod Uses: Welding, HVAC, Plumbing, Carpentry, Electrical.
3. Other Building uses on site: Faculty Offices, Storage, META24 (“Make, Enterprise, Teach, Achieve”) – Curriculum that emphasizes practical, technology driven instruction.

Building setbacks for the Workforce Village will vary, but will be typical of those that exist throughout the overall campus.

Access to the site is located near the southwest corner of the campus, near W. 17th Street.

The site plan shows internal sidewalks will connect campus buildings for internal maneuvering throughout the campus, as depicted on the plan.

The applicant proposes to develop a new parking lot containing fourteen (14) parking spaces, including two (2) ADA compliant parking spaces.

Additional parking is shown near the northwest corner of the campus along W. 16th Street. Staff feels existing and new parking, as shown on the plan, is sufficient to serve the proposed use.

Any new signs must comply with Section 36-553 of the City's Zoning Ordinance (signs permitted in institutional and office zones).

Any new site lighting must be low-level and directed away adjacent properties.

Any new fences and walls erected on the site must comply with Section 36-512 of the City's zoning ordinance.

Any dumpster placed on the site must be screened and comply with Section 36-523 of the City's Zoning Ordinance.

Staff supports the rezoning from C-3/R-4 to POD. Staff feels the proposal is reasonable. Staff feels the proposed Workforce Village will provide a quality addition to the overall ABC campus, provide additional student academic opportunity, and enhance the community at large within this historic neighborhood. ABC owns a majority of the properties in proximity to the proposed use. Staff feels the development should have no adverse impact on surrounding properties.

I. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the requested POD rezoning, subject to compliance with the comments and conditions outlined in paragraphs D, E, and F, and the staff analysis of the agenda staff report.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

(June 11, 2026)

The application was placed on the Consent Agenda for deferral to the July 9, 2026 agenda. There was a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion passed by a vote of 11 ayes, 0 nays, 0 absent. The application was deferred.

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ITEM NO.: 8 (Cont.)

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PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

(July 9th, 2026)

The applicant was present. There were no objectors present. The application was placed on the Consent Agenda for approval as recommended by staff. There was a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion passed by a vote of **9** ayes, **1** nay and **1** absent. The application was approved.