

TENTATIVE REPORTREPORT OF THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ON THE
MAYS CHAPEL SITE

Monday, January 14, 2013
Loch Raven High School

The hearing was called to order by President Lawrence E. Schmidt, Esquire at 6:02 p.m. In addition to President Schmidt, the following Board members were present: Mr. Michael H. Bowler, Mr. Rodger C. Janssen, Mr. Charles McDaniels, Jr., Mr. George J. Moniodis, Mr. H. Edward Parker, Ms. Valerie A. Roddy, and Mr. David Uhlfelder. In addition, Dr. S. Dallas Dance, Superintendent of Schools, staff members, as well as media, were present.

Mr. Schmidt stated that the Board had received considerable input regarding this item from a variety of sources. The Board has heard from the superintendent's staff about capacity issues in the central area. Mr. Schmidt asked Ms. Kara Calder, Executive Director of Planning and Support Operations, to provide a brief description of the Mays Chapel site and the capacity issues.

Ms. Calder stated that, as part of the FY 2013 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), the Board of Education requested and received planning approval for a new school in central Baltimore County to relieve severe student overcrowding in schools in the Lutherville and Timonium communities. In September 2012, the Board included funding for this new school in its FY 2014 state CIP request, and voted to include the project in its FY 2014 county capital request. Ms. Calder noted that this new school will provide relief for over-crowded schools, including Lutherville, Padonia, Pinewood, Pot Spring, Riderwood, Timonium, and Warren elementary schools. Pending the Board's approval, the school is scheduled to open for the 2014-2015 school year.

Following Ms. Calder's summary, the following persons offered testimony:

- 1) Mr. Edward Speno – Opposed the construction of a new elementary school on the Mays Chapel site. He expressed concern that tax payers would be “saddled” with the cost of a \$20-30 million school “far from home.” Mr. Speno asked why the Board was turning a blind eye to alternative sites such as Cockeysville Middle School with 32 acres ready for new construction or expansion.
- 2) Mr. Robert Palter – Asked the Board to relocate the construction of the elementary school from the Mays Chapel area to another location in Baltimore County. He stated that there are few walkers living in the community that the school would serve and that most students will have to be bused to the school. Mr. Palter expressed concern over traffic congestion and limited parking space.
- 3) Mr. Eric Rockel – Asked why the Board is not considering and discussing other alternatives in addressing the over capacity problem along the York Road corridor. Mr. Rockel reviewed with the Board some philosophical and fiscal themes that have not yet been explored prior to the selection of Mays Chapel.

- 4) Ms. Nancy Burke – Stated that she has reviewed the taxpayer funding and project costs for Baltimore County school additions. Ms. Burke expressed concerns over busing students away from their neighborhoods and transportation costs, which include the cost of bus drivers, aides, and buses. She asked the Board to take another look at the monetary costs and effect on the taxpayers, the emotional and physical cost to the children, and to consider building schools where the children live.
- 5) Mr. Paul Lang – Stated that a position paper was presented to the Board in opposition of the construction of a new elementary school on the Mays Chapel Site. He stated that the southwest corridor of the park is the worst place for building a new school. Other concerns expressed were safety, cost to the public, and the impact on the environment.
- 6) Ms. Peggy Fox – Asked the Board to reconsider the Mays Chapel site for a new elementary school. She believes that cutting down 11 acres of woods would be an environmental disaster. Ms. Fox expressed concerns over pollution, noise, traffic, wells, and depreciation of property values.
- 7) Ms. Kathleen Harrold – Asked the Board to reconsider building a new elementary school on the Mays Chapel site. She stated that schools should be located close to the homes of the children they serve. Ms. Harrold remarked that she supports high quality education for students; however, the school system’s plan for this new elementary school is not compatible with the best interests of children, families, and the community that surrounds the Mays Chapel site.
- 8) Mr. Leo Woerner – Stated that the Dulaney Springs site is a more suitable for a new elementary school. He provided to Board members a map of Dulaney Springs and Mays Chapel sites. Mr. Woerner’s concerns include: welfare of students; entrance into the proposed new school; traffic congestion; extra time spent in busing students; and operating expenses for extra buses.

Board member, Cornelia Bright Gordon, Esquire, entered the hearing at 6:39 p.m.

- 9) Ms. Angela Ruddle – Opposed the construction of a new elementary school on the Mays Chapel site. She stated that safe, beautiful, open space is valuable physically and emotionally for its residents.
- 10) Ms. Veronica Cummings – Asked the Board to recognize that the needs of a 700-student commuter school should not outweigh that of thousands of residents in Mays Chapel and in the surrounding areas. Understanding the financial issues, these students can be accommodated in their home schools. Ms. Cummings asked the Board to let its actions teach children that places like Mays Chapel Park are to be valued and preserved.
- 11) Mr. Pat Prater – Opposed the construction of a new elementary school on the Mays Chapel site. He stated that the Mays Chapel community consists of the elderly, nursing homes, and assisted living facilities. Mr. Prater urged the Board to study the plan before messing with the property and community of the elderly.

- 12) Mr. Don Boardman – Opposed to building a new elementary school on the Mays Chapel site. He stated that the Board is not considering the safety and security of the students. Mr. Boardman remarked that, at the last hearing, the Board made its decision the next day without taking time to consider those Board members unable to attend the public hearing. He also expressed concern over commuting students from their communities and horrendous traffic conditions.
- 13) Mr. Logan McNaney – Supports the decision to build a new elementary school on the Mays Chapel site. He stated that the Mays Chapel site is aligned with the plans and objectives of the following agencies: Maryland Departments of Planning, Transportation, Environment, Natural Resources, and the Maryland Historical Trust. Mr. McNaney commented that this site is also improved with features not evident at the Dulaney Springs site.
- 14) A Resident of Mays Chapel – Opposed the building of a new elementary school on the Mays Chapel site. She stated that the Board needs to consider another site for the elementary school. She asked the Board to consider the Dulaney Springs site. She remarked that the Board needs to conduct the hearing in a more convenient location with full community input.
- 15) Ms. Gail Purnell – Opposed the building a new elementary school at the Mays Chapel site. She stated that she is not against building a new school; however, is against a school being built in the Mays Chapel Park. Ms. Purnell asked the Board to consider the 32 acres surrounding Cockeysville Middle School or expanding/renovating Pot Spring Elementary School.
- 16) Mr. Angelo Del Negro – Opposed the building of a new elementary school on the Mays Chapel site. He reviewed the information presented to the community at various Board meetings over the last year. Mr. Del Negro stated that staff informed the Board on March 6, 2012, that the Dulaney Springs site was removed from consideration because it would cost 20-40% more because of the lack of utilities. He stated that there are utilities at the Dulaney Springs site.
- 17) Ms. Penny Noval – Opposed the building of a new elementary school on the Mays Chapel site. She noted that the county executive wrote a letter to the Board and Superintendent in March 2011 stating that “...it is incumbent upon each of us to search for solutions outside of the traditional response.” Ms. Noval asked that the school system use existing resources such as: using central area middle schools where grade 5 classes could be accommodated; additions to existing buildings; and continue to utilize the recently retrofitted Carver Center, currently serving Stoneleigh Elementary students.
- 18) Mr. Charles Yoo – Opposed the building of a new elementary school on the Mays Chapel site. He stated that Mays Chapel residents consist of seniors living in condominiums and town house communities. Mr. Yoo commented that the park provides exercise for all and is beneficial for the seniors and residents of Mays Chapel.

- 19) Mr. Whistler Burch – Opposed the building of a new elementary school on the Mays Chapel site. He read a letter from a physician from Brightview Assisted Living regarding the need for exercise. Mr. Burch stated that documents indicate that Cockeyville Middle School is at 70% capacity. This would be a better place to build so that students can shift from elementary to middle school.
- 20) Ms. Carol Mills – Opposed the construction of a new elementary school on the Mays Chapel site. She stated that the elementary school on the Mays Chapel Park “does not fit the picture.” Ms. Mills expressed concern over safety, pollution, busing students from outside the Mays Chapel area, and the repair and cost of extra buses. She remarked that the school should be built in an area where students live.
- 21) Mr. Marvin Tenberg – Opposed the construction of a new elementary school on the Mays Chapel site. He stated that a large percentage of the students would be bused to the school. Other concerns expressed were: traffic; loss of open space; and the negative impact on the environment.
- 22) Ms. Jean Suda – Supports building a new elementary school on the Mays Chapel site. She stated that central area elementary schools will be over capacity by 1,789 students by 2021.
- 23) Dr. William Vitale – Opposed the construction of a new elementary school on the Mays Chapel site. He stated that the Board cannot place a 700-seat school on a ten acre site. He remarked that he hopes the Board would stop, step back, listen to the objections, and make a better decision.
- 24) Mr. Charlie Cole – Opposed the building of a new elementary school on the Mays Chapel site. He stated that he is “deeply committed” to education; however, there are serious safety concerns if a school is built on this site. Mr. Cole commented that spending millions of dollars on a new school when the Board could add onto existing facilities is not a good use of finances.
- 25) Dr. George Lowe – Asked the Board to relocate the new elementary school to a different location. He stated that the seniors of Mays Chapel and residents across from the park will lose a vital piece of their prescription to “get outdoors.”
- 26) Mr. Stanley Licharowicz – Opposed the construction of a new elementary school on the Mays Chapel site. He stated that it would be an error to locate a school on the Mays Chapel site due to busing students, safety, traffic, and loss of open space including walking paths. Mr. Licharowicz asked the Board to include on an agenda a solution and have a third party consultant advise the Board.
- 27) Ms. Yara Cheikh – Supports a new elementary school on the Mays Chapel site. She commented that adding seats at other schools is not a fiscally responsible decision. Alternative locations are not feasible: George Washington Carver Center needs sporting fields and the Dulaney Springs site is unproven. Mays Chapel is owned by the school system and should be the site of the new elementary school.

- 28) Ms. Joan Kreeger – Opposed the construction a new elementary school on the Mays Chapel site. She expressed concern over safety and traffic issues. Ms. Kreeger asked the Board to look for an alternative and safer site.
- 29) Mr. Doug Dunlap – Supports the building of a new elementary school on the Mays Chapel site. He states that he lives near Warren Elementary school and walks his dog everyday at the school. People of all ages are at the school daily utilizing the courts and fields. Mr. Dunlap stated that a new elementary school would be on the cutting edge of technology and property values would increase.
- 30) Mr. Michael Naver – Opposed the building of a new elementary school on the Mays Chapel site. He commented that there is no indication that the Board is open to changing the proposal despite the safety, environmental, and other concerns mentioned this evening. Mr. Naver urged the Board to take advantage of this opportunity and look at the proposal to see what other alternatives are available.
- 31) Mr. David Suarez-Murias – Opposed the construction of a new elementary school on the Mays Chapel site. He provided a “findings of fact” sheet to the Board regarding the Mays Chapel and Dulaney Springs sites. Mr. Suarez-Murias urged the Board to consider additions to other existing buildings to solve the problem.
- 32) Ms. Sari McLeod – Opposed the building of a new elementary school on the Mays Chapel site. She provided facts about the Mays Chapel North neighborhood. Based upon the information, elementary aged children would represent approximately .003% of the population; therefore, the children would have to be bused to the new elementary school. Ms. McLeod remarked that the latest drawing of the proposed entrance could cause unwanted traffic in a very busy area as well as additional maintenance.
- 33) Mr. Dennis King – Supports the construction of a new elementary school on the Mays Chapel site. He stated that there are several overcrowded schools on the east and north side of York Road. The Board’s job is to do what is in the best interest for the students. Mr. King remarked that schools are the center of the community.
- 34) Mr. Jimmy King – Supports the construction of a new elementary school on the Mays Chapel site. He remarked that parents and staff at Ridge Ruxton School gave up four classrooms to accommodate the overcrowded conditions at West Towson Elementary School. Mr. King asked the Mays Chapel community to be part of the community.
- 35) Ms. Cathi Forbes – Supports building a new elementary school on the Mays Chapel site. She asked the Board to do what is right for the students and make a decision to build a school on the Mays Chapel site.

The hearing was concluded at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. Dallas Dance
Secretary-Treasurer

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