



THE FAIRFAX COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

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Fairfax County
Public Schools

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May 16, 2007

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FAIRFAX COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION

Mr. Timothy Sargeant, Commissioner At Large
Fairfax County Planning Commission
12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 330
Fairfax, VA 22035

Dear Mr. Sargeant:

I would like to address a letter that you received from a member of the FCPS staff concerning the building of a middle school in the Lorton area. While I do not speak for the Fairfax County School Board, I wish to express concerns about the perceptions that Mr. Chevalier's letter may have given your commission that are contrary to my perception of the School Board's actions taken to date.

The School Board voted that it would support a middle school project in the Lorton area that did not impact other projects in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). It is my belief that this vote includes support for any project that would build a middle school prior to the current CIP scheduled timeframe if the funding plan for that project would not impact any other currently scheduled CIP projects. The CIP has a year-by-year plan up to 2012. Any project beyond 2012 is not shown by year; therefore, there is not an order of projects beyond 2012. If the cost of a middle school is delayed through an innovative plan like a public/private partnership that does not obligate any CIP funds until after the 2013 timeframe, it cannot impact the order of projects because there is no order of projects to impact.

The financing plan for a new school may or may not include interest carrying charges to the school system or county. A plan that bridges to current CIP funding for the middle school could be developed with limited to no additional cost. With respect to the comment on capital projects funded on a "build now and pay later" basis, considering that all building is funded via a bond process, all capital projects are funded on a build now, pay later basis.

The Board's vote was for support that did not impact planned CIP projects. The specific motion was:

"I move to amend the boundary recommendation for South County Secondary School to include the statement that the School Board will support the building of a South County

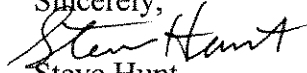
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middle school, if funds are made available to Fairfax County Public Schools for this purpose, as long as no other planned CIP projects are delayed by this action.”

In his letter, Mr. Chevalier used the term “free” (his quotes). Staff has used the term “no cost.” It was part of their original recommendation regarding the two-phase process for the new boundary for South County Secondary School. The second phase (to re-examine the boundary and possibly move students into Lake Braddock Secondary School) was to occur if there was no plan for a no-cost middle school at the South County site. The “no cost” language was actually removed, by the staff, before the final vote on the new boundary. The motion passed by a majority of the Board shows support for a middle school as long as it does not impact other “planned” CIP projects. There is a difference between one that is “free” and one that does not change the CIP order.

The staff has been unsupportive of this potential project from the very beginning. They were also unsupportive of the current overcrowded secondary school. The tone of the letter from Mr. Chevalier displays that lack of support. It does not reflect the tone of the motion passed by the majority of the Fairfax County School Board.

Sincerely,



Steve Hunt

Fairfax County School Board
Member, At large

P.S. In light of Superintendent Dr. Dale’s letter to the Commander of the Army garrison at Fort Belvoir that acknowledges that BRAC could result in a middle school space deficit in the southern Fairfax County area of .32 middle schools, the construction of a middle school on the south county site by the 2012-2013 timeframe would be very prudent.

cc: Fairfax County Planning Commission
School Board
Dr. Jack Dale