

# **ADVISORY COUNCIL ON SCHOOL FACILITIES AND CAPITAL PROGRAMS**

## **MEETING AGENDA**

April 6, 2015

7:00 p.m.

Swanson, Library

- 1. Welcome**
- 2. Approve Minutes**
- 3. Presentation by Kathleen Trainor, Arlington Montessori Action Committee.**
- 4. Membership**
- 5. Discussion of Master Planning Committee Report**
- 6. Discussion of Interim and Permanent Measures to Address Growing Enrollment – John Chadwick, Scott Prisco, Meg Tuccillo, Lionel White**
- 7. Committee Assignments and Reports**
  - Community Facilities Study – Jason Rylander/Kelly King/Greg Greeley
  - Projection/Capacity Subcommittee – Greg Greeley/Lionel White
  - ACI – Rebecca Hunter
  - CCPTA – Don Weinstein
  - MC/MM Program – Heather Obora
  - WRAPS – Kelly King/Heather Obora
  - Abingdon – Christian Dorsey
- 8. Project Updates – Scott Prisco**
- 9. Wrap Up**

## Up Coming Meetings:

- Abingdon ES BLPC: Tuesday, April 7, 2015, 7:00 PM, Abingdon ES
- Stratford BLPC: Wednesday, April 8, 2015, 7:00 PM, Stratford
- School Board Meeting: Thursday, April 9, 2015, 7:30PM
- Joint County Board/School Board Work Session on Budget, Stratford and Wilson:  
Friday, April 10, 2015, **9:00AM**, Room 101, Education Center
- Wilson BLPC: Tuesday, April 14, 2015, 7:00 PM, Wilson School
- Abingdon Gallery Walk: Tuesday, April 14, 2015, **4:30 – 6:00 PM**, Abingdon ES
- School Board Meeting: Tuesday, April 14, 2015, **7:00 PM**
  - Budget Work session #5 (if needed)
- Stratford PFRC: Wednesday, April 15, 2015, 6:00 PM, Stratford
- Abingdon PFRC: Wednesday, April 15, 2015, **8:00 PM**, **Stratford**
- Stratford BLPC: Monday, April 20, 2015, 7:00 PM, Stratford
- Abingdon BLPC: Tuesday, April 21, 2015, 7:00 PM, Abingdon ES
- Abingdon PFRC 9 (if needed): Wednesday, April 22, 2015, 7:00 PM, Abingdon ES
- School Board Meeting: Thursday, April 23, 2015, 7:00 PM
  - Public Hearing on SB Proposed Budget
- Wilson BLPC: Wednesday, April 29, 2015, 7:00 PM, Wilson School
- Stratford BLPC: Monday, May 4, 2015, 7:00 PM, Stratford
- School Board Meeting: Thursday, May 7, 2015, 7:00 PM
  
- Next FAC Meeting: Monday, May 11, 2015, location TBD

**Advisory Council on School Facilities and Capital Programs (FAC)  
Meeting Minutes  
April 6, 2015**

Members in attendance: Benjamin Burgin, John Chadwick, Gerry Collins, Christian Dorsey, Mike Freda, Greg Greeley, Eric Harold, Kelly King, Greg Lloyd, Miles Mason, Paul McAree, Jim Meikle, Abby Raphael, Bill Schimmel, Meg Tuccillo, Jeff Turner, Janine Velasco, Don Weinstein and Lionel White.

1. Welcome: Kelly King opened the meeting at 7:00pm in the Swanson Library.

Kelly noted that those members whose terms were expiring, or who wished to step down, should contact Scott Prisco. There was a discussion of how FAC members represent the entire community, not just one school or interest group. APS will have to publish openings soon so members were asked by 13 April to let John Chadwick know if they were not planning to return. Three members with expiring terms were offered one-year extensions. The number of openings for FAC next year is unknown at this time.

2. Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the March 2015 meeting were approved without changes.

3. Discussion of Master Planning Committee Report: Kelly invited discussion of the final report of the Superintendent's Master Planning Committee (MPC), which she last week electronically distributed to the members. Meg Tuccillo began by providing background on the purpose and structure of the MPC and then invited questions and comments. Kelly noted that the Board would be looking to the various advisory councils for their thoughts, so she would use this time and follow-up emails and discussions to capture FAC comments on the report.

Eric Harold noted that the report did not contain any recommended actions. Meg responded that the group had been told to outline concepts and options, but not to offer recommendations. He also commented that the report appears to advocate improved use of existing facilities as not a capacity issue.

(At this point Montessori presented – see item 4 – and then discussion resumed on this topic.)

Miles Mason noted that the report attempted to merge together the results of separate working groups, each of which had their own approach, resulting in a less-than-optimal final product.

Abby Raphael was asked what the School Board was planning to do with the report. Abby responded that there were “nuggets” contained within the report, which the School Board will discuss and possibly implement. There was concern by FAC members that the report would possibly slow down School Board decision-making for addressing current capacity needs. Abby said she did not see that happening.

Paul McAree liked the concept of staggered schedules, which led to a broader discussion of the concept. Kelly worked on this group's report and noted that year-round scheduling, while attractive has nationally been difficult to implement beyond the elementary grades due to the numerous extracurricular activities, testing, sports, clubs, etc. Abby noted that the School Board is concerned that students tend to lose ground during traditional summer vacations especially in reading, which has led to programs, such as the Summer Trolley, being implemented at Title 1 schools.

Don noted that some high school students might be ready to graduate in January of their senior year. Abby noted that Washington-Lee is discussing a pilot program that will allow graduating seniors to take a flexible course load and use the freed-up time to participate in internships and work programs.

Abby stressed that the School Board remains committed to creating more seats for our growing student population. The County Board's decision not to allow, at this time, construction of a new elementary school on the Jefferson site has changed our timeline but not the underlying need.

Gerry Collins expressed his support for continuing to partner with area colleges.

Several members commented that their initial concerns when the MPC was organized were largely borne out by the final report.

Kelly invited the members to e-mail her with additional thoughts on the MPC report, particularly potential near- and long-term "wins" for facilities, which she will combine for communications with the Board

4. Presentation on the Montessori Program: Kathleen Trainor, President of the Arlington Montessori Action Committee, assisted by Evan Thomas, Drew PTA President, and Monique O'Grady, founder of the committee, provided an overview of the APS Montessori Program. Kathleen noted that Arlington currently has 408 Montessori students at Drew Elementary, with several additional Montessori classrooms scattered around the county. Of those 408 students, 85% ride the bus. Each Montessori site uses its own admission and wait list process. Kathleen emphasized that contrary to public perception, the Montessori student population is quite diverse, with about 50% of the children qualifying for free or reduced-fee lunch.

She then focused on the possibility of moving the Montessori program from Drew to its own building, where it could be expanded to serve more families in grades pre-K through 8. She also noted that there is an extensive waiting list for space in the program. She outlined the essential elements for both interim and permanent space for housing an expanded Montessori program, which her committee would prefer to be housed in south or central Arlington.

She stressed the desire for the program to stay together (pre-k through 5<sup>th</sup>). She also suggested they could be relocated for the 2015 school year though that was

not confirmed by APS staff. A temporary location for them would include 19 classrooms and an undetermined number of “specials” rooms. They prefer relocation in South Arlington though an informal survey they conducted of 40 program families indicated they would all relocate no matter the location. They stressed they would have no need for a cafeteria, as the children eat in their classrooms, although Facilities should note that they would still need a kitchen and serving lines. Their long-term desire is a 600+ school for the Montessori program.

5. Interim and Permanent Measures to Address Growing Enrollment: John informally discussed the current status of the effort to provide more seats for Arlington’s students. He said that APS has had to regroup following the County Board’s decision not to permit construction on the Jefferson site at this time. He noted that the School Board is planning a retreat this week to discuss options. Facilities and Operations learned much during the past year, including the correct level of public transparency into the planning process.

His staff is revamping charts (etc.) to reiterate the need for a new elementary school in South Arlington. Unfortunately, given the delays, it will be at least 2019 before permanent seats can be built at this point. John said that we will have the seats needed for the 2015-16 school year using relocatables and program moves, but beyond that interim measures will be needed, including the expanded use of relocatables and possibly separate sixth grade programs or similar. John also commented that if classrooms needed to be moved, the choice programs are less location-dependent. John noted that at this time it seems like the best approach may be to continue to add relocatables to sites until new schools are built, with some exceptions, such as Oakridge. APS is still working on what is the best approach for students in the interim.

John’s comments led to a wide-ranging discussion amongst the members, ranging from broad issues, such as communications, to specifics, such as the width of corridors at Swanson Middle School.

There was discussion and concern over the communication with programs that get moved to address capacity needs and how best to do that. Some advocated for getting them involved upfront. Christian Dorsey observed that the decision whether to move programs is best determined by experts. John said that there has been robust collaboration between his team and the Department of Instruction, as well as with the other APS departments. The decisions, they feel, are the best for the students and that was the priority in the decision making process.

Miles observed that the “Arlington Way” has created too many meetings and not enough action. Several members noted that the need to obtain consensus, rather than a majority opinion, was one of the factors leading to the problems with the TJ Working Group, where a small number of dissenting members effectively stalled the process.

Abby expressed her concern that the recent letter from the County Board only addresses interim solutions to the seat shortage, rather than providing a way forward on permanent solutions. If decisions are not made by December 2015, we won't have a new school by 2019.

The FAC asked Kelly to write a letter from our council to the County Board discussing our frustration with the options and timing for a new South Arlington Elementary School.

6. Committee Assignments and Reports:

- CCPTA: Don Weinstein noted that the March meeting was devoted to a relatively brief presentation by Ginger Brown on the Community Facilities Study. He was personally surprised when John Vihstadt came to the meeting, apparently to introduce Ginger's talk and listen to the discussion. Don also noted that Emma Volland-Sanchez forcefully stated that the promised new elementary school for South Arlington *would* be built.
- Community Facilities Study: Kelly and Greg Greely noted that the meetings have been interesting and useful and urged members to check out the website for all of the presentations and materials.
- ACI: No report.
- Projection/Capacity Subcommittee: Nothing new to report.
- MC/MM: Jim Meikle said that the School Board was still considering the budget.
- WRAPS: Abby noted that there would be a joint School Board/County Board meeting to discuss budget, the Wilson site, and the Stratford site. Steve Cole, the WRAPS chair, has been meeting individually with members of the two boards with a plan.
- Abingdon Modernization and Expansion: Christian Dorsey briefly noted that work is continuing as planned.

7. Next Meeting: The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for 7:00pm on 11 May 2015 at Wakefield High School.