

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Joint School Board/County Board Work Session
February 19, 2016

Item F-1-b

The Arlington School Board convened on Friday, February 19, 2016, at 4:04 PM at Thomas Jefferson Middle School, 126 S. Old Glebe Road, Arlington, VA.

Present were:

School Board

Emma Violand-Sánchez, Chair
Nancy Van Doren, Vice Chair
Barbara Kanninen, Member
James Lander, Member
Nancy Van Doren, Member
Dr. Patrick K. Murphy, Superintendent
Melanie Elliott, Clerk

County Board

Libby Garvey, Chairman
Jay Fisette, Vice Chair
Katie Cristol, Member
Christian Dorsey, Member
John Vihstadt, Member
Mark Schwartz, County Manager
Hope Halleck, Clerk

Also present were:

John Chadwick, Assistant Superintendent, Facilities and Operations
Connie Skelton, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction
Ben Burgin, APS Assistant Director, Design and Construction
Zachary Larnard, APS Facilities Planner, Arlington Public Schools
Dennis Leach, Transportation Director, Arlington County
Jane Kim, Arlington County Transportation

1. Opening Remarks

Calling the meeting to order, Chairs Violand-Sánchez and Garvey welcomed attendees.

2. New Elementary School at the Thomas Jefferson Site

Mr. Larnard provided project information, outlining funding in the Capital Improvement Plan, Board direction, discussion of the Jefferson site, and the South Arlington Working Group (SAWG) process. After confirming that both Boards approved locating the new school at Jefferson, Mr. Larnard described outreach to communities affected by SAWG recommendations. He also presented the site design and outlined the proposed coordinated Building Level Planning Committee (BLPC)/Public Facilities Review Board (PFRC) process for this facility.

Mr. Chadwick described the proposed coordinated process and guidelines, confirming that APS has done significant community engagement and hopes to streamline the remaining processes. He confirmed both Boards would like to align the BLPC and PFRC and support their work with ongoing community input, and he reviewed the proposed structure and timeline for this process. He appreciated the strong collaboration between the County and

School staff, and confirmed the goal is to come to the County Board for the use permit by January 2017.

Discussion

Board members appreciated the update and Mr. Chadwick responded to questions about parking and updated costs for the project. The group discussed joint funding as well as how the PFRC and BLPC will work in parallel processes. Mr. Schwartz recognized that this new approach may result in challenges and staff will work together to adapt the process, to look for efficiencies, and to meet the proposed timeline. The group acknowledged the importance of minimizing the time commitment asked of PFRC and BLPC members, and also discussed the option for subcommittees to focus on specific issues.

Dr. Kanninen, Liaison to SAWG, confirmed outreach to numerous stakeholders, which will be inclusive and will be updated in response to feedback from the Boards and staff. County Board members supported the proposed process as a pilot and recognized the knowledge of community members that will support this effort. Suggestions included creating a joint county/school committee to look at issues around multimodal transportation and safety, and the Boards stressed the need to focus on minimizing risk and maximizing safety at the site. The group also discussed exploring geothermal options at the site, and appointing an individual with transportation knowledge on the instructional committee. Also discussed were amenities that may be County funded, and it was confirmed this will be part of the upcoming Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) discussions.

The group also discussed communications about the project and process. They agreed with the importance of an organized, collaborative plan coordinated by both entities, to ensure that the community is informed with accurate, helpful information. The group also discussed specific aspects of the communications plan, such as having a staff contact for technical questions and publicizing timelines. It was noted this communication will be especially important as plans for the new school evolve, to ensure that families and community members know what to expect in the future. Finally, the group agreed specific staff contact informations should appear on the County and APS websites.

3. Transportation Options for the New Middle School at the Stratford Site

Mr. Burgin and Ms. Kim provided an overview of transportation options for the Stratford site. Mr. Burgin first presented the project status of the planned addition/renovation. This included an update on stakeholder involvement and site design considerations. Ms. Kim then shared the results of the traffic impact analysis for the site, noting the County recommendation to not add access off of Old Dominion Drive. She then described proposed infrastructure improvements, and mitigation and future analysis options, and outlined Transportation Demand Management techniques to consider at the site. She also spoke to ongoing traffic operations, the environmental impact of the project and fire access to site, and she summarized community input on the plans. Mr. Burgin then reviewed next steps for the project.

Discussion:

Noting traffic concerns at the site that have been heard from the community, the group discussed multimodal options and how to encourage the community to consider alternative transportation. The Boards recognized this is an ongoing process and agreed to continue to focus on safety and alternative transportation here and throughout the County. Dr. Kanninen suggested incentives to motivate the public, and to make it is easier, safer and more convenient to use alternative transportation. Ms. Kim provided additional information about possible remote drop off sites, noting the difficulty in accessing the school, and the group also discussed how to encourage the use of public transit.

Mr. Leach confirmed that some of the traffic infrastructure improvements will be initiated immediately, and Board members were also interested in the effectiveness of traffic calming efforts. The Boards recognized that this is a difficult site to develop, with multiple constraints and features that require consideration. The group acknowledged that it has taken time for the traffic impact analysis to be done, and Mr. Leach described the thorough process undertaken to ensure that the transportation analysis is accurate. The group also discussed potential boundaries for the school, and how the community will respond to the transportation options proposed. Mr. Chadwick briefly reviewed the cost estimates for the project and how transportation options being discussed may affect those costs.

The Chairs appreciated staff efforts and the strong collaboration between the Boards, and looked forward to continued cooperation as the process moves ahead.

The meeting adjourned 5:54 PM.

ATTEST:

Melanie Elliott, Clerk
Arlington School Board

Emma Violand-Sánchez, Chair
Arlington School Board