

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
SCHOOLS COMMITTEE MEETING
THURSDAY, MARCH 29, 2012**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Walter L. Alcorn, Commissioner At-Large
Earl L. Flanagan, Mount Vernon District
Timothy J. Sargeant, Commissioner At-Large, Chairman

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Ellen J. Hurley, Braddock District
John L. Litzenberger, Jr., Sully District

OTHER COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Jay P. Donahue, Dranesville District
James R. Hart, Commissioner At-Large
James T. Migliaccio, Lee District
Peter F. Murphy, Jr., Springfield District

FACILITIES PLANNING ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Daniel Aminoff, Mason District
Karen Hogan, At-Large, Chairman
J. Ernest Jutte, At-Large
Chris Molivadas, Providence District

FAIRFAX COUNTY STAFF PRESENT:

Chris Caperton, Chief, Public Facilities Branch, Planning Division, Department of
Planning and Zoning
Denise James, Director of Facilities Planning Services, Fairfax County Public Schools
Barbara J. Lipka, Executive Director, Planning Commission (PC) Office
Kara DeArrastia, Clerk to the PC

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Planning Commission Vice Chairman Walter L. Alcorn constituted the Schools Committee at 7:01 p.m. in the Board Conference Room of the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia, 22035, pursuant to Section 4-102 of the Commission's *Bylaws & Procedures*. He indicated that the first order of business was to elect a Committee chairperson.

Commissioner Alcorn MOVED TO NOMINATE TIMOTHY J. SARGEANT AS CHAIRMAN OF THE 2012 SCHOOLS COMMITTEE.

Commissioner Flanagan seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

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Chairman Sargeant MOVED APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 10, 2011 SCHOOLS COMMITTEE MINUTES.

Commissioner Flanagan seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MAP UPDATE PROJECT

-- Current and future school sites labeled on Area Plan and described in Plan Text

Denise James, Director of Facilities Planning Services, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS), explained that FCPS staff worked closely with Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) staff to compile information that had been gathered from other County agencies since the last Committee meeting on November 10, 2011. She noted that she would continue to meet with DPZ staff to make additional changes to the Area Plan maps. In addition, she noted that the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) identified planned funding for County schools.

In response to a question from Chairman Sargeant, Ms. James said that the proposed amendment to update the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map was scheduled for public hearing before the Planning Commission on Thursday, May 10, 2012.

In reply to questions from Commissioner Flanagan, Ms. James stated that she had contacted Marguerite Guarino, Assistant Director of Real Estate, Fairfax County Facilities Management Department, and explained FCPS' pressing need for space, particularly in light of the fact that the Islamic Saudi Academy (ISA) would be vacated later this year. She added that she was also coordinating with staff to determine an ideal time to inspect that site and assess what, if any, modifications had been made, and what should be done if the site were to be considered for future FCPS use.

When Commissioner Alcorn asked about public input, Ms. James stated that the planning process had not yet been completed. She agreed that input would be necessary; however, she pointed out that coordination with the Facilities Planning Advisory Council (FPAC) and other agencies need to take place first.

Answering a question from Commissioner Hart, Ms. James confirmed that she was satisfied with staff's recommendations in the Plan Amendment.

-- Move away from labeling school sites as a particular type of school

Ms. James expressed concern about the efficacy of enduring the planning and public hearing process to simply rename existing structures on school properties. She discussed some of the school sites that would be ideal for multiple school uses and questioned if the Comprehensive Plan should be more flexible rather than specifically label each site. She also questioned how the Plan would address the sites, broadly or on a case-by-case basis.

Answering a question from Chairman Sargeant, Ms. James stated that not all school properties were used for educational purposes, adding that some might be used for administrative facilities.

Commissioner Flanagan, Ms. James, and Commissioner Alcorn briefly discussed the return of school property to the County and the possibility of retaining the specific school use.

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2232 PROCESS -- *Follow Up*

Chris Caperton, Chief, Public Facilities Branch, Planning Division, DPZ, referenced the draft letter from DPZ to FCPS regarding the “Expansion of Existing School Facilities,” dated March 2012, and described the process discussed within. He explained that Objective 10, Policy b of the Education section of the Public Facilities Policy Plan stated that school expansion projects in the CIP would be considered “features shown” of the Comprehensive Plan, barring significant impacts. He stated that DPZ staff needed to be involved earlier in the review of a proposed school expansion to determine that the location, character, and extent of the project was substantially in accord with the adopted Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Caperton also expressed concern with the term “significantly” in the Plan language and its lack of specificity. He further added that he had also met with Beth Teare, Fairfax County Attorney’s Office, and John McGranahan, Attorney for FCPS, which resulted in the draft letter, suggesting a process for FCPS to follow and coordinate on projects expanding the footprint of existing schools. Mr. Caperton noted that the items listed in Number 3 listed relevant information that DPZ staff would need to initiate a review of the project to determine conformance with the Comprehensive Plan early enough in the process to provide effective outreach and address any concerns. (A copy of the letter is in the date file.)

Ms. James added that the proposed process also applied to school renovations because they included capacity and expansion. Mr. Caperton concurred, adding that new school construction projects would require a more formal 2232 process with public hearing.

A brief discussion ensued between Chairman Sargeant, Commissioner Flanagan, and Mr. Caperton regarding the criteria that should be considered for public hearings, particularly in cases that might require only minor changes to existing sites. Commissioner Sargeant expressed concern regarding consistency in the measurement of “minor” changes from district to district and/or case by case.

Commissioner Hart suggested that the County Attorney’s Office might be able to provide guidance to Mr. Caperton regarding the legal use of “significantly” or similar terms. He pointed out that it was essential that the term be used consistently throughout the County. Mr. Caperton concurred, adding that he would meet with Ms. Teare to discuss the issue further.

A brief discussion followed wherein Daniel Aminoff, Mason District Representative, FPAC, and Ms. James explained that FCPS’ suggested modifications to the Comprehensive Plan would clarify goals without narrowing the scope of work while also tying the public facility goals to the CIP. Commissioner Hart added that the CIP references for school facilities were intended to address funding needs only.

In response to a question from Chairman Sargeant, Mr. Caperton suggested that Committee members from both groups review the draft letter and provide comments to staff over the following week.

Answering a question from Commissioner Flanagan, Ms. James explained that school boundary changes were implemented during the second phase completion of a school building addition, noting that the current CIP included building addition projects in the southwestern portion of the County planned for opening in the 2013 school year. She added that no construction of new school buildings was currently underway.

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FPAC'S STRATEGIC PLAN AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Karen Hogan, Chairman, FPAC, explained that FPAC had been charged with developing a long-term comprehensive Strategic Facilities Plan that would also incorporate community input, the first version of which would be submitted to the School Board in October 2012. She pointed out that FPAC would seek and incorporate community input and feedback on the strategies and objectives as they were developed. She noted that FPAC planned to invite parents and County residents to participate in community meetings in April and May of this year to provide input on issues including increasing enrollment, the availability of space to meet needs, and adequate funding to meet maintenance, renovation, and construction needs.

In response to a question from Commissioner Murphy, Ms. Hogan stated that the public meetings would be held in school facilities, but pointed out that all citizens were welcome to attend.

In the discussion that followed, Ms. James and Ms. Hogan noted additional measures for community outreach. Ms. Hogan added that when she had delivered the quarterly report to the School Board, some of its members had been unaware of the Planning Commission's Schools Committee and expressed their delight in the collaboration between the two agencies.

Answering questions from Chairman Sargeant, Ms. Hogan explained that there was no current Strategic Facilities Plan and said that it was one of the reasons for FPAC's formation. Ms. James added that the proposed plan would enhance FCPS' ability to garner community input as projects progressed. Ms. Hogan added that it would also help to limit the short notice or "surprise" element for citizens.

Commissioner Murphy noted that the Schools Committee had begun as a collaborative effort between Planning Commission and School Board members. He added that continuing dialogue between the two groups was essential and stated that School Board members were always welcome to participate in Committee meetings.

In reply to questions from Commissioner Flanagan, Ms. James explained that zoning might have some impact on school enrollment projections; however, other factors, such as the rate of construction, housing and gasoline prices, demographics, and information gathered from the County and state tended to be far more relevant.

When Commissioner Flanagan expressed concern about school capacity, Commissioner Alcorn pointed out that approximately 10 years ago the Board of Supervisors had amended the Residential Development Criteria, as recommended by the Planning Commission, implementing a cash proffer system for schools. He explained that the development review process for residential rezoning applications included an assessment of impacts of new residential development on public school facilities based on the School Public Facilities Impact Formula. He said developers would proffer to mitigate the impacts of the development through a cash or in-kind contribution. Ms. James added that anticipated student yields from a proposed new residential development did not reflect enrollment projections. She indicated that the schools proffer formula methodology was periodically adjusted to reflect changes in student yield ratios by unit type.

Answering additional questions from Commissioner Flanagan, Ms. Hogan explained that the first version of the Strategic Facilities Plan would lay out a framework for making decisions regarding facilities, bringing transparency to the process, and providing strategies for dealing with those issues in terms of funding, maintenance, and capacity. She added that it would not address specific problem areas in the County that currently existed, but noted that specific issues would be addressed later in the process. Ms. Hogan stated that the plan would serve as a guide for both County staff and the School Board for decision-making.

Ms. James stated that in discussing the School Public Facilities Impact Formula with County staff, she had suggested that it might be time to review the formula since it assessed the impact of new residential development only. She pointed out that there were sites in the Reston Planned Residential Community District that were not subject to the proffer criteria. In addition, she reiterated her earlier statement that the proffer formula estimate was not a school projection, noting that student generation rate was in fact the determining factor.

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RICHMOND HIGHWAY CORRIDOR COLLABORATION AND FUTURE SCHOOL NEEDS

Ms. James referenced the “Richmond Highway Corridor Enrollments and Projections 2011-16” handout, a copy of which is in the date file. She noted that there were serious enrollment imbalances in this area of the County, adding that there was also quite a bit of planning and zoning activity. She also pointed out that many of the schools in the area were small and could not be expanded. She discussed possibilities for redevelopment/new school construction, but pointed out that the locations were unsuitable. Ms. James noted that in previous similar situations, ad-hoc regional planning committees were formed to find ways to alleviate problems, and said that she would like to work with DPZ staff to get a better sense of the projects in progress. She added that cooperation with staff would help to better assess options insofar as working with private partners or creating space in existing schools and/or relocating existing programs.

Commissioner Alcorn encouraged Ms. James to be alert to market changes as they could occur outside of the planning process. Ms. James replied that she had spoken with Barbara Byron, Director, Office of Community Revitalization (OCR), and Elizabeth Hagg, Deputy Director,

OCR, who had provided information regarding available space. Commissioner Alcorn further added that real estate professionals would also be able to provide assistance. Chairman Sargeant also suggested contacting the Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Donahue, Ms. James said that a calculation of the final average of the capacities for the elementary, middle, and high schools listed on the handout would likely balance out. She pointed out, however, that the current capacities were not ideal.

When Chairman Sargeant suggested examining residential trends in this area due to BRAC, Ms. James stated that FCPS was evaluating adaptive reuse as a solution, adding that FPAC would make a recommendation to the School Board to form a study group to evaluate the school facilities located within the entire southeastern portion of the County.

Answering a question from Commissioner Alcorn, Ms. James explained that a separate group was working on information regarding charter schools, ancillary uses, and alternative instructional uses.

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BAILEY'S/WOODROW WILSON LIBRARY JOINT USAGE

-- Opportunities for Joint County/School co-location

Mr. Aminoff explained that in order to address over-capacity in a public school, FCPS staff would consider, for example, the possibility of relocating the library from the school site to a nearby public library to help accommodate a significant amount of space within the school for classrooms. He said that staff would take a more proactive approach to consider a wide array of opportunities to facilitate joint usage of public facilities, especially given the County's limited resources. Ms. James added that such co-location could include public libraries, parks, schools, and Supervisor's offices. She noted, for example, that the building expansion of a library could include space for school, police, and healthcare/social services, and when such additional space was no longer needed, it would revert to community use.

Commissioner Flanagan noted that Whitman Middle School would expand shortly and asked about what was planned. Mr. Aminoff and Ms. James explained that factors like parking, zoning, and community input were major factors in the expansion/construction of any site.

Mr. Aminoff said that FCPS would continue to search for co-locations but pointed out the difficulties in finding such opportunities.

Chairman Sargeant suggested further examination of possible ways to co-locate facilities, particularly when unplanned, and to describe such co-location in an application. He suggested the Comprehensive Plan Map as a starting point.

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The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.
Timothy J. Sargeant, Chairman

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Planning Commission Office, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 330, Fairfax, Virginia 22035.

Meeting taken by: Kara A. DeArrastia

Minutes by: Jeanette Nord

Approved: January 24, 2013

Kara A. DeArrastia, Clerk to the
Fairfax County Planning Commission