

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
SCHOOL FACILITIES COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY, MAY 31, 2006**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Walter A. Alcorn, At-Large  
John R. Byers, Mount Vernon District  
Suzanne F. Harsel, Braddock District  
Frank A. de la Fe, Hunter Mill District

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Rodney L. Lusk, Lee District  
Laurie Frost Wilson, At-Large

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Catherine Belter, Springfield District  
Kaye Kory, Mason District  
Phillip Niedzielski-Eichner, Providence District  
Janet Oleszek, At-Large

OTHER PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

James R. Hart, At-Large  
Ronald W. Koch, Sully District  
Kenneth A. Lawrence, Providence District

OTHERS PRESENT:

Gary Chevalier, Director, Office of Facilities Planning Services, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS)  
Dean Tistadt, Assistant Superintendent, Department of Facilities and Transportation Services, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS)  
Lee Ann Pender, Director, Office of Administrative Services, Department of Facilities and Transportation Services, FCPS  
Robert Cordova, Office of Administrative Services Department of Facilities & Transportation Services, FCPS  
Denise James, Planner, Office of Facilities Planning Services, FCPS  
Kali Schumitz, *Fairfax Times*  
Ari Cetron, *Connection Newspapers*  
Barbara J. Lippa, Executive Director, Planning Commission Office  
Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk to the Planning Commission

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Planning Commission Vice-Chairman John R. Byers constituted the meeting at 7:30 p.m. in the Board Conference Room at 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia, pursuant to Section 4-102 of the Commission's *Bylaws & Procedures*, and indicated that the first order of business was to elect a committee chairman.

Commissioner de la Fe MOVED THAT SUZANNE HARSEL BE ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF THE SCHOOL FACILITIES COMMITTEE. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously with Commissioners Lusk and Wilson absent from the meeting.

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Chairman Suzanne Harsel introduced Denise James, Lee Ann Pender, and Robert Cordova, with Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS).

Chairman Harsel said the subject of tonight's meeting was an update on the Schools Impact Proffer Formula. She explained that when the formula had first been adopted on January 27, 2003, it contained a provision for periodic updates. She noted that a memorandum from Dean A. Tisdadt, Chief Operating Officer, FCPS, dated May 22, 2006, concerning this matter, had been distributed, a copy of which is in the date file.

Gary Chevalier, Director, Office of Facilities Planning Services, FCPS, explained that the Board of Supervisors (BOS) had adopted a formula for the calculation of cash contributions to offset the impact of new residential development on public school facilities. He said the implementation motion contained stipulations for periodically updating the student yield calculations, construction costs, and levels of service, as well as a review of the methodology. He said the handout reflected new student yield ratios which represented a slight increase in the number of students generated by single family detached units and a slight decrease generated by townhouse, garden apartments/condominiums, and mid/high rise units.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Alcorn, Mr. Chevalier said there had been a slight decline in the elementary school enrollment and a slight increase in high school enrollment.

In response to a question from Chairman Harsel, Mr. Chevalier said during the past two years there had been an out-migration of students primarily at the elementary school level. Kaye Kory, Mason District School Board member, said that it could be characterized as a lack of growth.

Responding to another question from Chairman Harsel, Mr. Chevalier said staff reports would continue to contain student generation projections at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

Commissioner de la Fe commented that staff reports also contained a comparison of the projected enrollment and capacity levels.

In response to a question from Chairman Harsel, Mr. Chevalier said student projections were calculated on a per unit basis regardless of density and that the ratios were based on actual data.

Mr. Chevalier reviewed the formula changes based on the cost per square foot of new construction, adjusted by the amount of capacity provided by modular additions, which was less

expensive than brick and mortar construction, as shown on Attachment 1 of the handout. He noted that the most significant change in the formula resulted from an increase in construction costs.

Responding to a question from Chairman Harsel, Mr. Chevalier said the proposed formula update indicated an average cost to provide one seat in new construction of \$23,855 per student. He said the weighted average had been based on the number of facilities at each school level. Commissioner Alcorn noted that this did not include operating costs.

Commissioner Hart noted that the proposed increase of \$11,630 dollars per student was more than a 50 percent increase in three and one-half years and said the per square footage costs, noted on page 2 of Attachment 1, could become outdated quickly. Mr. Chevalier pointed out that the formula had always been based on actual data so that the projections would not be questioned. Ms. Kory said it had been anticipated that capital constructions costs would be updated every year. Mr. Chevalier pointed out that the per square footage costs had been based on current bids for jobs that would be ongoing for several years and that the bids had taken into account increased costs during the cycle of the project.

Commissioner Byers commented that it would probably be more amenable to developers if the formula was updated every year. Mr. Chevalier said one of the reasons this had not been done was to allow developers time to become accustomed to it. He also pointed out that the increase in constructions costs over the last 18-24 months had been much higher than normal.

Mr. Tisdadt said because no one knew where the market was headed, it might be more prudent to review the formula each year. He pointed out that some program changes, such as implementation of all day kindergarten, could reduce the student capacity at elementary schools and increase the cost per student.

Ms. Kory said an annual review of the formula was a good idea and might be more acceptable to developers.

In response to a question from Chairman Harsel, Denise James, Office of Facilities Planning Services, FCPS, said every rezoning, except for one which had no increase in students, had made a proffer contribution. She said they were trying to get cash contributions upfront, tied to the first residential occupancy permit, site plan, or subdivision plan, and to make sure that it, like other cash proffers, was tied to the construction cost index which would account for some of the needed increase. She said this would be negotiated at the time of rezoning and she was reviewing proffers as they came in to make sure this was the case.

Responding to other questions from Chairman Harsel, Ms. James said she had been tracking cases with proffered contributions during the last few years and the requirement to get money upfront and tied to construction costs index were refinements of the process.

Mr. Chevalier stated that he was not positive that everything proffered in the last three years had actually been paid in full and pointed out the State had ruled that developers could not be

required to pay proffered funds upfront and could do it on a per unit basis if so desired. Therefore, he said that collecting proffered money could drag on forever, but if it were tied to a construction cost index, the amount could be escalated a certain percentage each year to account for increased costs. Commissioner de la Fe commented that this should be so stated in proffers. Mr. Chevalier said his staff would develop wording for such a proffer for the committee to review.

In response to a question from Commissioner Byers, Mr. Chevalier said adjustments as a result of formula changes or inflation would both be based on the original proffered amount. Commissioner de la Fe pointed out that the proffer should specify that amount at the time of approval and adjusted accordingly.

Mr. Chevalier said the proposed formula update was \$11,600 per student which had been based on the use of modular additions and levels of service adjustments.

Responding to a question from Chairman Harsel, Mr. Chevalier said that all new elementary schools built today contained 36 classrooms and could accommodate 950 students. He pointed out, however, that the capacity could be lowered if a school had a significant number of special programs.

In response to a question from Commissioner Byers, Mr. Chevalier said Bryant Elementary School at Fort Belvoir could accommodate 1,550 students with normal staffing ratios, but due to special programs, it only had a capacity of about 1,000. Responding to further questions from Commissioner Byers, Mr. Chevalier said setting land aside for additional schools at Fort Belvoir had been discussed with the School Board and that the number of elementary students was higher than the number of middle and high school students because a different number of grades were accommodated at each level.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Hart, Mr. Chevalier explained the maximum capacity of an elementary school, 950 students, had been used in the formula in an effort to keep the costs down. Commissioner Alcorn said it would be a good idea to review the capacity numbers used.

Commissioner Alcorn pointed out that the proffer formula had been crafted very carefully in accordance with a Virginia Supreme Court decision from a Chesterfield County case. He said the purpose of the formula was to analyze and quantify the impact of proposed residential developments on schools, identify the needs in the area, and secure a remedy through proffers. He pointed out that the formula did not have to be strictly followed, but could be used as a guide with flexibility as needed on a case-by-case basis.

In response to a question from Chairman Harsel, Mr. Tisdadt said the square footage used in the formula only applied to classrooms, not other areas such as libraries, administrative offices, gyms, cafeterias, and bathrooms.

Commissioner Lawrence commented that the same type of housing might not yield the same number of students in all parts of the County. Mr. Chevalier said that area had not been a factor in the formula due to a desire to be conservative and to reduce the number of variables. Commissioner Lawrence said perhaps when the formula had been used for a longer period of time it might be possible to take this into consideration.

Phillip Niedzielski-Eichner, Providence District School Board member, said further delay in updating the formula would result in higher costs and urged the Committee to move as quickly as possible. Chairman Harsel said this matter needed to be reviewed by the Department of Planning and Zoning and that the full Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors would also have to agree with the updated formula. Commissioner Alcorn pointed out that approval would be implicit if the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors approved applications using the new proffer formula.

Chairman Harsel said another meeting of the committee would be scheduled to make a final determination on this matter. (Editor's note: A committee meeting has been scheduled on September 13, 2006.)

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The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.  
Suzanne F. Harsel, Chairman

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

Minutes by: Linda B. Rodeffer

Approved on: November 30, 2006

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Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk  
Fairfax County Planning Commission