

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
SCHOOL FACILITIES COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2005**

**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  
Ronald W. Koch, Sully District

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

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

**SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Phillip Niedzielski-Eichner, Providence District  
Brad Center, Lee District

**OTHER PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:**

James R. Hart, At-Large  
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 (FTS), Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS)  
Regina Coyle, Zoning Evaluation Division (ZED), Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ)  
Cathy Lewis, ZED, DPZ  
Barbara J. Lippa, Executive Director, Planning Commission Office  
Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk to the Planning Commission

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The meeting was called to order at 7:32 p.m. by Chairman Suzanne F. Harsel, in the Board of Supervisors' Conference Room of the Fairfax County Government Center, at 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia 20035.

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Chairman Harsel announced that the subject of tonight's meeting was a briefing by the Department of Planning and Zoning on the Metro West development currently scheduled for public hearing before the Planning Commission on February 8, 2006.

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Cathy Lewis, Zoning Evaluation Division (ZED), Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ), said Pulte Home Corporation had consolidated about 56 acres consisting of the former Fairlee subdivision and a privately owned tract of land, known as the Sweeny property currently used as a parking lot for the Metro station. She said the proposed development, now known as Metro West, would consist of three zoning categories, Planned Residential Mixed Use (PRM); Planned Development Housing (PDH)-16 and PDH-12. She said the central part of the site closest to the Metro station would be zoned PRM, the high density residential category, with a floor area ratio (FAR) of 2.25. Ms. Lewis compared this density to the area adjacent to the Huntington Metro which had the highest density in the County with a 3.0 FAR. She said the core area would have 1,642 multi-family units, with a general range of sizes because the exact size of the units was not known at this time. She said staff was agreeable to a minimum and maximum size of the units, noting that more families would probably move into large units and residents of high end condominiums often did use not mass transit. She said the site would also have between 125,000 and 300,000 square feet of office space with a retail component.

Ms. Lewis responded to questions from Commissioner Byers and Chairman Harsel about the height, size, and type of the buildings, parking, Americans with Disabilities Act units, and age restricted units. Chairman Harsel said occupancy by single parents with school age children could increase the number of students.

In response to another question from Chairman Harsel, Gary Chevalier, Director, Office of Facilities Planning Services, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS), said if a designated daycare provider was a County resident and space was available, placement in the school serving the area could be requested, but was not guaranteed.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Alcorn, Mr. Chevalier explained that calculations used to project the number of students generated by a development were based on the number and type of units and had not changed significantly from one update to another. He said during the Fairlee study, developments around Metro stations had been looked at and all of them had been within the County averages. He said 8 of 11 projects in the McNair development had yielded a number lower than the County average. He said, however, that apartments with heavy rental subsidies would yield more students than market rate units.

In response to a question from Commissioner Lawrence, Ms. Lewis said the applicant's attorney had surveyed the number and type of units within a one-half mile radius of the Ballston-Rosslyn Metro stations and found that the projected number of students generated by the Fairlee development was three times greater than the actual number generated by the Ballston-Rosslyn development. Commissioner Lawrence commented that it was important to control the size of the units and to ensure that there was a range of housing sizes.

Ms. Lewis said that while the applicant was willing to proffer to a range of sizes to address staff concerns, it was impossible to predict actual numbers since buildout would occur over a long period of time.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Byers, Ms. Lewis said the WMATA property was included in this development and it was her understanding that a decision to sell the property would be made soon.

Commissioner Hart said the mix of unit sizes might be more important than the actual number of units. Chairman Harsel commented that it was also important to know if the units would be for rent or for sale. Ms. Lewis said the four buildings within the quad would be rental and the remainder would be for sale units.

Responding to a question from Chairman Harsel, Mr. Chevalier said the number of students generated could probably be refined based on for sale and for rent units, but he did not have the ability to refine it based on the number of bedrooms. He explained that the average was based apartment sizes across the County.

Commissioner Alcorn asked if the purpose of defining the data more closely was to determine the amount of proffered funds. He reminded the Committee that school overcrowding was not a legal justification for denying a rezoning request.

Chairman Harsel explained that she had called the committee meeting to alert School Board members about student projections and to determine how area schools could handle an increase in students.

Mr. Chevalier called attention to a memo from the FCPS Facilities Planning to DPZ dated September 21, 2005, concerning the school impact analysis for the rezoning application, a copy of which is in the date file. He pointed out that a modular addition at Mosby Woods Elementary School would open soon after which there would be no more room for expansion. He said students generated by the Fairlee development would be assigned to another school, probably Marshall Road Elementary School, which could accommodate more students, perhaps through a modular or some other type of addition.

Responding to a comment from Brad Center, Lee District School Board member, Mr. Chevalier pointed out that in some cases when modular classrooms were added, core areas, such as the cafeteria, library, etc., could not handle more students.

In response to a question from Chairman Harsel, Mr. Chevalier said a large number of immigrant children attended Mosby Woods Elementary School who required specialized instruction and lower pupil/teacher ratios which lowered the number of children in each classroom as well as the capacity of the building. Phillip Niedzielski-Eichner, Providence District School Board member, noted that a gifted and talented center had been added to the school to balance the type of students in attendance.

Commissioner Lawrence pointed out that people who were opposed to this development often brought up the time of day their children had to eat lunch. He also commented that the Fairlee study had not only looked at existing development but everything that was being planned in stages.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Alcorn, Commissioner Lawrence said the school impact had been considered before the Plan amendment had been approved.

In response to Commissioner Alcorn's question about the reason for predicting the number of students, Commissioner Hart said that although one reason might be to obtain more proffered school funding, another reason was because with a development as large as Fairlee, the consequences of errors would be much worse than they would be in a smaller development. He also said that what seemed right at the time of the Plan amendment could change in the future and it was important for the Planning Commission to understand what represented good transit oriented development and how to mitigate its impacts.

Mr. Niedzielski-Eichner, stated that 236 students times \$7,500 per student, equaled approximately \$1.8 million, which did not come close to addressing the impact of the development on Schools. Mr. Center pointed out that if the cost was incurred at the elementary school level it would continue through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

Commissioner Alcorn explained that when the school proffer system was first developed, it was limited to capital facilities and was a one-time contribution. He said the \$7,500 figure per student represented one half of the amount of \$15,000 needed at the time to maintain the existing level of service. He also said the Virginia Supreme Court had recently upheld the position that localities could not request or demand funds in excess of the amount needed to provide the existing level of service to the community.

Mr. Center commented the cost of construction had skyrocketed over the last several months due to high energy costs and that the full impact of Hurricane Katrina on construction materials had not been factored into those costs yet.

Dean Tistadt, Assistant Superintendent, Department of Facilities and Transportation Services (FTS), FCPS, said that a bid for the renovation of South Lakes High School, expected to be about \$40 million, had just been received for \$52 million. He said renovation costs were now about \$149 a foot compared to \$92 a foot 18 months ago. He said renovation costs in Loudoun County had increased about 30 percent in the past 12 months.

Responding to a question from Chairman Harsel, Commissioner Alcorn said school proffers did not have a cost of living adjustment factor and the implementation motion needed to be reviewed and updated. Mr. Chevalier added that the cost per square foot was one of the components of the proffer for the Fairlee development and that recently he had seen proffers with escalator clauses. Chairman Harsel commented that proffers with escalator clauses were not for schools, but for items such as roads and trails.

In response to questions from Chairman Harsel, Ms. Lewis said buildout would occur over 10 years and that she would find out time constraints for receiving and using proffered funds.

Mr. Chevalier said in initial discussions, Pulte had agreed to put up money or fund a modular addition required for the development. Ms. Lewis commented that the applicant had

subsequently decided to use the formula to determine the amount of proffered funds instead of committing to the construction of a modular addition at Marshall Road Elementary School since it was not known at this time which school the children would attend.

Responding to a question from Chairman Harsel, Commissioner Alcorn said he believed the proffered funds had to be used within seven years. Mr. Chevalier said that would not be a problem.

Commissioner Alcorn pointed out that the number of students generated by a single family development was .244 compared to .063 generated by a high rise development. He said while it was important to make sure that the impacts were offset, he noted that single family development would have had a far more significant impact on public facilities.

Mr. Niedzielski-Eichner expressed appreciation to the committee's sensitivity to the complex issues discussed tonight, noting that it was important for School Board members to be informed when meeting with community members. He pointed out that the Board of Supervisors expected the School Board to ensure that a high quality education was provided on a consistent basis with facilities to accommodate the number of students generated by development. Therefore, he said it was important to work collaboratively not only to address proffered commitments, but to also consider how developments could be planned to minimize impacts.

Responding to a question from Chairman Harsel, Ms. Lewis said there were no other pending developments as large as the Metro West development. Commissioner de la Fe commented that a large development was in the planning stage in the Hunter Mill District which had substantial acreage but much less density.

Mr. Center commented that meetings such as the one tonight were valuable to share concerns and learn about the process for achieving goals.

Commissioner Alcorn requested School Board members let committee members know when and if they became aware that more land in a particular area was needed.

Chairman Harsel suggested that the committee meet again in January 2006.

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The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 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: January 18, 2006

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Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk  
Fairfax County Planning Commission