


Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

January 18, 2012

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Joshua P. Starr, Superintendent of Schools 

Subject: Bethesda-Chevy Chase Middle School #2 Site Selection Advisory Committee

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update on the new site selection process for Bethesda-Chevy Chase Middle School #2. The first meeting of the Site Selection Advisory Committee (SSAC) was held on Wednesday, January 11, 2012, at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School.

The SSAC comprises 47 members representing various community interests—Parent Teacher Association (PTA) representatives of all Bethesda-Chevy Chase Cluster schools, homeowners' association representatives for sites under consideration, and municipality representatives. In addition, staff expertise is provided by representatives from the following agencies: Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS); the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission; the Montgomery County departments of Parks, Planning, Recreation, Transportation, and General Services; the Office of the County Executive; the Office of Management and Budget; and the County Council.

The site selection process began with strong attendance—43 of the 47 representatives were present. The SSAC is reviewing the original 10 sites from the first site selection process, plus additional sites that were solicited from representatives. A total of 28 additional sites were submitted, resulting in a total of 38 candidate sites to be reviewed. All submitted sites are being considered by the committee. Of the 38 sites, 25 sites are publicly owned and 13 sites are privately owned. Discussions of the private properties will be held in Closed Session meetings, in accordance with the *Maryland Open Meetings Act*.

A summary of the January 11, 2012, meeting is attached. All materials produced during the site selection process will be posted on the MCPS website at the following link, www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/facilities/REM/ as they become available.

If you have any questions regarding the site selection process, please contact Mr. Bruce Crispell, director, Division of Long-range Planning, Department of Facilities Management, at 240-314-4702 or Ms. Janice M. Turpin, team leader, Real Estate Management Team, Department of Facilities Management, at 240-314-1069.

JPS:lm

Attachment

Copy to:

Mr. Bowers
Dr. Lacey
Mr. Edwards
Dr. Garran
Mr. Crispell
Mr. Song
Ms. Turpin
Ms. Wilson
Ms. Tribble

Bethesda-Chevy Chase Middle School #2 Site Selection Advisory Committee

Summary of Meeting of Wednesday, January 11, 2012

Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School Cafeteria
7:00 p.m. to 10:20 p.m.

Opening of Meeting

Site Selection Advisory Committee (SSAC) representatives and alternates were greeted and asked to check in and sign a confidentiality agreement that is necessary for the committee to operate, when necessary, in closed session in order to discuss candidate sites that are private property. This is consistent with requirements of the *Maryland Open Meetings Act*.

Forty-seven representatives were identified to participate on the SSAC. Present at the meeting were 43 representatives (or a designated alternate if the representative was not in attendance). The SSAC was seated in an area set aside for representatives; the public was seated behind the representatives.

Mr. Bruce Crispell, director, Division of Long-range Planning, Department of Facilities Management, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), introduced Ms. Della Stolsworth, meeting facilitator, Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County (CRCMC). The CRCMC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing quality dispute prevention and resolution services to individuals and communities in Montgomery County. Ms. Stolsworth possesses extensive experience facilitating community group processes. Ms. Stolsworth's services are provided at no cost, as are the services of two volunteers who provided assistance in scribing notes.

Ms. Stolsworth presented the agenda and provided ground rules for the process. Mr. Crispell described materials that were provided to each SSAC member. These materials included the following:

- A description of the site selection criteria that will be used to evaluate sites
- A description of activities for each meeting
- A description of the process that leads up to Board of Education action on a site
- A copy of the November 8, 2011, memorandum from Dr. Joshua P. Starr, superintendent of schools, to the Board of Education, describing in detail how the site selection process would be conducted
- A map and a table listing the 25 publicly owned candidate sites that have been identified for review

An additional 13 privately owned candidate sites have been identified. However, the committee did not receive these sites since there was insufficient time for review.

Mr. Crispell stated that SSAC is not a decision-making body. SSAC is an advisory committee, providing input to Dr. Starr, so that he can make an informed recommendation to the Board of Education. Mr. Crispell also indicated that the SSAC Report may include minority reports by any representative of the committee if they either disagree with the recommendations of the

SSAC or if they wish to include information that they do not believe is adequately covered in the SSAC Report. The SSAC Report, along with any minority reports, will be transmitted to the superintendent of schools and to the Board of Education at the conclusion of the SSAC process.

It was noted that the total of 38 candidate sites to be reviewed by the committee include the original 10 sites reviewed by the previous SSAC plus 28 additional sites proposed by representatives of the new committee. Every site that was proposed by any representative of the new SSAC was included in the list of sites to be considered.

Presentation of Publicly Owned Candidate Sites

Ms. Mary Pat Wilson, real estate management specialist, Real Estate Management Team, Department of Facilities Management, presented a PowerPoint presentation of candidate sites. The presentation began with general information regarding the site selection process and included projected enrollment information that results in the need for a new middle school in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Cluster. The majority of the presentation consisted of aerial maps of each candidate site, with the characteristics of each site in terms of owner, location, size, access, topography, current use, assessed value, and any additional relevant comments. Ms. Wilson reviewed all of the 25 publicly owned candidate sites.

Mr. Crispell presented a slide that provided a timeline for building a new middle school if it were to be built on the location of a currently operating elementary school in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Cluster. All seven of the operating Bethesda-Chevy Chase Cluster elementary schools, and Westland Middle School, were submitted as sites to be evaluated by the committee.

An operating elementary school site might accommodate the new middle school if the elementary school were relocated to another site. The information Mr. Crispell presented showed that such an approach would delay the opening of a new middle school by at least two years beyond the requested opening in August 2017. This delay results from the need to conduct a site selection process for a replacement elementary school, followed by the planning and construction of the elementary school. The elementary school would need to move to the replacement location before the new middle school could be built on the former elementary school site. The earliest completion date for the elementary school would be August 2017, and the earliest completion date for the middle school would be August 2019.

In addition, Mr. Crispell stated that this approach would significantly add to capital costs, since both a new elementary school and a new middle school would have to be constructed. It also was noted that with the exception of Westbrook Elementary School, all the elementary school sites are smaller than 10 acres, and that at Westbrook Elementary School, a large portion of the 12.5 acres owned by the Board of Education is not usable since it is located in stream valleys.

Mr. Michael P. Shpur, architect, Division of Construction, Department of Facilities Management, then presented a slide providing information on the minimum acreage necessary to construct a middle school. The figures that Mr. Shpur discussed assumed a flat usable site with no trees and no stream buffers. Under these optimal conditions, the minimum acreage for the new middle school was determined to be 10.1 acres. This figure did not include building setbacks and other site-specific issues that could result in more acreage being required.

Following the presentation of the information by Ms. Wilson, Mr. Crispell, and Mr. Shpur, the committee members voted on the following matters:

- A committee member recommended that a vote be taken to eliminate all of the existing elementary school sites as being unsuitable for further consideration. A vote was taken and 38 of the 43 SSAC members voted to eliminate the currently operating elementary schools; 5 members voted to continue their inclusion. Therefore, the 7 sites that currently are operating elementary schools were eliminated from further consideration.
- A second vote to eliminate all publicly owned candidate sites outside the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Cluster was recommended. Five of the 25 publicly owned candidate sites are outside the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Cluster, including the former Montgomery Hills Junior High School, the Radnor Center, Tilden Middle School, the former Kensington Elementary School, and the Montgomery County Bus Lot. A vote was taken and 21 of the 43 SSAC members voted to eliminate these sites; 22 members voted to continue their inclusion. Therefore, the five publicly owned candidate sites outside the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Cluster continue to be under consideration.
- A third vote to eliminate publicly owned candidate sites of less than the 10.1 minimum acres needed to construct the middle school was recommended. Five publicly owned candidate sites, including Leland Local Park, the former Rollingwood Elementary School, the former Montgomery Hills Junior High School, the Radnor Center, and the former Kensington Elementary School have fewer than 10.1 acres and were included in the vote. Thirty-six of the 43 SSAC members voted to eliminate these sites; 7 members voted to continue their inclusion. Therefore, the five publicly owned candidate sites of less than 10.1 acres were eliminated from further consideration.

Following the votes described above, Ms. Stolsworth conducted a process whereby each of the remaining sites was discussed in terms of pros and cons. Ms. Stolsworth systematically asked each SSAC member to offer either a pro or a con for the site under review or a “pass” if the member had no comment or if their pro or con had been already stated. The process continued until no one had any further comment to offer. The pros and cons were recorded on flip charts and will be included in the final report of the committee.

During the discussion of the Tilden Middle School site on Old Georgetown Road—in the Walter Johnson Cluster—a recommendation to remove this site from consideration was made.

- A fourth vote to eliminate the Tilden Middle School site on Old Georgetown Road from further consideration was taken. Tilden Middle School is outside the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Cluster and it will be used in the future as a holding center for secondary schools undergoing modernization. (This will occur when the Tilden Middle School modernization is completed in August 2018 at the Tilden Lane location.) Thirty-two of the 43 SSAC members voted to eliminate this site; 11 members voted to continue its inclusion. Therefore, the Tilden Middle School site was eliminated from further consideration.

As the process continued, a number of questions seeking clarification regarding site issues were raised. Representatives from MCPS, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, the county executive agencies, and the County Council responded to these questions. In addition, representatives from the Parent Teacher Association, homeowners' associations, and municipalities with knowledge regarding a particular site provided information to the committee. A list of follow-up questions was maintained and MCPS staff will provide the requested follow-up information at the next meeting of the SSAC on January 25, 2012.

At the end of the SSAC meeting, time was set aside for members of the public attending the meeting to make comments. Ms. Stolsworth facilitated this comment period and several observers spoke. At the conclusion of the comment period, Ms. Stolsworth requested the SSAC members complete the feedback forms that were provided. The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

Following is the list of publicly owned sites reviewed by the SSAC, including their acreage and indicating sites eliminated by the SSAC.

Bethesda-Chevy Chase Middle School #2 - Public Candidate Sites			
<u>Number</u>	<u>Site</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Committee Action</u>
			<u>Jan. 11, 2012</u>
1	Rock Creek Hills LP	13.30	
2	North Chevy Chase LP	31.03	
3	Lynnbrook LP/ES	10.04	
4	Leland LP	3.71	Eliminated
5	Rollingwood ES	4.07	Eliminated
6	Rosemary Hills/Lyttonsville LP	17.10	
7	WSSC Lyttonsville	11.99	
8	Former Mont. Hills JHS	8.67	Eliminated
9	Grace Episcopal School	10.94	
10	Norwood LP	17.50	
11	Bethesda ES	8.42	Eliminated
12	Chevy Chase ES	3.78	Eliminated
13	North Chevy Chase ES	7.94	Eliminated
14	Radnor Center	9.03	Eliminated
15	Rock Creek Forest ES	7.95	Eliminated
16	Rosemary Hills ES	6.07	Eliminated
17	Somerset ES	3.71	Eliminated
18	Tilden MS	28.06	Eliminated
19	Westbrook ES	12.46	Eliminated
20	Westland MS	25.09	
21	Former Kensington ES	4.54	Eliminated
22	Rays Meadow LP	11.09	Eliminated
23	Meadowbrook LP	44.72	
24	Montgomery County Bus Lot	17.47	
25	SHA Property/1495 Intersection	7.60	