

Notes on Wednesday, March 27, 2019 Meeting Between the Fair Access Committee and County Officials
Town Hall, Poolesville Maryland

Attendees: Kevin Schramm, Fair Access Committee; Russ Hamill, Montgomery County Police; Laura Lanham, Montgomery County Police; Darren Franke, Montgomery County Police; Robin Riley, Recreation Department; Caroline Sturgis, County Executive's Office; Catherine Matthews, Director, Upcounty Regional Office, Montgomery County Government; Victoria Buckland, Health and Human Services; Lisa Dobbs, Office of Senator Lily Qi; Karen Jordan, Recreation Department; Gregg Ossont, General Services Department; Dennis Linders, Health and Human Services; Rebecca Muenster, Fair Access Committee; Jerry Klobukowski, Fair Access Committee; Andrew Friedsen, County Council Member; Rose Hacking, Staff Member for Council Member Friedesen; Seth Adams, Office of School Construction, MCPS; Adrienne Karamihas, Division of Capital Planning, MCPS; Link Hoewing, Fair Access Committee; Jim Brown, Fair Access Committee

Meeting Notes

Kevin Schramm opened the meeting with a brief overview of the Multi-Use Facility proposed by the Fair Access Committee and the reasoning behind the proposal. He said the purpose of the meeting was to ensure all players involved in shaping the project got to know each other, exchanged views and developed a process for moving forward.

Council Member Friedsen said the meeting was a "reflection of the interest we all have" in this proposal. He said we need to engage looking at the needs of the Western County and determine what the proposed solutions would look like and how they could work. The process involves multiple county agencies and he said it is good to see the interest of all of the agencies and the County Executive's office. He emphasized that "we shouldn't say no growth but we can't build facilities" to meet the needs of citizens in the Ag Reserve. He also noted that there are many needs in the county and not enough resources.

Catherine Matthews said that "we really applaud any community that comes up with solutions and not just problems." She said that "where there is a will, there is a way" and suggested that perhaps things could be done "incrementally" in some instances. She asked whether there are priorities that "stick out" and whether the community had talked about "phasing in services."

Jerry Klobukowski said it is very straightforward what the community is looking for – a Multi-Use Facility and rebuilt high school.

Jim Brown said that the "school and its condition is the nexus" for the project. But he went on to say that the "lack of services is critical" and said that the health outcomes in the Western County "drove a lot of our concerns".

Seth Adams said that the county school system had changed its approach to school construction. Poolesville is one of nine schools the county is doing an in-depth review of that will result in recommendations to the Superintendent regarding their facilities and condition. They are using a set of “Key Facilities Indicators” to assess the condition of facilities and the assessment of Poolesville High School is complete. He said that “we know from the assessment that there are a number of issues to address at Poolesville”. He went on to say that schools are changing and “they won’t look like they do today” in the future. As a result, planning must change too. He pointed to cafeterias and the traditional role they have played as an example of how school facilities will need to change. He said that in this context, as schools are changing in their roles and functions, it is “perfect timing to hear from other departments”.

Victoria Buckland said that Health and Human Services (HHS) has had a partnership with the school system in creating “wellness centers” for students and families in schools. She noted that these facilities are planned using a number of factors but socioeconomic factors are big drivers. She said that as a result of the experience they have had with wellness centers, they have “some models we can use” to look at clinical facilities that are a part of a school building. She said there is a difference in the Poolesville proposal. What service mix would be integrated into the Multi-Use Facility?

Seth Adams suggested that program elements drive more thinking about school modernization and additions now. He said that some “Program elements linked to health care” might be reasonably considered as part of the Multi-Use Facility if a clinic is included in its plan.

Robin Riley said that the Rec Department does not have the space in the Poolesville area to do programming. She said the department did have some programs at the high school but they were not very successful. Until there is space to do programs, we won’t be able to offer them here based on our experience she concluded.

Russ Hamill said the police “need to manage expectations” when it comes to facilities including satellite stations and substations. People expect that there will be “detectives at these stations” but that is not the reality. He said that satellite stations can work well but they are not always successful. People point to the Olney satellite station as a success he noted but not every station works well and there are unique factors involved in each case.

Seth Adams said that terms like “modernization” and “revitalization” no longer are used when it comes to school facilities. He said that the KFI’s for Poolesville are completed and a report on the findings will be released in May. He said that in the spring and summer, his department will be looking at PHS and its needs. Aging infrastructure and capacity are not the only criteria driving school facility investments. Programming needs in schools are now a major driver in evaluating investments in schools. Career readiness in particular is one such programming element. He said the recommendations regarding Poolesville will be forwarded to the Superintendent in the fall. He went on to say that “we want to make sure our recommendations are reasonable and feasible” and that they are “for the long-term”. He said

that if we can leverage funding from other departments in the planning and recommendations it could be a real opportunity.

Link Hoewing said he has two sets of incentives that drive him to push for a rebuilt high school and a Multi-Use Facility. He has been involved with WUMCO and its driving programs and sees evidence all of the time about the need for nearby clinical services. Many residents in the Western County live alone, are indigent and can't drive or can't afford a car. On the other hand, he has grandkids who will one day attend the high school.

Caroline Sturgis said that she wanted to reassure everyone "you have the attention of the County Executive". She said that their staff has been discussing Poolesville internally. She said they have been "looking at the data and are committed to looking holistically".

Catherine Matthews said that "we should set some milestones and points where we need to get back together".

Link Hoewing said that regular meetings might help ensure the process progresses and proposed meeting monthly.

After some discussion about the capital budget process, the timing of recommendations for school facilities to the Superintendent, Board of Education hearings on school construction, and the release of the KFI's, the group agreed to meet in June to continue the dialog and determine where things stand at that stage.

Seth Adams noted that in releasing the KFI's "we don't want the community surprised by our recommendations". He said the BOE will want a detailed presentation in the fall about proposed school construction projects. He said that in the process, the other agencies who have projects that might be incorporated in proposed MCPS projects will work with the school system to plan out how that might work.

Catherine Matthews also noted that the County Executive will be holding budget forums for the public in late April/early May and urged the Fair Access Committee to attend.