



project. Mr. Dan Hobbs explained that there would be 260 homes when the area was fully developed, but this year there would be only 35. There was another property with a potential for 270 homes with 50 under construction. Dr. Shoenberg remarked that for some period of time there might be only a few families west of 270 who were at Beall Elementary; however, there was a great deal more construction to come. Mr. Hobbs replied that the construction people were moving as fast as they could in that area. Mr. Ewing asked about the projection for population growth in the City. Mr. Hobbs replied that by the year 2000 it would be between 55,000 and 60,000 which was not as large as previously thought. It would take them until the end of the century to become a mature community. They had been experiencing a drop in household size. Mrs. Mary McEachern noted that the City also had a stock of low-cost housing with a constant turnover of houses. Mr. Hobbs added that Twinbrook had been recycled a number of times.

Dr. Cody asked whether the City had access to data regarding births in the City because in many areas of the county there were population bubbles. Mr. Ewing commented that they were seeing this in the Takoma Park-East Silver Spring area and it might well happen in other areas. Dr. Pitt asked whether they still had a fairly high mobility rate in the lower cost housing. Mr. Hobbs replied that they did have in certain parts of the town.

Mr. Alex Stein said he wanted to reemphasize the question of the area split which made 270 look like the Berlin wall. He wanted to discuss the school closure process and the way it tended to disorganize the social factors of neighborhoods. He would like to see special secondary instructional programs in the high schools, and they had been talked about a law and government program in Richard Montgomery because it was close to the county government. The other possibility would be to have a high tech center in that school because of its central location. In regard to the cosmopolitan nature of the County, he pointed out that English-as-a-second-language students were moving westward. The City was now getting a significant portion of ESOL students. Beall had 45 and Twinbrook had 43, and the trend was increasing.

Dr. Cronin asked whether there was still a move toward condominium conversion in the City. Mr. Hobbs replied that the only one under consideration was the Summit, which was predominantly low-income. Mr. Stein reported that Asians and Hispanics were buying some of the smaller homes in the Maryvale area. He said they also had to look at Chapter 1 schools because Twinbrook, Beall, and Maryvale were in the top four in the county. He pointed out that they were a City made up of diverse groupings. They needed a continued monitoring of the transfer policy and to try to assure that all policies were applied equally. He stated that schools were vitally important to the lifestyle of the city.

Mr. Charles Haughey explained that they had a plan of action and would welcome the Board's assistance. The first goal was liaison between the mayor and council of the City of Rockville and the Board

of Education. Mrs. Elaine Goldberg would be their representative. They would also be conducting public meetings and discussions with the PTAs in the City. The second activity was participation in the budget preparation and review process. They would expect to testify on behalf of their major issues. The third was the development of more information about the MCPS schools serving the City of Rockville students. They hoped to pull together demographic information and hoped to meet with the administration and faculty of schools serving Rockville, the Board's staff, and the superintendent's staff. They would like assistance from the MCPS planners and research office in order to develop an analysis of issues relating to Rockville. He hoped that the city staff and PTAs would be involved in discussions.

Mr. Haughey said they would be looking at (1) area organization, (2) school boundary status, (3) long-term viability of Richard Montgomery, (4) parity of resources in Rockville to the rest of the county, (5) parity of pupil performance, and (6) the question of upgrading the quality of the secondary school experience. In order to move forward they were seeking the Board's help. He said it would be useful if they could be briefed on the 15-year plan and the capital improvements program. He hoped they could be oriented to secondary school programs, curriculum, and pupil performance. Mr. Ewing indicated that they would be pleased to arrange for those kinds of briefings and to provide as much information as they had available. However, providing new information raised a resource problem. Dr. Pitt agreed that it was relatively easy to share some of the information the City wanted. In regard to student performance data, he hoped staff could sit down with them to discuss this. Dr. Shoenberg added that a number of them were dismayed by the almost willful misinterpretation of standardized test data. He hoped that they would be able to educate the public about the meaning of those test scores, and that the Commission could assist them in this goal.

Dr. Cronin commented that the Commission could help educate the Board because they knew the pulse of the schools better than the Board. For example, Mrs. Joseph knew Richard Montgomery and the issues that needed to be addressed. Mr. Haughey felt that their plan was probably ambitious, but they thought it should be shared with the Board. Dr. Cronin remarked that much of this was the sterile process of manipulating numbers, but there was also the living process of study.

Mr. Ewing reported that they had paid a good deal of attention with helpful support from the county in the way of funds for the Blair High School area. At this point there were two and possibly three high schools in the county which could be considered urban high schools. Because of their diversity some people were nervous about these schools, and he thought it was incumbent upon the school system to deal with that anxiety. He said that urban high schools needed tremendously different plans to deal with improvements, but he believed that this was not impossible for them to deal with. He thought that Richard Montgomery was a tremendously important school

and was the litmus test of their ability to overcome problems that had defeated other communities. He appreciated the commission's help. In regard to the budget process, he thought that the Council really wanted to know what their priorities were and where attention should be focused.

Mrs. Naomi Joseph asked whether there was some way that test scores could be footnoted to speak to the diversity of the student population. Mr. Ewing wondered whether the Information Office could do a feature piece on this. Dr. Pitt replied that they had tried this method in the past, but he had not heard this concern at the Board level. Dr. Cronin said he was concerned about using averages because they did not tell the spread of the students in the school.

Mr. Haughey said the question was what the schools were doing to the potential of the students. The Commission was going to be able to take a more highly focused view of this. Mrs. Elaine Goldberg pointed out that the maps indicated what a difficult chore they had set for themselves. They had schools in and out of the city, and there were two different administrative areas. She looked forward to getting into the work plan, and she explained that they had given the Board a picture of Rockville. She was proud of the City and said the City was very concerned with its citizens. One of its major concerns was education and neighborhood integrity and strengthening the family. She asked how they could help the Board.

It seemed to Mr. Ewing that if they pursued their work plan, the Commission would be a tremendous help to the Board. He knew they were very concerned about the area division, but he hoped they would give a good part of their time to the question of how good the schools were and what could be done to make them better and to make an urban high school function effectively.

Dr. Shoenberg expressed agreement with Mr. Ewing's remarks. He said it was going to be difficult to go on pushing boundaries around, and he understood some of the difficulties they had with boundaries. However, they surely could do and must do something about the quality of the schools, and the Commission's understanding would be valuable. He thought they had a splendid work plan and would help them as best they could. Dr. Cronin said he would echo these remarks. He felt that experiences in the City of Rockville did have applications elsewhere in the county such as the Blair and B-CC areas. However, in the B-CC area there was no focal point such as a city government. He saw urban schools going out past Rockville, and he felt they were setting a 25-year pattern here. Mr. Stein remarked that he had seen what had happened in the B-CC area in the last 25 years, and he felt that if they had been an open-minded Board listening to an advisory committee some of that could have been prevented. He was also concerned about the issue of education in the national arena with which they were all being confronted. He said that this was a double-edged sword. It was good to call attention to education, but there was a danger of polarization which would make their collective venture all the more difficult.

Dr. Cronin stated that the Board knew what it was doing because it had an agenda before it, but the question was what was education. They had to look beyond just voting on an issue. He wondered whether the Commission could tell the Board what they thought education was and what they wanted to see as the end product. Dr. Shoenberg said he was willing to talk with civic groups and PTAs because Board members had a responsibility to tell people what they knew about education and to hear what their ideas were.

Mr. Ewing observed that the Board had decided on three major objectives when it reorganized in December. The first was to find a replacement for the superintendent, and they had done that. The second was to get past the budget season intact, and they had done that. The third was to address facilities and racial balance issues and, while this was not solved, they had been supported by the state Board of Education. Now for the first time in years the Board was able to focus on the quality of education and the quality of instruction and learning in the public schools. It was his judgment that as a Board they had not spent much time on that. They were going to work with Dr. Cody on establishing an agenda for that purpose.

Dr. Pitt thought they should start their work program, and in doing that they would become informed about the quality of education. He hoped that they would come to the Board with their insights and recommendations. Dr. Cody stated that he would reinforce the comments made by Mr. Ewing on the quality of educational programs. He said that when they said "better schools" they needed to define and redefine what they meant. The Commission had spoken about a high tech school, but that would be changing the focus of the school. When he said "better," it meant making choices about what was important, changing what they taught or the way they taught. He hoped that as the Commission pursued this they would think through what it was they wanted to do a better job. He asked what their first order of business would be. Mr. Haughey said they would like to have briefings with staff.

Dr. Cody agreed that these briefings should be set up, and Dr. Pitt asked that they contact him about the 15-year plan and the CIP. Dr. Cody indicated his willingness to participate in the briefings if his schedule permitted. In regard to Orchard Ridge, Mrs. Goldberg reported they had formed a task force with non-Commission members to do fact finding. They expected that report in the near future.

Mr. Ewing stated that the Board would be establishing goals and objectives during the summer. Dr. Cody agreed that it was important to share these with the community and to get community involvement. Mr. Ewing expressed appreciation for the Commission's presentation and suggested work plan.

Re: Adjournment

The president adjourned the meeting at 10:35 p.m.

President

Secretary

HP:mlw

