

APPROVED
13-2007

Rockville, Maryland
June 11, 2007

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in special session on June 11, 2007, at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Ms. Shirley Brandman, Vice President
in the Chair
Mr. Steve Abrams
Mr. Christopher Barclay
Dr. Judy Docca
Mrs. Patricia O'Neill
Mr. Larry Bowers, Acting Secretary/Treasurer

Absent: Mrs. Nancy Navarro, President
Ms. Sharon Cox
Ms. Sarah Horvitz

Re: **PUBLIC HEARING ON THE ASSIGNMENT OF
HAMPSHIRE GREENS COMMUNITY**

The following people testified before the Board of Education:

1. Keith Roachford, Dr. Charles Drew Elementary School PTA
2. Mary Vogel, Briggs Chaney Middle School PTSA
3. Fran Simons, William Farquhar Middle School PTA
4. Melissa Rosenberg, Francis Scott Key Middle School PTSA
5. Carla Calhoun, White Oak Middle School PTSA
6. Darnell Daisey
7. Susan Lee
8. Debbie Murphy
9. Stephen Szot, Hampshire Greens HOA
10. Julio Pena
11. Jesse Brande
12. Patsy Hurst-Moore
13. Maurice Hurst
14. Leesa Arnold
15. Patricia Silverthorn
16. Richard DiPippo
17. Stuart Rochester
18. Betsy Sirk
19. Joseph Poux
20. Anil Jane
21. Patricia Walters
22. Alex Yung
23. Garrett McClees
24. Reggie Felton

The Board of Education asked the following questions:

1. Mr. Barclay asked Ms. Rosenberg about her statement that if Hampshire Greens was removed from Francis Scott Key Middle School, it would have a negative impact on the school. She replied that Hampshire Greens residents represented one fifth of the PTSA executive board. Most people in the school community do not have the time and resources to give to the school.
2. Mr. Abrams addressed questions of all the people who testified from the Hampshire Greens community. He prefaced those questions by noting that Mr. Daisey said that he wanted the discussion to keep to the facts. Mr. Abrams wanted to examine the comments casting aspersions on the superintendent. He thought that he had heard that the assignment pattern for Hampshire Greens occurred approximately 10 years ago. Yet, Dr. Weast came to Montgomery County Public Schools eight years ago. If, in fact, he was supporting practices and policies that had preexisted him, how did it become a fact to the Hampshire Greens community that he was pursuing his agenda rather than adhering to what had been preexisting Board policy? Mr. Abrams asked that question parenthetically so that it is on the record.

Mr. Abrams was sympathetic to the concerns expressed by the community since he got involved in school issues because of a boundary dispute. He understands how important it is for those individuals going through the process. He also had the responsibility of trying to balance what is in the best interest of the system. Next week, *The Washington Post* will come out with an article about minority achievement in MCPS as compared to other public school systems in the country. It is going to reflect extraordinarily favorably on the efforts that have been made in Montgomery County over the past decade. That is not made up from one single piece, but rather it is the computation of a lot of different initiatives, all aimed at trying to improve achievement in a system that is today a majority/minority district. Those initiatives require a lot of effort, which may be a burden on some, but from a systemic standpoint, they have some value. He used the above to preface his questions to get facts on the record.

Of those individuals who testified, he wanted to know when they purchased their homes. What did you know about the school assignment when you purchased the homes? He wanted that information on the record. He asked them to provide that in writing for the record.

Mr. Abrams wanted to know a second thing that on that issue since he was trying to ascertain facts. Of those students who have gone through the school assignments, how has their academic performance been? If the Board could have that information to make a judgment as to whether, in fact, there has been any detriment to education due to the efforts made by the school system.

One of the options on the table is an assignment to White Oak Middle School. He wanted to hear from those who testified on their preference of going to Briggs Chaney Middle School. What is their view if Briggs Chaney is not possible and there is a reassignment to White Oak?

3. Mrs. O'Neill asked for information from staff. What is the base area for the high school for Hampshire Greens? What is the base area for Briggs Chaney and White Oak as the schools articulate? She realized that Dr. Charles Drew Elementary School has a program for highly gifted students so there are children from several areas. Of those students who reside in the Drew area, what middle schools do they articulate to and what is their high school base area assignment? What would be the mileage that MCPS is using (two points in Hampshire Greens) to Briggs Chaney and White Oak? Children from Broad Acres go to White Oak and pass Key. How many miles do children from Broad Acres travel every day to White Oak? It intrigued her since the Board had heard several times that students pass 10 other middle schools. While Farquhar is off the table based on recommendations and alternatives, she could not see passing Parkland or Loiederman to get Key. She wanted from staff a map showing such routes.
4. Mr. Barclay added to the questions for the Hampshire Greens community. In writing, what has been the impact on the students in terms of participation in before-school and after-school programs based on the distance the student has to travel to school? He asked staff to get information on how many times the buses from Hampshire Greens have been late to school. Can there be a calculation on the number of minutes of instruction that may have been lost, if any?
5. Mrs. O'Neill wanted the historical record of other buses coming to Key that are late. Is this a pattern in the geographic area?
6. Mrs. O'Neill noted that Mr. Felton was on the Board when the decision was made during the assignments in the Northeast Consortium. She asked him if there was a reconsideration of the boundaries for Hampshire Greens. Mr. Felton replied that new communities were on the books (no buildings) based on demographics of the proposed development. However, the assumptions were wrong, and there is a need to correct the assignment based on the present demographics.
7. Mr. Abrams observed that everyone wants to stick to the facts, and then they become visceral. He wanted a record where there was a base understanding on which to apply policies. Mr. DiPippo stated that the developer did not change the documents from 1997 to 1999 to reflect the impact of the consortium on assignments. Mr. Abrams asked staff for information on the middle school assignment in 1997 and if that changed before the change in documentation from the developer. He believed that the middle school stayed the same.

8. Mr. Barclay noted that he had heard statements that the Board was going against its own policy. In Policy FAA, there is an opportunity for the Board to reexamine unique and extraordinary circumstances.
9. Mrs. O'Neill asked staff if MCPS runs activity buses from Key to Hampshire Greens. Are there activity buses from White Oak to the Broad Acres community? Are there activity buses out of White Oak and Briggs Chaney to wherever the students live?

The meeting ended at 8:20 p.m.

PRESIDENT

SECRETARY

JDW:gr