

MEMORANDUM

Date: November 17, 2014

To: File

From: WMCRP, Inc.

File: Richard Montgomery Elementary School #5 (1404)

Re: **Schematic Design Community Meeting #2 Notes 11/13/14**

Attending:

Ray Marhamati	MCPS Div of Construction	Ray_Marhamati@mcpsmd.org
Julie Morris	MCPS Div of L.R. Planning	Julie_A_Morris@mcpsmd.org
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Jennifer Young	R.M. Cluster Coordinator	young.jennifer@gmail.com
Elliot Alter	Principal, Beall E.S.	Elliot_Alter@mcpsmd.org
Christina Ginsberg	Twinbrook Citizens Assoc.	twinbrookpres@yahoo.com
Stan Bastacky	Wootton Oaks Resident	stan850@gmail.com
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Kathleen Cohan	Beall Elementary School	Kathleen_A_Cohan@mcpsmd.org
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Rob Healy	Beall Elementary School	Robert_M_Healy@mcpsmd.org
Bridget Newton	City of Rockville	BNewton@rockvillemd.gov

Issues Discussed:

1. Ms. Morris presented the time line for the school: completed in August of 2017. However, the approval date is for one year later (2018); this depends on funding for the school.
2. The new school will relieve overcrowding at Beall, Ritchie Park and College Gardens Elementary Schools. The new school will be built with a capacity of about 600 students, with a core capacity for 740 students. A future 6-classroom addition will bring the school to full 740-student capacity. However, it has been decided to build the “shell space” for the additional six classrooms at the time of initial construction. It will be necessary to finish the interior construction of these rooms (including mechanical and electrical work) when the additional need is demonstrated.
3. Ms. Morris provided an overview of the program spaces that will be included in the new school. The Feasibility Study has been completed (and is available on line) and it determined that the most economical solution is to demolish the existing building and

build a new one, instead of attempting to renovate the existing building. The site has 10.9 acres, but with several Forest Conservation Easements, 6.9 acres are available.

4. Communications: both WMCRP Architects and MCPS DoC have web sites with information available: <http://www.rmes5.wmcrponline.com/Blog/Blog.html> and <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/construction/projects/rm5es.shtm> Ray Marhamati is the contact point for questions and comments; Elliot Alter is the Principal contact.
5. Mr. Pones began his presentation with a review of the Goals and Objectives from the Feasibility Study. We have since added Enhanced Security as a major objective.
6. Design Option 1 was described, featuring the use of the sloping site to add a classroom floor below the main floor, as well as a floor above. This is similar to the design of Glenallan Elementary School; images of that school were shown. Also, many of the design elements (daylighting, etc.) are utilized for all of our designs.
7. Design Option 2, presented at Meeting 1 last week, has been developed into Options 2.2 and 2.3, based on comments received at that meeting.
8. Mr. Pones presented the Site Plan for Option 2.2. We are limited to one entrance point to the site. We do not have control over whether a traffic light will be added to this location or not. Buses and cars are separated immediately after entering the site. We looked at switching cars and buses, but this arrangement better uses the site and provides more queuing space for cars. Singer ES also has one entrance, with the same arrangement: cars turn right, buses turn left. There are still some large retaining walls (especially at the Service Court) but they are facing in towards the school, not out towards the neighbors; however, a small retaining wall faces out toward the neighbors at the north edge of the site, west of the entrance. There will be a fence separating the playing fields from the parking lot- with openings to allow community use. Play areas are consolidated along the south side of the site, and easily visible. The Media Center is located towards the front of the building.
9. The Site Plan for Option 2.3 is similar to Option 2.2. There is more building area in the east connecting wing. The Media Center is located towards the rear of the building. The Pre-K playground is now shown in the courtyard- it will be re-located to the south side of the building. It was noted that kids would cut through the stream bed at the end of Ritchie Parkway to the school, through the back of the playing fields. This will still be possible, but will not be encouraged.
10. The site differences between Options 2.2 and 2.3 were closely examined at the east end of the building. Option 2.2 includes an outdoor amphitheater (which would be an add-alternate) while Option 2.3 includes outdoor spaces directly off the Media Center and the Teacher's Lounge. Why not both? Different ways of treating the site allow only one or the other, not both at the same time.

11. Mr. Whaples presented the floor plans, comparing Options 2.2 and 2.3. A key consideration for both is the student flow through the building: First, for arrival and dismissal. Second, for lunch and transitioning to recess. Third, for fire drills and emergencies. This flow has been improved from old Option 2, with a hallway link added, as discussed in the previous meeting.
12. In both Options (2.2 and 2.3) the administrative suite, multipurpose room, and gym are in the same location. Both options have a 3-story classroom wing, with the first floor buried into the hillside. Exiting from both options is similar. All programmed rooms are the same size, throughout each of the Options that have been presented. All Options have the same number of toilet rooms.
13. The Music suite, Media Center, and Staff Lounge are in different locations in the two options. Option 2.3 has a larger courtyard.
14. The opportunities presented by courtyards were discussed. Examples of beautifully landscaped courtyards were mentioned, with butterfly gardens and fishponds. Others can be neglected- maintenance is an issue. It depends on who takes ownership of the courtyard and how it is utilized. Principal Alter prefers a smaller courtyard with a defined use, like the Art space in Option 2.2.
15. The Beall ES Media Specialist, Ms. Mazur, stated that it is very important that there are no blind spaces in the Media Center, as Option 2.3 seems to show. It is too soon in the design process to focus on this; instead, we discussed the relative location of the Media Center. Option 2.2 has the Library closer to the front entrance, which would be better for community use. However, the Library in Option 2.3 is quite visible, with an open stair in front.
16. There is no dedicated para-educator room. Ms. Morris explained that typically, lockable storage and desk space is provided in other larger spaces. Ms. Morris identified each of the many instructional support rooms in the building. Sometimes, the size of some classrooms (perhaps 4) is slightly reduced to create a small instructional space; this can be done here.
17. Lockers are provided in the corridors, instead of cubbies in the classrooms, for all grades except Kindergarten and Pre-K. This provides more space in the classrooms, and helps to prevent the spread of head lice.
18. Additional art and music space can be accommodated in the Dual-Purpose room, which is provided in addition to the art and music rooms. The music rooms and Dual Purpose room will be built with double walls to isolate noise.
19. The six-classroom future expansion is shown as a built “shell space” in both Options. Mayor Newton expressed concern that enough capacity was being built; a shell space would provide for a quicker turn-around when additional classrooms are needed. Ms. Morris stated that the additional classrooms would be funded when the demand

indicates that the expanded capacity is needed. Mayor Newton will lobby for providing shell space instead of simply indicating a location for future expansion.

20. Mayor Newton was asked if the City of Rockville will provide additional funds to expand the size of the gym, as done at other new Rockville elementary schools. She said that this was a strong possibility; the budget process starts in December, when the issue will be raised and discussed with the Mayor and Council.
21. Discussion about whether Option 1 still needed to be considered. The group prefers the Option 2 layouts- at both public meetings. Principal Alter prefers the flow of Option 1, but he recognizes that Option 2 is better for the community. He stated that the new Options 2.2 and 2.3 address the egress issues he had with old Option 2. We will now drop Option 1 to concentrate on improvements to the Option 2 layouts.
22. Most of the group preferred Option 2.2 over Option 2.3, mainly due to the location of the Media Center. Ms. Ginsberg suggested switching the Media Center with the Art & Music suite, but this would not work because kids should not carry their instruments up stairs. We will explore moving the Media Center towards the front of the building, including the possibility of locating the Media Center above the Administration suite.

Schematic Plan Meeting Schedule:

Meeting #3—Thursday, November 20	3:30 PM	Ritchie Park E.S.
Meeting #4—Tuesday, December 9	7:00 PM	R.M.H.S.
Additional Meeting(s)	to be determined.	

Please notify this office right away of any errors or omissions.