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The Akron Architectural Group

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AKRON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Community Planning Meeting #2
Ritzman Community Learning Center
Tuesday, April 5, 2005 @ 6:00 p.m.

In Attendance

D. James.....	Akron Public Schools
J. Beal.....	Akron Public Schools
G. Taylor	Akron Public Schools
J. Kaufman.....	Akron Public Schools
L. Schur	Akron Public Schools
K. Sham-Hanna	Akron Public Schools
M. Miller	Akron Public Schools
M. Velhaly	Akron Public Schools
J. Birath	AAG
L. Duncan	City of Akron
L. Jennings.....	Burgess & Burgess
W. Witof	CTP
S. DeBerry	CTP
L. Higgins.....	CTP
R. Slater	CTP
K. Olson.....	CTP
J. Buckeye.....	CTP
W. Kartler	CTP
R. Kartler	CTP
D. Garlick.....	CTP

Distribution

AAG Project Managers	
M. Salopek	AAG
D. Mitchell	AAG
D. James.....	Akron Public Schools
J. Beal.....	Akron Public Schools
K. Balchak	Akron Public Schools
R. Jones Blum.....	Akron Public Schools
L. Duncan	City of Akron
T. Long.....	City of Akron
M. Williamson.....	City of Akron
D. Krutz.....	RKPS
L. Jennings.....	Burges and Burges

The following is a review of items discussed at the meeting:

- D. James introduced the team members from Akron Public Schools (APS), City of Akron, and Akron Architectural Group (AAG) that would be assisting the community and staff with the process.
- D. James presented a video of the Central Learning Center and the proposed bus routing and schedules.
 - He noted that the school would move August 2007 into the Center, demolition of the building would begin January 2008, construction begins February 2008 and completes July 2009, the new Ritzman CLC opens August 2009.
 - The Central Learning Center will be shared by Ritzman and Glover. There will be staggered starting times; 9:00am arrive and 9:30 start, 9:15am arrive and 9:45am start, 3:30pm dismiss and 3:45pm dismiss.
 - Each school will have two lunch periods.
 - Transportation will be provided by APS yellow busses. These will be dedicated for each school.
 - There is a maximum of sixty children per bus.
 - The bus ride is fifteen minutes from the time the first child is picked up to when they are dropped off.
 - Bus stops will be located within 1-1/2 blocks of any home.
 - There will be increased police patrols during pick-up and drop-off.
 - Parents may drive and pick-up their own children if they choose.
 - Outside play area is fenced in and has video surveillance.
 - There will be full-time security at the facility.
 - The doors will be controlled with electronic locks and video surveillance at all points of entry.
 - APS is reviewing before and after school care to determine if it will be provided at the Central Learning Center or in the child's neighborhood.
 - Open enrollment would be limited to siblings having first priority and placing others on a waiting list.
 - It was asked if the current other tenant would move out to allow for a second gym. D. James responded that their lease agreement expires in 2007 and the tenant has not entered into negotiations to extend their lease.
 - How do two schools share one gymnasium? D. James noted there would be staggered times, the sessions would be shorter (thirty-minutes), but that the schools would stay together and mix with the other school.
 - How is the Central Learning Center furnished? D. James informed the group that David Hill and Resnick will leave furniture behind for use and APS will supplement as required.
 - Will there be future levees to pay for shortfalls and if it cost more than expected? D. James assured everyone that the money is there and set aside specifically for this use.
 - Where will interim card pick-ups and parent-teacher conferences be held? D. James informed the parents that these will occur at the Central Learning Center or at a school in their cluster.
 - What happens if a child becomes ill at the Central Learning Center? D. James noted there is a health clinic at the facility and that APS may partner with Children's Hospital.

- When and who will decide if the children will be bussed to the Central Learning Center? D. James responded that the Joint Board of Review will evaluate the plan and that the Akron School Board will have the final say. Anyone who wants to express their concerns should contact D. James, their councilperson, the school board and can use the form on the website.
- There will be an opportunity to tour the Central Learning Center once additional work is completed.
- D. James reviewed alternatives the community requested during the previous meeting.
 - APS and the City of Akron need to maintain the Master Plan so it does not cause hardship to other buildings.
 - Swinging into the old Betty Jane would cause Windemere to move to segment four. Hatton would remain in segment three.
 - Enlarge current site through eminent domain. No one wants to pursue this course of action; it is a long and costly process that would risk damaging community relations.
- L. Jennings emphasized the importance of the Community Planning Team's input during the design and planning process. He emphasized that everyone must participate to ensure a successful Community Learning Center that meets the specific needs of the community.
- L. Jennings defined the meeting as a focus group exercise. He began by asking how is Akron, as a city, doing and how do you think things are going in Akron? Responses were:
 - Akron is a nice, clean city.
 - Akron has a beautiful downtown that has been developed for families, i.e. Canal Park, Lock 3, etc.
 - Akron is comprised of solid families with traditional family values.
 - Akron has low crime compared to other cities.
 - Manufacturing is leaving town, causing residents to ask how will this be supplemented.
 - It has become difficult to get work.
 - The work force requires additional education to prepare for new fields.
- L. Jennings asked how the Akron schools doing and how do you think things are going in the Akron Public Schools? Responses were:
 - The Ellet cluster is a wonderful cluster. The schools are doing well and there is little trouble.
 - The Ellet cluster is a tight, strong community that supports their schools.
 - The Ellet cluster is comprised of hard working, non-transient parents.
 - The Akron Public School system is very good.
- L. Jennings asked what are the needs of the community? Responses were:
 - The closest family swimming, exercise, recreation facility is in Green. They want a facility in the cluster area that the community can use.
 - L. Jennings responded that this would require identifying a potential partner and if they are able to bring Local Funded Initiative (LFI) money to the Project.
 - L. Jennings noted he would be approaching recreational providers with this need.
 - University of Akron training programs in the building. Opportunity for higher education classes.
 - Community Center to allow a place for people to gather.

- Not a strong demand for community service programs.
 - Location to review property tax assessments and other similar programs.
 - Kent State University has expressed an interest in teaching sign language at the new CLC.
 - There was concern expressed that the new facility would not be utilized to its potential.
 - It was noted that there is a large demand for space in the cluster. Current facilities are crowded and turning away groups.
 - The new CLC will offer large, complementary spaces for many events/functions.
 - The Akron Art Museum expressed interest in conducting art lessons in the new facilities.
 - Cultural arts such as dance, music and drama should have the opportunity to perform in the CLC.
 - A shelter from rain and snow for waiting outside for school to begin and for pick-up was requested.
 - Place the new playground on the sunny side of the site, not in the shadow of the new building.
 - Provide direct access from the Student Dining to the playground.
- L. Jennings asked is there anything you do not want to happen in the new CLC? Responses were:
 - Alcoholics Anonymous offering classes at the new CLC received mixed comments. Concern was expressed about having individuals with alcohol and drug problems being at a building that young children use. Even after school hours, the playground and multi-use field could have children playing on it.
 - Having the areas used after school hours left in a messy condition. The spaces should be just as they were when they walked in.
 - The building should not be a place to just hang out. This could lead to vandalism.
 - Limit what can occur during school hours. Do not want to mix programs with education time.
 - Eliminate risk of adults having contact with children. Do not want adults who are not at the facility for the school use to be in the hallways, on the playground, coming and going at the same time the children do.
 - L. Jennings asked if there were other concerns about the use of the CLC? Responses were:
 - Requested other options to busing students outside the cluster during the interim period of construction.
 - Open enrollment may add overcrowding issues to the new CLC. Having a new school will draw others from other areas to the school. D. James responded that each cluster is having work done for new facilities. There are sixteen buildings identified throughout the district for work in the first phase of construction. Any students currently being bussed will eventually have their own school. APS wants to return to neighborhood centers, they do not want to bus children out of their neighborhood.
 - Security was requested outside of the building during after school hours when groups are meeting in the CLC to create a safe environment for the community to use the playground and field.
 - It was asked if the principal would have authority to deal with issues if something is not working? It was noted that the City of Akron and APS would be responsive to any issues and the principal would not have to deal with it.

- Site vehicular traffic is an issue and the new CLC should not have children crossing the traffic.
- L. Duncan stressed with the parents that the City of Akron cares about their children. She has spoken with the police chief who assured her that he is committed to providing additional patrols in their neighborhood during bus pick-up and drop-off.
- L. Jennings asked if there are other concerns about the use of the CLC?
 - How are the building use being scheduled? L. Jennings responded that Issue 10 created a Joint Board Agreement between the City of Akron and APS. There is a committee and language in the agreement to oversee the scheduling of the facilities.
- J. Birath issued a request for volunteers to join the Roll-Up the Sleeves (RUS) Team. There are two groups that volunteers are required for. The first is the Community Planning Team (CPT) that is composed of parents, neighbors and potential partners to review the proposals and make suggestions. Those attending the meeting fall into this category. The second is the RUS Team that is composed of teachers, other staff and a few community members to get into the detail of the new Center and create the proposals to present to the CPT. The RUS Team will be meeting April 11th at 2:45pm in the LRC.
- J. Beal indicated that on Saturday, April 16th at 9:00am there will be a field trip to review Allen Elementary in Canton, an OSFC funded project that has recently completed construction. Directions were available at the meeting and will be left with J. Kaufman.
- The next community meeting on May 3rd, 6:00pm at the same meeting space.

The preceding is AAG's interpretation of the meeting. Any changes, additions, or clarifications should be forwarded to our office as soon as possible. Unless these changes are furnished within ten (10) working days, it will be understood that all parties are in agreement with the preceding statements.