

11
3-29-16

Gloria Sitton

From: Nancy Jennings via Call.Click.Connect. <CallClickConnect@alexandriava.gov>
Sent: Saturday, March 26, 2016 8:41 AM
To: City Council; City Council Aides; Jackie Henderson; Call Click Connect; Gloria Sitton
Subject: Call.Click.Connect. #92889: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council Good Morning, In January I spoke on b

Dear **Call.Click.Connect.** User

A request was just created using **Call.Click.Connect.** The request ID is 92889.

Request Details:

- Name: Nancy Jennings
- Approximate Address: No Address Specified
- Phone Number: 703-820-6930
- Email: nrjennings@comcast.net
- Service Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council
- Request Description: Good Morning,

In January I spoke on behalf of Seminary Hill Association, Inc. (SHA), in support of residents' concerns about the planned expansion of Patrick Henry Elementary School into a pre-K through grade-8 program with a recreation center twice the size of the one now at this school. Those comments are attached for your review. The comments below are my own personal opinion and may help you weigh the issues about this project on Tuesday night and ones in the future.

The budget and planning process for expanding this school is opaque and should have included taxpayers and residents. For example, who decided to put additional grades on site and who decided there was a need for the facilities being added to the rec center. I and others, who did not grow up in Alexandria, have noted that the schools we attended "back home" are not being torn down but are repaired, maintained, and creatively renovated at a lesser cost than tearing down a school and building a new one. Also, ACPS projects are never budgeted for actual cost; for example, T. C. Williams High School, the Hammond soccer field, and the TCW tennis courts cost double the amounts budgeted for them.

For reasons I do not know, the expansion of Patrick Henry Elementary School is on a fast track. The site where the school is now located is the best site for a school, but the people making decisions have chosen an expensive building plan that will move it. Since community outreach began, the community has had limited access to information and limited time for discussions of the plans for the new buildings and fields. SHA's representative and other members of the Board have attended the Advisory Group and Community meetings. The information to be discussed at these meetings is often not available in advance, so they become instructional meetings about what staff is thinking rather than discussions. Making this project a success may be difficult, especially given past experience with staff's plans.

In conclusion, I hope that you can at least protect the interests of our community, which lives near and uses this school. We fear features of a complex like this that would detract from our quality of life, such as re-routing traffic onto residential streets, restricting access to fields and open space, and the installation of lights on playing fields.

Thank you for your efforts to make this project better.

Nan Jennings

2115 Marlboro Drive
Alexandria, VA 22304

- Attachment: 2016-02-20 Open Mike on Patrick Henry.docx
- Expected Response Date: Monday, April 4

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11
3-29-16

Gloria Sitton

From: Mary Biegel via Call.Click.Connect. <CallClickConnect@alexandriava.gov>
Sent: Monday, March 21, 2016 1:57 PM
To: City Council; City Council Aides; Jackie Henderson; Call Click Connect; Gloria Sitton
Subject: Call.Click.Connect. #92545: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council Good afternoon Mayor Silberberg and Memb

Dear **Call.Click.Connect.** User

A request was just created using **Call.Click.Connect.** The request ID is 92545.

Request Details:

- Name: Mary Biegel
- Approximate Address: No Address Specified
- Phone Number: 703-212-8041
- Email: marymorrisbiegel@gmail.com
- Service Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council
- Request Description: Good afternoon Mayor Silberberg and Members of City Council,

I am writing to submit feedback regarding the Patrick Henry site plans, which I have also attached. I have reviewed these plans in detail, circulated the plans among my neighbors, and listened to the feedback at the community meeting. Option A is my preference, and the preference of my neighbors. It was also the clear preference of the attendees at the community meeting on March 16th during both the small group discussions and the group poll.

My neighbors and I were very happy to see one option presented that incorporated the residents' feedback regarding the entrances and parking lots. Option A is the only option that does not include a parking lot or loop on Latham St., and it has many other favorable characteristics which have appealed to residents, parents, and the broader community.

However, I would like to also note that while I am recommending Option A, the local community has also made some large compromises in this site plan. For example, what is now open field space which serves as a public park and sports practice field will become a building and parking lot. We would have hoped for the school to remain at its current location to better preserve this outdoor space, but swing space was not available. In addition, a larger recreation center is being built on the site than we believe is in demand or necessary in a residential neighborhood, and we are losing our valued open outdoor fields which are so well used by the community. Open and natural field space are also the top requests of the larger city as shown in the Parks and Recreation 2105 survey.

With this being said, I do understand that compromises are necessary. I hope that moving forward, the remaining key concerns of the neighborhood will be included in the site plans, namely keeping all entrances and parking lots on Taney rather than Latham, avoiding fences and artificial turf on the field that would limit the local community's access, and not placing any athletic lights on the field now or in the future.

I have included a summary of each of the options which includes my feedback, as well as feedback from my neighbors and attendees at the meetings. I believe it is clear that Option A is the preferred option.

Option A

- As we have stated through numerous emails, speeches, and community letters, a major concern is having an entrance or parking lot on Latham Street. Option A is the only one that incorporates this feedback. Having EVE only access is a great compromise.
- There is limited visibility at the intersection of Polk/Latham. This option avoids adding traffic at this intersection, which would be a safety issue for residents, as well as walkers or drivers to the school.
- An entrance on Latham would add traffic on a narrow residential street, which is a safety concern for parents,

students, and residents. It would also funnel traffic down Peacock, a narrow street with visibility issues, and other surrounding residential roads, leading to safety issues.

- Another important issue has been keeping the open outdoor space at Patrick Henry. There's a minimal difference in the open space across the various options.
- It provides multiple entry points along Taney which will help streamline traffic and drop off/pick up times.
- Residents have had issues crossing the Latham/Taney intersection due to traffic and illegal U turns there. The bus loop and kiss and ride are on Taney before drivers reach this intersection, so it should cut down on congestion at the intersection.
- Parents can turn around in the kiss and ride so U turns will not be needed on Taney, and traffic will be more streamlined.
- There's a current safety issue with children being dropped off on Taney, and the kiss and ride takes these cars off of Taney.
- Bus traffic is separated from car traffic.
- A smaller story wing faces the residential street and the higher scale part of the building is near Foxchase, which is similarly scaled.
- The rec playground, basketball court and inter-play are visible from the street and to the neighborhood, which is good for the safety of the students and residents who want to use these after school hours.
- The play spaces are easily accessible to students and no roads or parking lots need to be crossed.
- The entrance to the Rec Center is more visible from the street and this option provides the best separation and distinct identities of the rec center and the school.
- In terms of open space, Option A provides some setback and green space along Latham and nice open yard space along Taney.
- Option A has been the clear preference among many different groups of community members at the Advisory Group and Community meetings.

A couple of concerns/questions regarding Option A are:

- We must ensure that the Rec Center parking does not spillover onto Latham St. The houses nearby don't have garages so street parking is needed by local residents.
- Option A requires phasing but hopefully this is acceptable and will not deter anyone from this option. This school is going to be here for a very long time and it is important to build something that works for the school and community.
- An additional concern is whether 3 entrances are too many on Taney. However, I think this argument fails to note that rec center traffic should not have an impact during drop off hours. Any rec center traffic will begin after the students are in school, and the majority of the rec center will be closed to the public during the after school program.

Option B:

- This option does include multiple entrances and parking lots, but it is not acceptable to place a parking lot along Latham St. As noted before, Latham is a narrow residential street and an increase in traffic due to the parking lot would be a safety concern for residents, and parents and students going back and forth to the school.
- It is a safety concern to place an unmonitored parking lot along the woods.
- The rec entrance and rec play are not easily visible in this option.
- Students would have to cross parking lots and roads to reach some play spaces.
- A two story wing faces Latham.
- This has been the least preferred option at the community and advisory group meetings.

Option C:

- This option does include multiple entrances and parking lots, but it is not acceptable to place the bus loop along Latham St. As noted before, Latham is a narrow residential street and an increase in traffic due to the bus loop would be a safety concern for residents, and parents and students going back and forth to the school.
- It was noted at the Advisory Group meeting that the bus loop could be moved, which would be a positive change. However, the bus loop should not be replaced by a parking lot for traffic and safety reasons.
- The play spaces and basketball court in this option are not easily visible from the street which is a safety issue when using them after hours.
- There is wasted green space in the middle of the triangle parking lot.
- There is no clear separation of the rec center vs. the school within the building.
- A two story wing faces Latham.

Thank you for your time and please let me know if you have any comments or feedback.

Regards,
Mary Biegel
811 N. Latham St.
(703)212-8041

- Attachment: [advisory-20160302-presentation.pdf](#)
- Expected Response Date: Monday, March 28

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