

9  
9-12-20

## OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

### MEMORANDUM

September 11, 2020

**TO:** Mark B. Jinks, City Manager

**FROM:** Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools *GC*

**SUBJECT:** Douglas MacArthur Modernization Project Budget

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Thank you and your staff for such great collaboration on the Douglas MacArthur Modernization Project, which is set to go before the City Council for Development Special Use Permit approval this Saturday, September 12, 2020.

Prior to approving this design, ACPS wants to be transparent about the budget for this project based on early cost estimates we are receiving from our construction management team. The current CIP funded budget is \$77.5 million. It is important to note that the Douglas MacArthur school may require an additional CIP budget above that for approximately **\$5-7 million**, a little less than 10% of the total project budget. There are several reasons for this potential cost escalation including:

- Increased site costs due to site constraints and geothermal well installation
- Parking garage costs exceeding budget due to site and building orientation and increased spaces to accommodate all users
- Increased square footage to accommodate specialized instruction program
- Increased construction costs due to schedule, COVID-19 implications and general inflation

While having a design currently outside of our budget is never the intent, please note that our collective staff members have been working collaboratively on value management. Our value management efforts have lessened the potential cost exposure by approximately \$10 million since May 2020. This savings has been achieved by changing materials, eliminating operable partitions in classrooms, reducing hallway square footage, exploring multiple parking garage iterations, choosing more cost effective materials and eliminating a custom canopy design. Additionally, ACPS has identified other CIP projects totaling up to as much as \$3 million that could potentially be re-prioritized, shifting funding to this project. I am confident that our team will continue on this path to reduce the potential additional request. Due to the type of construction management agreement we have pursued on this project, we are not

finalizing the construction costs at this time and have several more months of work to get costs down before negotiating a guaranteed maximum price.

Regarding net-zero energy questions received during the Planning Commission meeting on September 1, 2020, ACPS does not currently have included in its estimate the cost for purchase and installation of photovoltaic panels. Should this be required as part of this project, ACPS consultants estimate that this could be approximately \$1-2 million upfront cost for purchase and installation which could be saved in utility costs over 10-15 years. In the case this is determined to be a requirement, ACPS and its team are exploring public-private agreements that could allow for an alternate entity to support the upfront costs of the PV panels. There is no anticipated impact to the schedule based on this potential requirement at this time.

I appreciate this opportunity to inform you of where the project budget is right now and can assure you that our team will be making every effort to reduce this cost going forward. Again, I sincerely thank you and your team for your support through this fast-paced and complex project and we look forward to our continued collaboration on this community asset for our students and families.



9  
9-12-20

## Gloria Sitton

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**From:** James Byrnes <jimbyrnes50@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 11, 2020 4:29 PM  
**To:** Gloria Sitton  
**Cc:** James Byrnes; CCPCA Board - Internal; newmacarthur@acps.k12.va.us; board@acps.k12.va.us; Elliot Rhodeside  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]City Council Public Hearing - Docket No. 9  
  
**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear Ms. Sitton:

1. Per the instructions on the Docket - Final for the 9/12/2020 City Council Public Hearing, I am submitting written comments on Docket No. 9 (21-0201): Rezoning #2020-00002 and DSUP #2020-00010 (Douglas MacArthur Elementary School). My comments are as follows.

### 2. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE MACARTHUR SCHOOL PROJECT

- I found the statements in the Staff Report overzealous with respect to the Community involvement in the MacArthur School project. I cannot speak for the involvement of the Advisory Group (is this Group considered a part of the Community?); however, I have participated in all Community meetings since the late Fall 2019 and the presentation materials have been very minimal and lacking in detail.
- The Community had been asked to consider very limited elements of the design of the new Building such as color palette; canopy redesign; and minor changes to site circulation. None of these issues have any significant impact on the final design.
- At the 5/28/2020 Community Input meeting, the Schematic level Site Plan showed significant changes in the Building design which degraded the approved "Forest Concept". Community criticism of the revised design was not well received by ACPS and, in fact, the Community was told that it was too late to modify the design. It's a tad unfair to unilaterally change the approved Concept and then ignore the Community.
- ACPS needs to completely restructure their policies and procedures on Community involvement on all current and future ACPS major projects. "Checking the box" on Community involvement is not acceptable.

### 3. FAR (FLOOR AREA RATIO)

- I'm not totally conversant with the current Zoning Ordinance but it makes no sense to review the DSUP at the final stage of project approval and need a Zoning Text Amendment in order to consider and approve a major project (the new MacArthur School).
- When the Budget for the MacArthur School project was approved several years ago, the budget package must have included a preliminary gross square footage for the new Building, based on the proposed student population of 850. The FAR for the new project should have been calculated at Budget submission (since the area of the site was known) and the need for an amendment through the Planning Commission should have been initiated at that time. Why did we wait until the 11th hour to process such an amendment?
- There is no expectation that the DSUP would not be approved; therefore, a FAR amendment should not have been addressed so late in the game.

### 4. DEVELOPMENT SPECIAL USE PERMIT #2020-00010

- It's unfortunate that many of the positive attributes of the approved "Forest Concept" were eliminated in the final design of the new Building. The east facade of the new Building is jammed up against Janneys Lane with

very little Community gathering space to welcome the students and the Community to this new School. The Classroom Building was separated into two Wings which increases the floor area; the exterior envelope square footage; creates inefficient circulation; and does not allow efficient use of shared spaces.

- While the project may achieve LEED GOLD certification, if ACPS applies for the certification, the project demonstrates a lack of attention to energy efficiency; increased construction costs with no benefit to the Program; increased operating costs over the life of the Building (50 years); and limited opportunities for interior renovations in the future.
- **NET ZERO:** The Planning Commission complained, at their 8/27/2020 Public Hearing, that the project was not a NET ZERO project. ACPS has consistently stated at all of the Community meetings that the project is "NET ZERO READY" which I assume to mean that the infrastructure to support PV (photovoltaic) panels is in the present project but the installation of PV panels would be funded and installed in a future project. You can't "have your cake and eat it too". I recommend that the City Council encourage ACPS to submit a project in their 2021-2022 Budget for a project to install the PV panels before completion of the new Building. I also recommend that ACPS consider an ADD ALTERNATE to the present construction Bid Package for installation of the PV panels. With this approach, ACPS will receive a competitive bid for the PV panel installation and if the low Bid is within their Budget, the panels can be installed prior to occupancy. If funds are not available for the panels, ACPS will have a good price to include in their budget package for the PV panel project.
- **CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY (C of O):** The Planning Commission also discussed, at the 8/27/2020 Hearing, whether or not ACPS could obtain a "C of O" without the PV panels in place at time of completion of construction of the new Building. A "C of O" is issued upon completion of the construction; acceptance of the work by the Fire Marshall and City Building Code officials (Mechanical, Electrical, etc.). PV panels have no bearing on the safe occupancy of the Building. PV panels represent an alternate source of power for the Building. Power for the Building is provided by the Utility (Dominion Energy) and the PV panels (if installed on day-one) backfeed power into the grid which reduces the demand from the Utility. Receipt of the "C of O" should not be conditional.

5. There seems to be the need for some evaluation of the policies and procedures for processing major ACPS projects. The City should work with ACPS to refine this process.

Thank you,

James Byrnes  
300 Cambridge Road  
Community Member  
Clover College Park Civic Association - Board Member  
[jimbyrnes50@gmail.com](mailto:jimbyrnes50@gmail.com)  
703-577-1482

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9  
9-12-20

**Gloria Sitton**

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**From:** John Chapman  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 12, 2020 11:25 AM  
**To:** City Council  
**Subject:** Fwd: [EXTERNAL]Fwd: DMAG: Concerns about on-property traffic flow

Just got this email

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Bill Pfister <wcpfister@gmail.com>  
**Date:** September 12, 2020 at 11:24:05 AM EDT  
**To:** Justin Wilson <justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov>, John Chapman <john.taylor.chapman@alexandriava.gov>, Canek Aguirre <aguirre.canek@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]Fwd: DMAG: Concerns about on-property traffic flow

This version has my (1st grade MS Paint skills) renderings of traffic flow alternatives.

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Bill Pfister <wcpfister@gmail.com>  
**Date:** Tue, Aug 18, 2020 at 12:26 PM  
**Subject:** DMAG: Concerns about on-property traffic flow  
**To:** paul youmbi <paul.youmbi@acps.k12.va.us>, Erika Lehman <elehman@dlrgroup.com>, Erika L. Gulick <erika.gulick@acps.k12.va.us>, Tiffany Pache <tiffany.pache@acps.k12.va.us>  
**Cc:** Bill Pfister (Garmin Contact) <wcpfister@gmail.com>, <rgore@campagnacenter.org>, Lisa Porter <lporter78@gmail.com>, Mindy Lyle <mindylyle@comcast.net>, Kelly Booz Booz <kbooz@aft.org>, jeanette chuck <jeanette.chuck@gmail.com>, <gdiaz@arha.us>, Edith S. Hawkins <ehawkins@campagnacenter.org>, Elliot Rhodeside <elliotr@rhiplaces.com>, <danacolors@gmail.com>, Amy Jackson <Amy.Jackson@alexandriava.gov>, margaret lorber <margaret.lorber@acps.k12.va.us>, Kristina Seppala <kristina@camelbackstrategy.com>, Penny Hairston <penny.hairston@acps.k12.va.us>

It recently came to my attention that several teachers have concerns with the traffic flow, specifically related to student drop-off and the teacher / staff access to the underground parking. Further, I was told they have been voicing these concerns to the project team for some time and feel their concerns have been dismissed without adequate consideration or explanation. I personally assumed that the project team and traffic engineers had done their proper due diligence, although it doesn't appear these issues have been appropriately addressed. For example, an issue I raised and several others supported is the additional sets of crosswalks without a stoplight at the west end of the property on Janneys Lane is both an administrative impossibility (ACPS staff are not equipped to enforce traffic and we already have an extreme deficit of crossing guard professionals) and a horrible accident in-the-making.

Setting aside the actual interchange(s) from the parking driveways and Janneys Lane, there are two specific concerns:

1. ACPS Employees are currently assumed to drive in a passing lane next to student drop-off, which is not a safe situation, especially if parents also use this passing lane.

Although parents are instructed not to do so, they still exit their vehicles on the left to assist students on the right, which introduces parents to flow-through traffic.

When parents are departing the drop-off indentation / lane, they must crossover the passing lane.

2. Teachers / staff must utilize the student drop-off route to access the parking deck

The design team indicated that teachers / staff are all parked and in the building by the start of drop-off at 7:30am although this is not the reality.

One potential solution is to provide separated access for teachers / staff, such as is illustrated by the attached picture. While it creates additional complexity at the interface with Janneys Lane, it greatly reduces the complexity and risk associated with the current traffic flow. This also provides additional options for traffic flow at the west end of the property. Instead of creating designs that require constant observation and enforcement to ensure compliance, I would much prefer designs that are inherently safer and intuitive, so that the natural behavior is the safe behavior. We absolutely don't want teachers and administrators starting every school day stressed out because they couldn't engineer a better solution for them.

I welcome any thoughts on both the issue of traffic flow itself and also why the concerns voiced by the teachers were not addressed.

Thanks,  
Bill

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Bill Pfister  
[wcpfister@gmail.com](mailto:wcpfister@gmail.com)

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Bill Pfister  
[wcpfister@gmail.com](mailto:wcpfister@gmail.com)

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9  
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John Augustine  
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September 11, 2020

Mayor and City Council  
City of Alexandria  
301 King St. Alexandria, VA. 22314

Re: LETTER OF SUPPORT AND RELATED REQUEST- Support for MacArthur Elementary School  
Redevelopment Plan and Request to Address Unresolved Property Owner Concerns

Dear Mr. Mayor and Members of City Council:

The purpose of this letter is to voice our support for the new MacArthur Elementary School Plan and request that the City address the unresolved concerns with the adjacent property owners. We are one of the immediate next-door neighbors on the eastern side of the school property, and have been so since 2013. MacArthur provided an excellent education for our daughter and son, who both attended all of their elementary school years at MacArthur. We believe the new school will be an improvement to the neighborhood and city.

However, like some of our other neighbors that also share a property border with MacArthur, we not been afforded the opportunity to meet with any of the design team to review the details of the immediate border plans, nor have we received answers to specific questions that we submitted numerous times about how the design would impact the adjacent properties. We are pleased that the plans seem to preserve the existing mature Leyland Cyprus trees on the neighboring Sliver Lot easement (Out Lot A). We would respectfully request that at some point we have the opportunity to meet with the appropriate members of the design team to review any other details of the border area, such as the possibility of mutually agreeable improved fencing along the entire Eastern property border line and a new section of screening trees to the currently exposed properties (Lot 4, Augustine and Lot 5, Smith) beyond Out Lot A to address all privacy, noise, elevation, and drainage concerns related to the adjacent residential properties.

Specifically, we would request that Council modify condition 21 as follows:

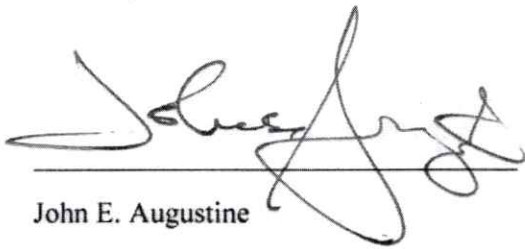
21. Provide material, finishes, and architectural details for all retaining walls, seat walls, decorative walls, and screen walls. Indicate methods for grade transitions, handrails (if required by code), directional changes, above and below grade conditions. Coordinate conditions with adjacent property owners and **extend new perimeter fencing around the athletic field along its entire frontage with adjacent residential properties and add a new section of screening trees to the currently exposed adjacent eastern border residential properties.** Design and construction of all walls shall be to the satisfaction of the Directors of P&Z and T&ES. (P&Z) (T&ES) (Code)\*



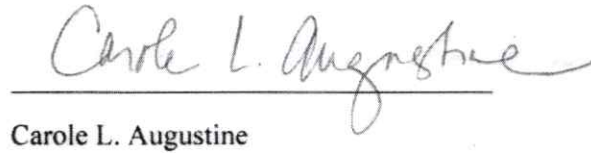
Mayor and City Council  
September 11, 2020  
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Thank you for your consideration of this request, and again we look forward to resolving all concerns associated with the redevelopment plan and moving forward to implementation.

Sincerely,



John E. Augustine



Carole L. Augustine

Cc:

Stewart Bartley  
Christina Bartley  
Ken Wire, Esq.  
Dirk H. Geratz  
Karl Moritz  
Arthur Smith  
Tracie Smith  
Jan Baran  
Kathryn Baran



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9-12-20

Arthur A. Smith  
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September 11, 2020

Mayor and City Council  
City of Alexandria  
301 King St. Alexandria, VA 22314

Re: LETTER OF SUPPORT AND RELATED REQUEST - Support for MacArthur Elementary School  
Redevelopment Plan and Request to Address Unresolved Property Owner Concerns

Dear Mr. Mayor and Members of City Council:

Thank you for all your efforts in planning, designing, and helping getting the new school project on its way. We currently have two children at MacArthur and both are doing well and thriving at the school. Unfortunately, our fourth grade son will not get a chance to enjoy the new school but hopefully our first grade daughter will. The building design does look beautiful and it will be a great addition to the community.

As discussed in our previous communications with Paul Youmbi and Erika Gulick, we do have concerns regarding privacy and noise to existing property owners that border the eastern border of the MacArthur property. Therefore, we respectfully request that at some point we have the opportunity to meet with the appropriate members of the design team to review any other details of the border area, such as the possibility of mutually agreeable improved fencing along the entire eastern property border line and a new section of screening trees to the currently exposed properties (Lot 4, Augustine and Lot 5, Smith) beyond the Sliver Lot easement to address all privacy, noise, elevation, and drainage concerns related to the adjacent residential properties.

Specifically, we would request that Council modify condition 21 as follows:

21. Provide material, finishes, and architectural details for all retaining walls, seat walls, decorative walls, and screen walls. Indicate methods for grade transitions, handrails (if required by code), directional changes, above and below grade conditions. Coordinate conditions with adjacent property owners and **extend new perimeter fencing around the athletic field along its entire frontage with adjacent residential properties and add a new section of screening trees**

to the currently exposed adjacent eastern border residential properties.

Design and construction of all walls shall be to the satisfaction of the Directors of P&Z and T &ES. (P&Z) (T&ES) (Code)\*

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and again we look forward to resolving all concerns associated with the redevelopment plan and moving forward to implementation.

Sincerely,



Arthur A. Smith



Tracie H. Smith

Cc:

Stewart Bartley

Christina Bartley

Dirk H. Geratz

Karl Moritz

Arthur Smith

Tracie Smith

Jan Baran

Kathryn Baran

9  
9-12-20

**R. Stewart Bartley**  
**I. Christina Bartley**  
1005 Janneys Lane  
Alexandria, VA 22302  
(703) 623-4565  
StewartBartley@mac.com

September 11, 2020

Mayor and City Council  
City of Alexandria  
301 King St.  
Alexandria, VA. 22314

Re: LETTER OF SUPPORT – MacArthur Elementary School Redevelopment Plan

Dear Mr. Mayor and Members of City Council:

The purpose of this letter is to voice our strong support for the current plan for redevelopment of MacArthur Elementary School. We are one of the immediate next-door neighbors on the eastern side of the school property, and have been so since 1997. The school provided an excellent education for both of our children and has been an excellent neighbor for the past 23 + years. We are excited about the new design and think that it will be a big improvement to the neighborhood.

Our only concern is that we have not been afforded the opportunity to meet with any of the design team to review the details of the immediate border plans. We are pleased that the plans seem to preserve the existing mature Leyland Cyprus trees on the neighboring Sidefield lot, over which we have an ingress and egress easement. We would respectfully request that at some point we have the opportunity to meet with the appropriate members of the design team to review any other details of this border area, such as the possibility of mutually agreeable improved fencing between the trees and the new playgrounds.

Specifically, we would request that Council modify condition 21 as follows:

21. Provide material, finishes, and architectural details for all retaining walls, seat walls, decorative walls, and screen walls. Indicate methods for grade transitions, handrails (if required by code), directional changes, above and below grade conditions. Coordinate with adjacent conditions **and extend the perimeter fencing around the athletic field along its entire frontage with adjacent residential properties**. Design and construction of all walls shall be to the satisfaction of the Directors of P&Z and T&ES. (P&Z) (T&ES) (Code) \*



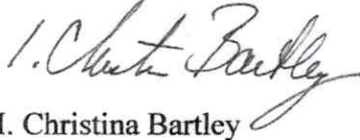
Mayor and City Council  
September 11, 2020  
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Thank you for your consideration, and again we look forward to implementation of the redevelopment plan.

Sincerely



R. Stewart Bartley



I. Christina Bartley

Cc: Ken Wire, Esq.  
Dirk H. Geratz  
Karl Moritz