



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

ARLINGTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

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February 17, 2017

Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Suite 300
Arlington, Virginia 22201

SUBJECT: WRAP Implementation

A. Wilson School

1) **U-3468-16-1** Arlington County School Board for an approximately 176,000 sq. ft. new school (Wilson School) with a design capacity of approximately 775 students and associated facilities, with modification of zoning ordinance requirements for height, parking, setbacks and other modifications as necessary to achieve the proposed development plan in the S-3A zoning district.

2) **Ordinance of Vacation** for the vacation of two portions of public rights of way abutting the Wilson School property located at 1601 Wilson Boulevard.

3) **Consideration of consistency with the Arlington County Comprehensive Plan of proposed public school**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Planning Commission recommends the County Board:

Approve the subject use permit for an approximately 180,000 square foot new school and associated structures with modifications to the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance (ACZO) requirements for building setbacks, to require no on-site parking, to allow parking spaces to be located off-site, and defer the consideration of the proposed 93 space parking garage until removal of the temporary fire station from the site, subject to the conditions of the staff report with the following amendments:

1. Amend the use permit to move the elevator out of the linear park to a location adjacent to either the Wilson School or the Penzance West Building;
2. Amend the use permit to ensure that the model of the original Wilson School called for in Condition #38E be a permanent fixture in the school and not a temporary or moveable

P.C. #26.A.B.

element; be located in a place of prominence in or near the main entrance lobby of the New Wilson School so as to be visible from the public sidewalk on Wilson Boulevard adjacent to the School; be of a scale that the model's details can be clearly discerned from the sidewalk by passersby and that the model be illuminated so as to be visible from the public sidewalk at all times of day.

3. Amend the use permit to ensure that the full tree replacement required in Condition #21 be met on-site.
4. Amend the use permit to require applicant to redesign the 18th street access for the Stratford program if the parking garage under the field is not built.
5. Amend the use permit to request that APS provide documentation of compliance with the requirements established by the Maintenance and Replacement section of the Final Landscape Plan Condition 21D to ensure that trees and other landscaping across the site remain healthy for the life of the use permit.
6. Amend the MOA between DPR and APS for public use of the facilities require the gymnasium have sufficient ability to host reasonable number of spectators for the activities there.
7. Amend the use permit conditions to ensure that once the MOA between the County and APS is complete it is subject to a full public review by PRC and the Planning Commission prior to demolition of the Wilson School.
8. Amend the conditions to include a condition that would prohibit APS from putting trailers on public open space at the school since they've chosen to limit the number of seats at the school.

The Planning Commission

Found the vacations of two portions of public rights of way abutting the Wilson School property located at 1601 Wilson Boulevard to be substantially in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.

Dear County Board Members:

The Planning Commission heard this item at its February 13, 2017 public hearing and again at its February 15, 2017 public hearing. Michael Cullen, Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development (CPHD) Planning gave a presentation on the background of the proposed amendments and Robert Gibson, Department of Environmental Services (DES) – Transportation gave an overview of related parking. Also present was Rebeccah Ballo, CPHD-Historic Preservation and Linda Collier, DES – Real Estate Bureau.

Jeff Chambers, Director of Design and Construction, Arlington Public Schools (APS) presented an overview of the Wilson School project and the architect, Jack Chen from Leo A. Daly

Architects, gave an overview of the design of the building. Also present was Jennifer Xu, Project Manager, APS.

REVIEW PROCESS

The project was reviewed by the Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC), Transportation Commission (TC), Historic and Landmarks Review Board (HALRB), Environment and Energy Conservation Commission (E2C2), Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC), and Urban Forestry (UFC).

Caroline Haynes, PRC Chair, stated the PRC opposes the parking garage.

Steve Campbell, UFC, urges that all of the remaining 20 trees should be planted at the Wilson site, species selection is important for the rooftop tree, more medium trees be planted on the rooftop, and terrace plantings should have a well-designed maintenance program. They believe wind studies should be conducted.

Dick Woodruff, HALRB, supported preservation of the Wilson building. In lieu of preservation, they support a larger model of the building that will be in a permanent location that is visible to the public.

Commissioner Schroll reported the TC voted 4-0-1 to support the staff recommendation to defer the parking garage and unanimously to support all related vacation. They discussed the improvement in urban design from elimination of a garage and also the need to have some of those ADA spaces replaced on-site.

PUBLIC SPEAKERS

There were eight public speakers for this item.

1. Jim Huryz, Fairlington resident, said Abingdon is presently being renovated and expanded and has reported several use permit condition violations to the County. Smart growth crams as many vehicles people housing events and activities as possible onto every site developed or redeveloped under New Urbanism. It is apparent the County's population will continue to grow. The staff report is about vehicle trips and parking. His neighbors are concerned about being overwhelmed by people in vehicles after Abingdon is finished. He wants a moratorium on New Urbanist planning until 21st Century paradigms can replace mixed use infill.
2. Audrey Clement said Trump epitomizes tasteless wealth. The historic postal pavilion converted to a Trump hotel is a statement in understudied elegance and it is remarkable that Trump can have more taste than Arlington elite's intent on trashing historic value of the existing Wilson School. Hours are spent discussing parking spaces although the County has a policy intent on a car-free diet.
3. Mr. Debor said everyone is wrong on the design of this wackadoodle fan shape design without preserving any historic relevance of this school. The key architectural elements and original drawings still exist and could be used to restore the school. The story of the

Wilson School is one of the most important in Virginia. Citizens understand the importance of the school as an important part of the history of the nation. The Board should defer the vote for 90 days to have a team from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to evaluate and make a recommendation.

4. Melissa McCracken, BLPC Chair, said they have supported a parking garage at the site as there are needs throughout the day and weekends. There are an itinerant group of people coming and going to the school site throughout the day. The public transportation data for this site should be more comparable to Washington-Lee.
5. Stan Karson, President, RAFOM, said their neighborhood has never faced a developer like APS who has shown nothing but contempt for the community involved. They have been asking for inclusion of the original building into the current design and at every turn they have not received support.
6. Stuart Stein agrees that historic preservation has been ignored and supports the position of the UFC. The community has been disappointed with the process overall with the exception of the support of the HALRB.
7. Scott Brinitzer is a landscape designer and thinks this design is forward looking and the idea of integrating of the different geographic areas of Virginia and into the school room is forward thinking. He is concerned that this school succeeds and its potential is maintained and how it relates to the building next to it. The connection between these buildings is key to the success of the idea of the design of the school.
8. Terri Prell, North Rosslyn Civic Association, supports Urban Forestry and supports on-site parking because there are part-time staff that will need parking. The MOA does not give the community very much access to the theatre. The path between this school and the park is horrendous with an elevator in between. She also believes there should be wind studies.

PLANNING COMMISSION DISCUSSION

PFRC Report: Commissioner Sockwell reported PFRC met most recently on February 1, 2017 where the issues discussed included the appropriate number and location of parking. There were concerns about the athletic field and how the parking garage elevates the playing field. PFRC did not like the elevator and many members suggested a tunnel or another creative solution to the elevator issue. Commissioner Sockwell was frustrated about the lack of detail about how the site would work. An example is the MOA with DPR or conditions of the projects. PFRC members liked the architecture and it would be a landmark for Arlington and would serve a placemaking function for Rosslyn.

Parking

i) TDM

Commissioner Schroll asked about TDM. APS provided a slide showing TDM benefits at \$60 stipend each month, transit FSA of \$255 and Parking FSA of \$255 for full-time staff.

Commissioner Schroll suggested APS should capture how much money people are spending on transit.

ii) APS Garage (92 spaces)

Commissioner McSweeney asked why the garage was located under the field and not the school. Architect answered it would need to be deeper under the school and without support columns it is more efficient.

Commissioner Siegel asked what will determine whether the garage would need to be built in the future. Mr. Gibson responded that prior to either the full field or garage, applicant would have to come back in to amend the project at which point either option would be evaluated. The reason behind that recommendation is that with 16-28 months of operation, data could be collected about the numbers of spaces being rented, the demand, and how TDM and transit are affecting the drive rates for the school to see if the need is for 25-50 spaces or if it is better to use off-site or to build on-site.

Commissioner Iacomini stated there are budget implications for deferring the garage.

Commissioner Iacomini asked why they would need the elevator in the park if the garage is under the field. Mr. Chambers responded the elevator would be an interim condition.

Commissioner Schroll asked why they would build the entrance in the same way, with or without the garage. Mr. Chambers responded the height of the garage is related to the park and the slope is intended to be used as a seating area. Mr. Schroll would like to see the square footage of that sloped area. Mr. Chambers responded that staff did not have the figure available.

Commissioner Gearin asked about the cost of leasing the spaces versus building the garage and would like to know the difference in playable field space with and without the garage.

Commissioner McSweeney said the cost of renting the spaces is 33 years' worth of parking.

Commissioner Hughes asked if APS had conducted a Lease vs. Purchase analysis using its borrowed monies discount rate. Mr. Chambers confirmed APS has not.

iii) Penzance Garage: Elevator

Commissioner Gutshall asked about the options that were explored for the elevator location and about the punch through. Mr. Chambers responded other options were explored but were found not to meet the security and access needs for their students.

Commissioner Gearin asked who would be able to access the Penzance parking after hours. Mr. Chambers responded they would work with DPR on access options.

Architecture

Commissioner Iacomini suggested producing new elevations for the County Board to accurately reflect the materials on the exterior of the building. The applicant agreed and said the materials had been changed for materiality and cost.

Commissioner Gutshall asked if stairs on the terrace is required for egress. Mr. Chen responded the stairs on the outside are provided as an extra means of egress but are not the sole means of egress.

Capacity

Commissioner Hughes wanted to confirm that the building is not being built to support additional structure on top of the existing structure to allow an increase in capacity. Mr. Chambers confirmed it was not. Commissioner Hughes asked about adding capacity. Mr. Chambers said the building is being designed for the current programs and the schools would do internal modification or change of program to increase capacity. Commissioner Hughes asked why we were not getting those additional seats now. Mr. Chambers responded because it was being built for the HB Woodlawn and Stratford programs.

Commissioner McSweeney asked why they are building a lower school with less capacity. Mr. Chambers responded for student safety and the difference in cost for a high-rise design.

Commissioner Iacomini stated there are a lot of functions that need space such as technological, offices, and support staff. There could have been some collocation here and more creative use to go up higher for County use. We have the ability to get more capacity and its crazy to not go up at this site.

Site Design

i) Landscape Plan

Commissioner Schroll asked about the tree range and asked if different size or type of tree account for that and have they studied where the extra trees could go. Mr. Chen responded they are pushing themselves to find additional location for extra trees.

Commissioner McSweeney asked about planting of medium trees and if the roof would be design to take that extra load for bigger trees. The applicant responded they are upping the number of trees and it is a balance between the tree and soil requirements.

Commissioner Siegel asked about maintenance and related budget for the roof. Mr. Chambers responded they have a contract for maintenance for the first two years and they would contract it out afterward. Students will have programs related to the green roof and gardens but they won't rely on students for maintenance.

Commissioner Schroll asked how the County documents compliance with the final landscape plan and maintenance. Mr. Cullen responded there is inspection afterward by the Urban Forestry staff.

ii) Wind study

Commissioner Siegel emphasized the need for wind studies in the Rosslyn corridor. Marco Rivero responded staff would take that into consideration in the future.

iii) Offsite fields

Commissioner Gearin asked for the specifics of the park referenced in the License Agreement and how it will work in process. Mr. Cullen responded that it is really Dawson Terrace or Rocky Run. Mr. Gibson responded that question was part of the discussion at the County Board during execution of the License Agreement.

Commissioner McSweeney asked if there is space within the school for weight rooms and treadmills. Mr. Chen responded there are two gyms plus exercise room and treadmills and other equipment.

Historic Preservation

Commissioner Iacomini asked about placement of the model and said the placement in the library does not catch attention or catch the eye of a passerby. It has been a landmark in Arlington for a long time and it's important to be in the main lobby, visible from the sidewalk, and illuminated in the evening including a significant base (three feet and sufficiently broad). The architect may not like in their lobby but it gives a touchstone to the community and it is about something to give back to the community since we're taking something away.

MOA

Commissioner Schroll asked about when the MOA be completed. Mr. Rivero responded there are two MOAs on the table right now. APS and their counsel are reviewing those documents and the final will be attached to the County Board staff report. Commissioner Schroll said it is frustrating they don't have it and don't get to look at it. Commissioner Schroll asked if there have been any changes to the outline from PFRC. Mr. Rivero responded things have not changed. Commissioner Iacomini asked about the reaction to it and Commissioner Schroll responded they were frustrated.

i) Public access to interior of school

Commissioner McSweeney asked about public access to some of the terrace roofs and Mr. Chambers responded public has access to the level two terrace via elevator, stairs and exterior stairs.

Commissioner McSweeney wanted to ensure the theatre and other public spaces in the school were accessible to the public after hours. Mr. Rivero responded there are other spaces part of the MOA but close coordination with APS is required as those are heavily used spaces after hours.

ii) Gym spectators

Commissioner Gutshall said the Discovery gym is unsafe and inconvenient to watch basketball due to the chairs. He sees similar dimensions for this school and asked for an explanation of how spectators would participate in that use. Mr. Chambers responded it is designed as a physical education gym and they don't have organized sports at the school. Commissioner Gutshall said this is an example of something that needs to be done better but as a County, the point is to design things that are multi-purpose facilities and two more feet on the sideline of the court would make a huge difference. Commissioner Gutshall asked if there is any room to add space to that gym and Mr. Chen responded there isn't room to expand. Commissioner Hughes responded this is an element that limits support for other programs and any increase in capacity since there is no room for organized sports.

Site Plan Conditions

i. Penzance sale

The Planning Commission asked what happens if there is a sale of the Penzance property and staff responded the conditions and agreements with Penzance are tied to the land.

ii) 18th St closure

Commissioner Gearin asked about how the closure of 18th Street will work during the school day and if there will be limited parking. Mr. Gibson responded that people would be able to leave the area – it would be do not enter, similar to Discovery in the afternoon. APS could deploy other methods to make that crystal clear. Commissioner Gearin asked if 18th Street will be closed for off-site PE for Stratford students. Mr. Gibson responded arrival and dismissal have been the main discussion and an on-site bus and associated traffic control would be managed by APS.

Commissioner McSweeney asked about changes to the closures and how the community is notified. Mr. Chambers responded they reach out to the community if there are changes to operations. Mr. Gibson responded these are currently estimated times and in addition to street signs, APS is required to develop operational plans and after a year they have to submit a report to the County on operations and again once many operations are moved to Quinn.

PLANNING COMMISSION MOTION

Commissioner Schroll made a motion that the Planning Commission recommend that the County Board approve the subject use permit for an approximately 180,000 square foot new school (Wilson School) and associated structures with modifications to the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance (ACZO) requirements for building setbacks, to require no on-site parking, to allow parking spaces to be located off-site, and defer consideration of the proposed 93-space parking garage until removal of the temporary fire station from the site, subject to the conditions of the staff report dated February 25, 2017; and confirm the proposed public facility is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Gearin seconded the motion.

Commissioner Hughes made a motion to amend the main motion that the Planning Commission recommend the County Board defer action on the Wilson School Site. In doing so, in order to preserve the limited land available in our county, the Applicant will return with a proposal for a school that meets the vision of WRAPS and delivers 1300 New Secondary Seats at the Wilson Site. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Iacomini.

Commissioner Hughes spoke to the motion and said he cannot recommend approval of a school that does not meet the possibility of the site and it is doing the County a disservice by not fulfilling the potential at this site given the need and competition for space for schools.

Commissioner Siegel spoke in support of the sentiment but was torn since the decision to move forward with the current school design was made during an extensive public process and ultimately by the School Board. It doesn't feel appropriate for the PC to vote against a design approved in a public forum.

Commissioner Schroll added that PFRC had discussed this issue and was divided on the design as some people thought it was tall enough and others thought it should be taller.

Commissioner McSweeney agreed that she is torn. As a planning commissioner and former member of the community facilities study, she is aware of the demographics and is torn that APS has decided that on this site they have chosen to accommodate a specific program that is smaller and knowing that APS will be coming forward with another high school, she is worried that they would use this available space. They can't build up similar to other existing schools such as the Reed School. She supports the motion.

Commissioner Iacomini supports the motion.

Commissioner Gutshall agreed with the sentiment but he won't support the motion because PC is an advisory commission to the County Board and not the School Board. Although it is about land use, the School Board made this decision. Moving forward they have to do better. The final point is that if they were to make this motion they would forgo opportunity to provide substantive comment moving forward to the Board.

Commissioner Schroll agrees and is frustrated they are leaving height on the table and the suggestions about joint use. It sets a rough precedent then when the next high school comes, we won't be able to build up. He believes they should put Commissioner Hughes motion on the table and consider the other items on the table.

Commissioner Schroll made a motion to table the motion to amend. The motion died for lack of a second.

Mr. Duffy added there has been a multi-phased process and guidelines were considered. The CIP was considered by the School Board and ultimately by the County Board. While the issues raised are important but we have a facility that has moved through the process and there is a need to open this school by September 2019.

The Planning Commission voted against the motion 3-5 with Commissioners Hughes, Iacomini, and McSweeney in support and Commissioners Siegel, Gutshall, Schroll, Gearin, and Lantelme opposed.

The Planning Commission took up amendments to the main motion.

1. Commissioner Schroll moved that the Planning Commission recommend the County Board amend the use permit to move the elevator out of the linear park to a location adjacent to either the Wilson School or the Penzance West Building; Commissioner Siegel seconded the motion.

The Planning Commission voted 8-0 in support of the amendment with Commissioners Gutshall, Siegel, Schroll, Iacomini, Hughes, Gearin, McSweeney, and Lantelme in support.

2. Commissioner Schroll moved that the Planning Commission recommend the County Board amend the use permit to ensure that the model of the original Wilson School called for in Condition #38E be a permanent fixture in the school and not a temporary or

moveable element; be located in a place of prominence in or near the main entrance lobby of the New Wilson School so as to be visible from the public sidewalk on Wilson Boulevard adjacent to the School; be of a scale that the model's details can be clearly discerned from the sidewalk by passersby and that the model be illuminated so as to be visible from the public sidewalk at all times of day. Commissioner Iacomini seconded the motion.

The Planning Commission voted 8-0 in support of the amendment with Commissioners Gutshall, Siegel, Schroll, Iacomini, Hughes, Gearin, McSweeney, and Lantelme in support.

3. Commissioner Schroll moved that the Planning Commission recommend the County Board amend the use permit to ensure that the full tree replacement required in Condition #21 be met on-site. Commissioner Gearin seconded the motion.

The Planning Commission voted 7-1 in support of the amendment with Commissioners Gutshall, Siegel, Schroll, Iacomini, Hughes, Gearin, and Lantelme in support and Commissioner McSweeney opposed.

4. Commissioner Schroll moved that the Planning Commission recommend the County Board amend the use permit to require applicant to redesign the 18th street access for the Stratford program if the parking garage under the field is not built. Commissioner McSweeney seconded the motion.

The Planning Commission voted 7-1 in support of the amendment with Commissioners Gutshall, Siegel, Schroll, Iacomini, Hughes, Gearin, McSweeney, and Commissioner Lantelme opposed.

5. Commissioner Schroll moved that the Planning Commission recommend the County Board amend the use permit to request that APS provide documentation of compliance with the requirements established by the Maintenance and Replacement section of the Final Landscape Plan Condition 21D to ensure that trees and other landscaping across the site remain healthy for the life of the use permit. Commissioner Siegel seconded them motion.

The Planning Commission voted 8-0 in support of the amendment with Commissioners Gutshall, Siegel, Schroll, Iacomini, Hughes, Gearin, McSweeney, and Lantelme in support.

6. Commissioner Gutshall moved the Planning Commission recommend the County Board MOA between DPR and APS for public use of the facilities require the gymnasium have sufficient ability to host reasonable number of spectators for the activities there. Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion.

The Planning Commission voted 8-0 in support of the amendment with Commissioners Gutshall, Siegel, Schroll, Iacomini, Hughes, Gearin, McSweeney, and Lantelme in support.

7. Commissioner Gearin moved the Planning Commission recommend the County Board amend the use permit conditions to ensure that once the MOA between the County and

APS is complete it is subject to a full public review by PRC and the Planning Commission prior to demolition of the Wilson School. Commissioner Schroll seconded the motion.

The Planning Commission voted 8-0 in support of the amendment with Commissioners Gutshall, Siegel, Schroll, Iacomini, Hughes, Gearin, McSweeney, and Lantelme in support.

8. Commissioner McSweeney moved the Planning Commission recommend the County Board amend the conditions to include a condition that would prohibit APS from putting trailers on public open space at the school since they've chosen to limit the number of seats at the school. Commissioner Gutshall seconded the motion.

The Planning Commission voted 8-0 in support of the amendment with Commissioners Gutshall, Siegel, Schroll, Iacomini, Hughes, Gearin, McSweeney, and Lantelme in support.

Main Motion

The Planning Commission voted 7-1 in support of the main motion as amended with Commissioners Gutshall, Siegel, Schroll, Iacomini, Gearin, McSweeney, and Lantelme in support and Commissioner Hughes opposed.

Motion for Wilson School Vacations

Commissioner Schroll moved that the Planning Commission determine that the proposed vacations of portions of public rights of way abutting the Wilson School property located at 1601 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, Virginia (RPC # 16-032-001) as set forth in Attachments 1 and 2 of the staff report dated February 13, 2017, are substantially in accordance with the Master Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Siegel seconded the motion.

The Planning Commission voted 7-1 to support the motion with Commissioners Gutshall, Siegel, Iacomini, Lantelme, Gearin, and Schroll in support and Commissioner Hughes opposed.

Respectfully Submitted,
Arlington County Planning Commission
Erik Gutshall

