

**MINUTES
JAMES CITY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
County Government Center Board Room
101 Mounts Bay Road, Williamsburg, VA 23185
March 21, 2016
7:00 PM**

1. ROLL CALL

Planning Commissioners Present:

Robin Bledsoe
Rich Krapf
Tim O'Connor
Chris Basic
Heath Richardson
John Wright
Danny Schmidt

Staff Present:

Paul Holt, Planning Director
Jose Ribeiro, Senior Planner II
Maxwell Hlavin, Assistant County Attorney

Ms. Robin Bledsoe called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

Ms. Bledsoe welcomed the representatives from Lafayette High School.

2. ANNUAL ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

Ms. Bledsoe opened the floor for nominations for Chair and Vice Chair.

Mr. Krapf nominated Mr. O'Connor for Chair.

In a unanimous voice vote, the Commission elected Mr. O'Connor as Chair, 7-0.

Mr. Schmidt nominated Mr. Wright as Vice Chair.

In a unanimous voice vote, the Commission elected Mr. Wright as Vice Chair, 7-0.

Ms. Bledsoe opened the floor for discussion on adopting the 2016 Calendar.

Mr. Richardson moved to approve the 2016 Calendar.

In a unanimous voice vote, the Commission adopted the 2016 Calendar, 7-0.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Bledsoe noted that the Public Comment period was for topic not pertaining to items on the Public Hearing Agenda.

Ms. Bledsoe opened the Public Comment period.

There being none, Ms. Bledsoe closed the Public Comment.

5. PUBLIC HEARING

a. Review of the FY2017-FY2021 Capital Improvements Program (CIP)

Ms. Bledsoe provided an overview of the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) process as it pertains to the Planning Commission. Ms. Bledsoe stated that pursuant to §15.2-2239 “a local Planning Commission may, and at the direction of the governing body shall, prepare and revise annually a CIP based on the Comprehensive Plan of the locality for a period not to exceed the ensuing five years.” Ms. Bledsoe stated that the Comprehensive Plan *Toward 2035: Leading the Way*, which was recently adopted, includes goals and objectives for schools, parks & recreation, stormwater management, land use and transportation. Ms. Bledsoe further stated that information specific to the Williamsburg-James City County (WJCC) Schools would be found in the section on public facilities on pages PF 1-19. Ms. Bledsoe stated that the Planning Commission received the WJCC Schools CIP for FY 2021-FY 2026 on March 16, 2016. Ms. Bledsoe noted that the majority of that document included items that are considered capital maintenance projects. Ms. Bledsoe stated that those projects are not ranked or voted on by the Planning Commission. Ms. Bledsoe stated that there were 14 projects included in the Plan which would qualify for Planning Commission ranking. Ms. Bledsoe stated that the Planning Commission received applications for 10 projects and could only consider those projects for which applications had been received. Ms. Bledsoe stated that the four projects that were not submitted for consideration were: entrance redesign projects for Rawls Byrd, Stonehouse and James River Elementary Schools and lighting for the practice fields at Lafayette High School.

Mr. José Ribeiro, Senior Planner II, stated that after a series of meetings to discuss and rank CIP requests and to evaluate the projects for consistency with the adopted 2035 Comprehensive Plan, the Policy Committee is forwarding its recommendations to the Planning Commission for consideration. Mr. Ribeiro further stated that 15 applications were received. Of those applications, 10 came from the WJCC Schools and five from various County divisions.

Mr. Ribeiro stated that the Policy Committee uses a standardized set of ranking criteria to prioritize projects. Committee members evaluated each request and produced a numerical score between 10 and 100. Mr. Ribeiro further stated that the scores generated by individual Committee members were then averaged to produce the Committee’s final score and priority. Mr. Ribeiro noted that projects that received the same score also received the same priority ranking. Mr. Ribeiro stated that at its March 3, 2016 meeting, the Committee unanimously recommended forwarding the FY 17-21 CIP priorities to serve as a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Ribeiro stated that staff recommends that the Planning Commission forward these priorities to the Board of Supervisors for consideration during the budget process.

Ms. Bledsoe opened the Public Hearing.

Mr. Frank Polster, 420 Hempstead Road, stated that he supports the FY 2017-FY 2021 Stormwater CIP request. Mr. Polster addressed the Commission on the importance of these projects in meeting MS4 priorities and total maximum daily load requirements. Mr. Polster stated that it is necessary to protect the impacted watersheds from further deterioration. Mr. Polster further stated that poor water quality and flooding are truly a quality of life issue for the County’s citizens, particularly in the Grove community.

Mr. Tinsley Goad, 118 Ferncliff Drive, representing the Lafayette High School Boosters Club, stated that he supports amending the ranking of the two CIP requests for Lafayette High School. Mr. Goad addressed the Commission on the inequities among the high school facilities. Mr. Goad noted that Jamestown High School has a full-auxiliary gym and that the Warhill High School gym is large enough to be partitioned into two full-size gyms, while Lafayette High School has no auxiliary gym and the existing gym is not large

enough to partition. Mr. Goad stated that the only reason Lafayette High School students practice at the Williamsburg Indoor Sports Complex is because the school's own facilities are substandard. Mr. Goad noted that the goal of the last redistricting process was to ensure an equivalent experience for all students, however, it would be difficult to say that there is equity among the three high schools.

Ms. Lisa Lucas, 103 Muirfield, representing the Lafayette High School Parent-Teacher Student Association, addressed the Commission on the need for the auxiliary gym and the improved walking path. Ms. Lucas stated that the lack of facilities creates real disadvantages for the students who have to travel off-site for practice/rehearsal space, rearrange schedules to take advantage of space when it is available or have activities and practices cancelled for inclement weather. Ms. Lucas noted that these disadvantages impede the success of students in all areas of development.

Ms. Kathy Woollum, 121 Tayside, representing the Lafayette High School Athletic Boosters, stated that addressing longstanding facility needs must be a priority. Ms. Woollum provided the Commission with documentation regarding the Lafayette High School Athletic Booster's request to the School Board, noting that the Board's response was initially positive; however, the request ultimately did not receive adequate status. Ms. Woollum further noted that the study of facilities that was used by the School Board in its determinations contained inaccurate data which was obvious on a physical tour of the facilities. Ms. Woollum stated that the goal of providing the Commission with additional data and documentation was to give it the tools to make an informed decision.

Mr. Hap Holm, 107 Leeds, noted appreciation for the Board of Supervisors, Commissioners and staff that participated in the Open House tour. Mr. Holm addressed the Commission on the need for the athletic facilities at Lafayette High School, noting the difficult logistics and administrative burden involved in getting students to the various off-site facilities they must use for practice. Mr. Holm further noted that the additional time involved greatly impacts students' schedules. Mr. Holm noted the effect of sports and other extracurricular programs on the formation of character and requested that the Commissions support the request.

Mr. Brian Erwin, 107 Gullane, addressed the Commission on a proposal to move forward with the auxiliary gym by using the existing plan developed for Grafton High School. Mr. Erwin stated that with this plan, it would be possible to build the gym well under the requested amount. Mr. Erwin stated that no other comparably sized high school in Virginia is challenged by the lack of amenities faced by students, teachers and staff at Lafayette High School. Mr. Erwin requested that the Commission reconsider the CIP priorities in light of the urgent need for facilities at Lafayette High School.

Ms. Kristan Holm, 107 Leeds, addressed the Commission on the disparities between the three high schools. Ms. Holm noted the discrepancies in parcel size, amount of indoor practice space and lighted outdoor fields. Ms. Holm further noted the fiscal and logistical benefits of refurbishing existing fields, providing lighting and constructing both the walking path and gym.

Ms. Channing Wynne, 2519 Snuggles Court, Cheerleading Coach, addressed the Commission on the need for indoor practice space. Ms. Wynne stated that there is no safe space for her competitive teams to practice on a regular schedule. Ms. Wynne stated that the team often holds practice as late as 9 p.m. Ms. Wynne noted that with hard work the team has competed at state level, but is at a disadvantage competing against teams with consistently available practice space. Ms. Wynne requested that the Commission consider making the auxiliary gym a priority.

Mr. Tommy Neville, 204 Blackheath, addressed the Commission on the inequalities between the high school facilities. Mr. Neville stated that he is a parent of six children and due to several moves within the community has seen the disparities first hand. Mr. Neville noted that the staff and students put forth a

tremendous effort to make do with the existing facilities. Mr. Neville noted that it was time to invest in both the facility and the students.

Ms. Bledsoe closed the Public Hearing.

Ms. Bledsoe opened the floor to discussion by the Commission.

Mr. Schmidt stated that the facilities at Lafayette High School are inadequate when compared to the two other schools. Mr. Schmidt stated that the facilities were inadequate even in the 1990s. Mr. Schmidt stated that equity is critical. Mr. Schmidt stated that the disparities are evident in the facts and figures assembled by the advocate groups.

Mr. Richardson stated that it is important for the public to understand that the CIP process remains the same as it always has with the exception of providing more time for the WJCC School Board to develop its priorities and coordinate with the Policy Committee. Mr. Richardson stated that as the Policy Committee considered the applications it reached out to the School Board for more detailed information and a prioritized list of projects. Mr. Richardson noted that a prioritized list was not provided until March 16. Mr. Richardson noted it was apparent during the Open House that there are very real needs for facilities and improvements at Lafayette High School.

Mr. Wright inquired about the location of the auxiliary gym on the Lafayette High School site.

Ms. Bledsoe responded that gym would be behind the existing playing field.

Mr. Basic stated that his concerns lie with the broader scope of prioritizing the list of 15 projects. Mr. Basic further stated that it is clear that a disparity exists among the three high schools when it should not. Mr. Basic thanked Ms. Bledsoe for her comments at the beginning of the Public Hearing and noted that it is important for the community to understand the Planning Commission's duties under State Code.

Mr. O'Connor stated that he has been a longtime advocate for parity in the schools. Mr. O'Connor stated that he had ranked the auxiliary gym above the entrance redesign projects; however, he did not put a high priority on the walking path, because he did not find it the highest and best use of available funds. Mr. O'Connor stated that there should be more cost effective ways to transport students to practice locations.

Mr. Krapf stated that the school projects were ranked by the WJCC School Board in accord with its strategic plan. Mr. Krapf noted that it presents a dilemma when the School Board priorities are at odds with community requests. Mr. Krapf stated that often broader community needs must take precedence over school priorities. Mr. Krapf stated that he would be supportive of moving the auxiliary gym higher in the rankings; however, he believed there were viable alternatives to the walking path.

Ms. Bledsoe stated that she supports moving the auxiliary gym higher in the rankings; however, there are potential alternatives to the walking path. Ms. Bledsoe further stated that she understands the need for the entrance redesigns; however, the list of projects did not include three vulnerable elementary schools and has some questions about the actual priority of those projects.

Ms. Bledsoe requested that Mr. Hlavin provide guidance on the latitude given to the Planning Commission to prioritize projects.

Mr. Hlavin stated that as a recommending body, the Planning Commission has a tremendous amount of latitude. Mr. Hlavin stated that the Commission could amend the Policy Committee's ranking list and forward that to the Board of Supervisors as a recommendation or could refer the matter back to the Policy Committee for further study or additional input from the WJCC School Board.

Ms. Bledsoe stated that she did not want to do anything to negate the project rankings for those projects that provided sufficient data under the review process.

Ms. Bledsoe moved to amend the ranking list so that the Lafayette High School Auxiliary Gym would move from No. 14 to No. 5.

Ms. Bledsoe asked the Commission if there was any discussion about the motion.

Mr. Richardson stated that he would be supportive of amending the ranking.

Mr. Krapf stated that he believed that ranking the auxiliary gym as No. 5 was too high, because the Jamestown High School Entrance Redesign was the highest priority on the WJCC School Board's list of projects. Mr. Krapf stated that he wanted to be respectful of the WJCC School Board's strategic priorities.

Mr. Basic stated that he supports raising the priority of the auxiliary gym; however he does not believe it should be as high as No. 5. Mr. Basic stated that the items currently ranked Nos. 5-10 were scored higher, because address safety issues should be addressed.

Mr. Schmidt stated that an advantage of the auxiliary gym would be to reduce the number of students exiting the school property onto Longhill Road at the end of the school day. Mr. Schmidt noted that this would also address a safety issue.

Mr. O'Connor stated that when scoring the projects, he also considered the number of individuals benefitting from the project. Mr. O'Connor noted that he had ranked the auxiliary gym higher than the Marina project for that reason. Mr. O'Connor further stated that equity among the schools is very important and if the auxiliary gym is moved to a higher priority, the marina project should be moved lower.

Mr. Basic stated that the Policy Committee has always put great thought and care in considering the CIP project rankings. Mr. Basic did not want to see those efforts negated by reevaluating every project.

Ms. Bledsoe stated that she proposed moving the auxiliary gym to priority No. 5, because it would not affect the rankings of the projects designated as 1-4 which were voted on by the Policy Committee. Ms. Bledsoe further stated that if priorities 1-4 are to be reevaluated, it would be necessary to send the matter back to the Policy Committee. Ms. Bledsoe stated that by making the auxiliary gym the No. 5 priority, it would effectively move everything else down one and would not negate any other rankings save one, but would make the point that the auxiliary gym was ranked incorrectly and needed to be moved up.

Mr. Richardson stated that he concurs with the thought that by ranking the auxiliary gym as No. 5, it would not discredit the objective process of evaluating the projects ranked Nos. 1-4.

Ms. Bledsoe inquired if the Commission would prefer that the motion be amended to rank the auxiliary gym as No. 6.

Mr. Wright stated that he would support either option.

Mr. Hlavin stated that shifting the auxiliary gym to a higher priority would affect funding for projects because of the year(s) for which funds are being requested. Mr. Hlavin stated that if rankings are shifted for multiple projects, it might be prudent to refer the matter to the Policy Committee and get input from the WJCC School Board and Financial Management Services.

Ms. Bledsoe stated that she did not believe the WJCC School Board would be willing to provide any additional information.

Mr. Krapf requested clarification on how the funding is allocated.

Mr. Holt stated that the first year of the five-year plan is what is funded and adopted as part of the budget. Mr. Holt stated that the ensuing four years are just plan years.

Mr. Krapf stated that if the auxiliary gym is moved up and is not funded in the upcoming budget, it would still maintain its ranking amongst the other projects in the package.

Mr. Holt stated that the Board does look at the CIP priorities as they craft their long-term budget plan.

Mr. Hlavin stated that the auxiliary gym is a FY 17 request.

Ms. Bledsoe requested clarification on what that would mean.

Mr. Hlavin stated that it would improve the project's potential to be considered for funding in the upcoming budget.

Mr. Basic stated that this was a helpful consideration since several of the higher priorities were not requesting funding until FY 18.

Mr. Wright noted that while the Policy Committee and the Planning Commission should consider the financing to a degree, their charge is to consider whether the projects are in accord with land use designations and the goals and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Bledsoe stated that she would like to call the vote on the motion to move the Lafayette High School Auxiliary Gym from No. 14 to No. 5 in the list of priorities.

Mr. Holt clarified that the motion would essentially move the Jamestown High School Entrance Redesign project to No. 6 and shift the lower priority projects down. Mr. Holt stated that this would not be considered a tie for No. 5 priority, but would be the only No. 5 priority.

Mr. Holt stated that the motion on the floor was to approve the list of CIP priorities as modified and forward the recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.

On a roll call vote, the Planning Commission voted to approve the list of CIP priorities as modified and forward the recommendation to the Board of Supervisors by a vote of 7-0.

9. COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND REQUESTS

Ms. Bledsoe thanked the Commission for its thoughts and comments on the CIP rankings. Ms. Bledsoe further stated that she believed the Commission made a solid and correct decision in the matter.

Ms. Bledsoe stated that she has enjoyed serving as Chair of the Commission.

Mr. Krapf inquired who was representing the Planning Commission at the Board of Supervisors meetings.

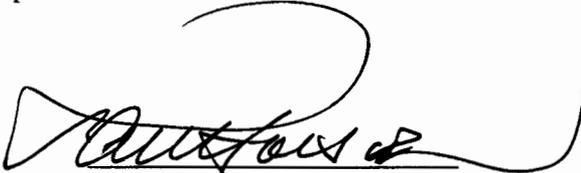
Ms. Bledsoe stated that Mr. Basic will be the Planning Commission representative at the Board of Supervisors meetings for April and that Mr. Wright is covering the March meeting.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Wright moved to adjourn the meeting until 7 p.m. on April 6, 2016.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:25 p.m.


Robin Bledsoe, Chairman


Paul D. Holt, III, Secretary