

MINUTES

New South Anchorage Area High School Public Meeting, 6:30 PM Bowman Elementary School August 25, 1999

TO: File

FROM: Kathy Burgess and Anne Brooks, Brooks and Associates

DATE: August 26, 1999

DISCLAIMER: The following are Minutes of the August 25, 1999 Public Meeting held at Bowman Elementary School regarding the New South Anchorage Area High School. Opinions expressed by referenced individuals are their own and, except for identified Anchorage School District, do not necessarily represent or reflect the opinions of Anchorage School District.

Ed Conyers, Executive Director of Anchorage School District Facilities and Maintenance Department opened the meeting with introductions of the project team and other persons present who will participate in various aspects of planning the new school. He stated that this meeting is a continuation of the June 15, 1999 public meeting held at Goldenview Middle School. At that time the Design Team of ECI/Hyer Inc. had just been selected and had just begun to become familiar with the project.

There are two working committees addressing the new school project: the Coordinating Committee and the Building Design Committee. The Coordinating Committee is charged with coordinating roles and activities of pertinent public agencies and organizations in the project's development. Members include Municipal agency representatives appointed by the Mayor, State DOT&PF representative, and community representatives, such as PTSA's and community councils. The Building Design Committee consists of a school principal, teachers, PTSA representatives, community representatives, the Design Team, and ASD representatives. Jon Steele of ECI/Hyer described the task of the Building Design Committee, the group that will have a long-term commitment to assist in the conceptual design process. Persons interested in serving should contact Rob Balivet of Anchorage School District Facilities Department at 348-5253. The agenda of each Building Design Committee meeting will be published beforehand so that people may attend sessions covering their topics of interest.

Terry Hyer of ECI/Hyer reviewed the project schedule. Between now and December the budget will be reviewed; a schedule will be developed; site analysis will take place, and the conceptual design process will begin.

Tom Nelson of the Municipality of Anchorage Planning Department presented a history of the selection of the current site from 1982 to the present. He described the criteria for school sites and the reasons the city chose this land in the early 80s. Originally it was a 108-acre parcel intended for both a junior and senior high school. When Goldenview was chosen for the new middle school half of the 108 acres was sold and the remainder kept for a senior high, the land now designated for the new high school. Also, the owner of the 108-acre parcel, Mr. Hines, did not want to sell more than fifty acres to the District.

Greg Jones, a neighbor of the school site and former Planning and Zoning Commission member at the time the city acquired the land, also spoke about the history of the site selection. In his opinion, the halving of the 108-acre site changed the development flexibility for the site along with eliminating access to the site from DeArmoun road.

Jacques Boutet, P.E., Traffic Engineer with The Boutet Company presented his Limited Traffic Impact Analysis commissioned by the School District to examine the Elmore Road site. (It is titled "Limited" because it focuses specifically on a local area. After extensive explanation of the study's process and analysis, he gave the following conclusions and recommendations:

1. Elmore Road should be reconstructed from Huffman Road to DeArmoun Road. Reconstruction should be to MOA standards for a collector road. Amenities should include pathways on both sides of the roadway and street lighting in accordance with MOA standards. The extension of Elmore through to DeArmoun will reduce delays and traffic impacts at the intersection of Huffman and Elmore and improve circulation and access for the school site. These improvements would support construction of four driveways for the school site instead of three.
2. Provide southbound and eastbound left turn lanes at the DeArmoun Road/Elmore Road intersection. These improvements could be implemented through the Elmore Road reconstruction or through ADOT&PF's ongoing reconstruction project for DeArmoun Road.
3. Provide left turn lanes on all approaches of the intersection of Huffman and Elmore. In addition, although capacity and level of service is not an issue for this movement, an eastbound right-turn lane should be constructed to allow right-turning traffic to exit the through lane and not require through traffic to slow and lose momentum. These improvements should be implemented as part of the Elmore Road reconstruction project. Additional improvements, such as signalization will not likely be required for at least 10 years.
4. Make provision for study of a pedestrian/vehicle operations along Elmore Road after the school is operational and evaluate options for additional pedestrian traffic control devices and improvements.
5. Design speed and traffic calming measures should be addressed during the Elmore Road reconstruction project.
6. Provide four driveways, two for students, staff, and visitors, one for buses, and one for service vehicles. Space them a minimum of 200 feet from each other and existing intersections, unless they can be located at an existing intersection, such as 135th Avenue.
7. It is recommended that the reconstruction of Elmore road be scheduled for completion prior to opening of the new high school.
8. Use the construction documents to restrict night-time operations, road and driveway closures, and other potential disruptions to the neighborhood. Emphasize the use of flagmen and aggressive dust control practices.
9. It is concluded that while the neighborhoods located west and north of the proposed school sites will experience some increased traffic from trips made between the Kempton Hills subdivision and properties to the north and east, these volumes will not be of significant magnitude and will not have significant impacts on the existing roadways.

Those who wish to read the report in detail may get a copy from Anchorage School District Facilities Department.

Ed Conyers stated that the school's Building Design Committee will meet on Friday, September 17, 3:30-5:00 and Saturday, September 18, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. in the Service High School Library.

Jon Steele said that the next meetings will begin the focusing on the Educational Specification vision for the new school with a study of contemporary trends in high school design. Agendas for this and future meetings will be posted on the ASD high school renovation website so that people can participate in the issues that concern them.

Throughout the meeting there were many questions and concerns raised by members of the public. The following is a summary of the points raised:

- The site is zoned R1 now and design work is beginning before the land has received the zoning designation appropriate to a public school. There is potential for this work to be wasted.
EDITOR'S NOTE: The school can be constructed on either a site zoned R1 or PLI. Design efforts will influence any rezoning of the site.

- Some of the surrounding community does not support a high school on the site, however, some neighbors stated that with appropriate road improvements they would be more likely to accept the school.
- The current road system is inadequate to support a high school.
- The site selection study said an upgrade would be reevaluated every two years and this (with its opportunity for public participation) has not been done.
- Who will pay the cost of upgrading Elmore Road to support the high school?
- Let's close off Leyden Road to school traffic.
- The Huffman/Elmore intersection is already backed up during peak hours. Having a high school nearby will only make matters worse.
- People don't stop at the Huffman/Elmore intersection at the sign. Perhaps a traffic light is needed.
- If traffic backs up on Elmore inexperienced student drivers are likely to take short cuts through nearby residential streets.
- Many people would like an appropriate public forum to discuss the selection of this site for a high school.
- Will it be necessary to provide public funds for other improvements to support the school besides the Elmore Road upgrade?
- People from the building trades can make recommendations for cost-saving materials that can be used in the school's construction.