

Clover Hill replacement school temporarily stalled

By Donna C. Gregory
ASSISTANT EDITOR

The replacement for Clover Hill High School hit a temporary snag last week when the Chesterfield School Board failed to approve its capital improvement plan (CIP).

The plan includes funding to build the replacement school, two middle schools and two elementary schools to relieve overcrowding in county classrooms. It also calls for renovations at several other schools.

But, the plan has been put on hold after board members failed to make a motion to approve it. The board member who normally would have made the motion, Dianne Pettitt, who represents the district where the replacement school would be built, was not at last week's meeting.

In Pettitt's absence, board members sat silently after School Board Chairman Marshall Trammell called for a motion to approve the CIP. Hearing no response from his fellow board members, Trammell announced, obviously taken aback, "The motion dies."



Trammell

So, what now? "[The CIP] doesn't go away," explained Trammell after the meeting. "We just haven't approved it yet. All board members have got to get comfortable with all aspects of the plan to make sure that we are all in concert with moving forward."

When asked if there's a possibility that a replacement for Clover Hill might be delayed, Trammell answered, "We haven't even begun to have those kinds of discussions...I don't think there is an issue about replacing Clover Hill. I think it's a question of when we can do it and does this fit the right timescale? What it boils down to is where, when and if. When we finally commit to building that new high school, that limits the amount of debt capacity that we can carry for other projects."

Before Trammell called for a motion to adopt the CIP, county critics Brenda Stewart and Shelly Schuetz spoke out against the plan, saying that a replacement for Clover Hill isn't needed because the new Cosby High School has relieved overcrowding in that part of the county. They argued that a new school should be built to ease crowded classrooms at Thomas Dale and Meadowbrook high schools.

According to the school system's latest enrollment numbers, Thomas Dale and Meadowbrook are both 25 percent over capacity. Those figures are expected to increase as more people move to the county.

After the opening of Cosby, Clover Hill is now only one percent over capacity.

"The county needs to properly prioritize its needs," urged Stewart.

Construction costs for the Clover Hill replacement have also skyrocketed in recent years. When the project was budgeted in 2003, the school was expected to cost \$55 million. Today, construction, land and design costs are estimated at \$92 million.

"\$92 million is a lot of money for a school we cannot justify," maintained Shuetz.

Trammell said he expects board members will discuss the CIP at their next meeting in January "with the potential of having a vote at the end of January."

As mandated by the county code, an approved CIP must be submitted to County Administrator Lane Ramsey by Mar. 1.

A land use plan to build a replacement for Clover Hill along Genito Road has already

been submitted to the county's planning department.

Bermuda boundaries approved

School board members approved new boundaries for elementary schools in the Bermuda District. The adopted plan includes provisions to locate an English as a Second Language program at the new Elizabeth Scott Elementary School that's currently under construction and a center-based gifted program at Marguerite Christian Elementary School. The boundary change will take effect this fall.

Redistricting was required due to the addition of Elizabeth Scott near the intersection of Route 10 and I-295.

The school board appointed a committee of parents and teachers from the district, who worked over the summer to develop the boundary plan that was ultimately adopted. A public hearing was held in October with minimal outcry over the proposed boundaries.

| Bermuda District elementary school enrollments before/after boundary change | | | |
|---|---------------------|---------|---------|
| School | Functional capacity | Before* | After** |
| Wells | 725 | 917 | 639 |
| Curtis | 850 | 769 | 739 |
| Enon | 585 | 592 | 525 |
| Harrowgate | 550 | 688 | 487 |
| Marguerite Christian | 860 | 955 | 793 |
| Elizabeth Scott | 910 | N/A | 719 |

*Before numbers are based on student enrollments reported as of Sept. 30.
**After figures are projected as of fall 2007.

School clubs update

School board members received an update on a newly adopted policy that calls for more oversight of school clubs. Under the policy, club sponsors must receive training, and each club is required to submit paperwork detailing its purpose, membership and other information.

Some parents expressed concern last year when they learned that some high schools have Gay-Straight Alliances.

During the meeting, Ed Witthoefft, director of high schools, held up a binder about four inches thick, showing the amount of paperwork involved in implementing the new policy. "It's just a lot of paperwork," said Witthoefft, "[but] it's done now, and it's not an issue." Trammell questioned if clubs are being monitored to make sure they are following school guidelines. "The sponsors were trained. The sponsors know the policy. The principals know the policy," answered Witthoefft.

Despite Witthoefft's response, Trammell said board members will discuss the issue and could request further monitoring in the future.

Gym renaming

The school board is considering a request to name a gymnasium at Carver Middle School after Alan J. Pruett, a former assistant principal who passed away last July.

Public comments are now being sought about the proposal and can be provided via e-mail at ccpsinfo@ccpsnet.net. The board is expected to make a decision about the naming in January.

Is your ARM about to reset?
Has your mortgage payment increased?



Call me today!
Paula Haynes
Mortgage Broker

Colonial Mortgage Company of Virginia
Midlothian, VA 23112
639-4526

colonialmortgagecompany@comcast.net

Broker is licensed by Virginia State Corporation Commission MB-1414

Need it Framed by Christmas?

Frame It Yourself and Save at
THE FRAMERS' WORKSHOP

794-7961
1121 Alverser Dr.
(across from Southern States)



Fresh Smiles
by Christine Ottersberg, DDS
personalized dental care in a spa atmosphere

897-8838

1217 Sycamore Square,
Midlothian, VA 23113
in Sycamore Square convenient to Rt. 288
www.fresh-smiles.com

the **SOMERVILLE** showroom



Now is the time to transform your bath into a home spa environment.
The Purist[®] Suite from Kohler.

The Somerville Showroom in Midlothian is a KOHLER Registered Showroom. Stop in today to see the latest that Kohler has to offer. The Somerville Showroom can accommodate all your plumbing and heating needs.

The Somerville Showroom
3703 Price Club Blvd. Midlothian, VA
Two blocks West of Courthouse Road and Hull Street
804.745.6400 Hours 7:30am - 5:00pm
Open to the public.

www.tsomerville.com

THE BOLD LOOK OF **KOHLER**

KOHLER.com