



FAMILY

New high school expected to break ground next month



Page Dowdy/Chesterfield Observer

Clover Hill High School students will no longer have to brave the traffic and the quirks of an old building when a replacement school opens in fall 2010.

By Greg Pearson
STAFF WRITER

Construction on the new \$76.2 million high school on Genito Road is projected to begin next month and be ready for school staff to move in during the spring of 2010. But the school in the southwest quadrant of Genito Road and Route 288 won't open for classes until the fall of 2010.

Clover Hill School Board member Dianne Pettitt and Kathy Kitchen, assistant superintendent for business and finance, answered questions about the replacement for Clover Hill High School last week at a Brandermill neighborhood meeting. Brandermill residents were the primary supporters for locating the school at its current site. Residents there have been sending their children to Clover Hill since 1972.

A new road will cut across the school grounds, providing an entrance and exit on Genito Road at Genito Place and on Old Hundred Road at Brandermill Parkway. The road will have sidewalks to encourage walking to school. County officials have already suggested the need for a traffic light at the latter intersection, but that decision will be made by the Virginia Department of Transportation. Pettitt thought it was unlikely that Old Hundred Road would be widened.

Though the floor plan will be essentially the same as Cosby High School, the Genito school site has only 80.7 acres, about 17 acres less than Cosby, which cost about \$60 million to build. The difference in price, according to Kitchen, is higher construction costs.

When asked by one resident if the cost of the school could be reduced "by 10-15 percent to get the fat out," Pettitt said she didn't know

what could be cut.

At a cost of \$200 per square foot, Kitchen replied that the size of the building would have to be reduced. "That would include the gym, cafeteria or a number of classrooms," she said. In a budget meeting with school officials earlier this year, one supervisor said eliminating the high school football stadium (and playing home games at another school) could save \$5 million.

Following the meeting, Kitchen wrote in an e-mail that the school costs include \$2.7 million for "all equipment, furniture and items such as science equipment, band instruments, [and] athletic uniforms... Schools are traditionally built and furnished this way, and all costs are charged to the capital project."

The costs also include one locker per student and security cameras, the latter now a fixture at all county high schools.

Not all permits have been secured, and there are wetlands on the property. The county's Environmental Engineering Department has already met with Brandermill residents and the Brandermill Country Club to discuss stream restoration to lessen the impact of flooding that could affect three or four homes on Quail Hill Court and one home on Quail Hill Drive.

"The restoration will start at Quail Hill Drive and go 800 feet downstream," said Dick McElfish, director of environmental engineering. "We're going to be directing as much water as we can away from Brandermill and toward Route 288."

"I think they will allow us to determine when the work will be done so it will have the least impact," said Bob Dewsbury, one of the owners of Brandermill Country Club. Improvements would affect the course's eighth fairway, he added.



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