

Rock Creek Hills Citizens Association Special meeting 5/17/2011

Meeting was called to order at 7:40 pm. Estimated audience circa 250.

While the stated purpose of the meeting (as stated by our guests) was to explain the process going forward for building a middle school in Rock Creek Hills; most residents were vocally opposed to the 'process' by which Rock Creek Hills was selected as the site for the new middle school. All members of the BOE expressed their regrets at not being able to attend. (surprise)

The meeting began at 7:45 with a 15 minute presentation by Bruce Crispell (director of Long Range Planning), Joyce Jessell (Director of Construction), and Janice Turpin, which focused on the site selection process and the feasibility study procedures that the Board staff would pursue regarding the proposed middle school. There followed a one hour question period discussing both the site selection process and feasibility study.

Bruce began by explaining the need and rationale for a new middle school and its preferred location. There was not substantial opposition to this.

The association then debated two motions, one to oppose the proposed project and the second to accept it subject to a satisfactory feasibility study and design. Only about 20 votes supported the motion to support the proposed project out of 175 eligible voters. The balance, or approximately 150, voted to oppose the project. The Rock Creek Hills Citizens Association board was directed to request the Board of Education to reopen the site selection process to re-examine other alternatives and to provide a reasonable opportunity for residents of Rock Creek Hills to address the Board on any site selection affecting our neighborhood. The residents also directed the RCHCA board to pursue two probable violations of the Maryland Open Meetings Act. These include failure to provide adequate notice of the action taken at the Board of Education's April 28 meeting and discussion of the proposed merits without the presence of the public during the Board's dinner of the same evening. The officers of the Rock Creek Hills Citizens Association were directed by the membership to file a complaint with the Maryland State Board of Education regarding the Montgomery County Board of Education actions. In addition, the officers of RCHCA were directed to oppose the transfer of the land to the Montgomery County School System and any appropriations to support the proposed middle school's design and construction.

The membership continues to object strongly to the Board's failure to give them any reasonable opportunity to comment on proposed action that only became public early on the afternoon of April 28, 2011. This arbitrary action is in substantial measure the basis for the opposition the Board will encounter as it seeks to move the project forward.

Respectively submitted,

Ken Sanford