

# *Citizens' Facilities Advisory Committee*

## **Meeting Summary**

**Tuesday, October 24, 2006  
Lacy Elementary, 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM**

### **Highlights**

1. Committee Call to Order & Announcements
2. Adoption of Committee Quarterly Report
3. School Design Process
4. Status Report on School District Comparisons Project
5. Tour of Lacy Elementary

### **Committee Call to Order & Announcements**

John Mabe, co-chair of the Citizens' Facilities Advisory Committee called the meeting to order at 4:15 PM.

Mr. Mabe asked the committee whether they had any changes or corrections to the September 26 meeting summary. Rob Weaver, a CFAC member, asked that a minor modification be made to the third page of the meeting summary to note the fourth priority of the Capital Planning Assumptions. The committee accepted the meeting notes, with that change.

Mr. Mabe then referenced additional materials provided to committee members to address questions raised at the September 26, 2006 meeting. This information covered repairs and renovations, an update from Whitestone on its service life study, information on indoor air quality impacts, Gates Foundation efforts, multi-story schools, land-banking, and prior student enrollment projections versus actual enrollment. The cover memo to committee members also stated that WCPSS staff would produce a more thorough response about site parking, bus parking, and high school transportation issues, but the response may need to include municipal planners.

Mr. Mabe then referred committee members to a series of documents about WCPSS' Blueprint for Excellence available to them at their seats. Mr. Mabe said that if committee members had questions, to please let Billie Redmond, co-chair of the Citizens' Facilities Advisory Committee or himself know, and they would forward to staff.

Mr. Mabe also reminded committee members that the next meeting would be November 28, 2006, and that the meeting will cover school construction (organization, process, and delivery) and school construction oversight.

Mr. Mabe directed committee members to computers at the back of the media center, which were open to the committee's web site ([www.wakegov.com/cfac](http://www.wakegov.com/cfac)). Mr. Mabe reminded committee members that all materials from meetings are posted to the web

site. A copy of comments submitted to committee members via the web site was included in the meeting materials.

### **Adoption of Committee Quarterly Report**

Mr. Mabe then segued into discussing the committee's draft quarterly report. Mr. Mabe asked for consensus from the committee about the draft. Mr. Weaver asked whether the committee was going to touch on year-round schools. Mr. Mabe indicated that the committee could talk about whether to delve into that policy, but if so, it would be something that the committee wouldn't get into until the spring. Committee members replied that it is something that falls under whether WCPSS is spending money wisely, in regards to life cycle costs, and should look at whether items wear out quicker because of the year-round calendar. Committee members also indicated that year round schools were part of the system's planning decisions that fall under their purview. Mr. Mabe replied that his personal view was that he thought the committee would talk about how to populate a school and what is the most efficient use of a building. The committee postponed further discussion regarding year-round schools to a later date.

Mr. Weaver also asked that the report be modified on page 3 so that it would say student enrollment is currently "forecasted to double" instead of "expected to double" in the next 20 years. He also asked that this information be cited. Mr. Weaver also offered that the report was well written but the conclusion was brief. The committee discussed further developing the future work section of the report and eliminating the conclusion piece. The committee then adopted the report and asked Mr. Mabe to make the modifications.

### **School Design Process**

Mike Burriss, WCPSS Assistant Superintendent for Facilities, and Jyoti Sharma, WCPSS Director of Facility Planning, presented WCPSS' school design process to the committee. Mr. Burriss explained that the process of selecting a designer is the same as all professional services selections; they use it for land surveying, geotechnical work, mechanical engineering, and CM at risk. This process is used when the selection is based on who is most qualified, not the lowest bid. Mr. Burriss explained that WCPSS' Professional Services Selection policy, 7265, is based on NC General Statutes 143-64.31 to 64.34.

Mr. Burriss reported to the committee that a prior Citizens' Advisory Committee recommended that Wake County government and WCPSS work together to streamline the selection process and to use similar criteria. Both agencies worked together through the "Strategies to Optimize the Planning, Design, Construction, Repair, and Maintenance of School and County Facilities" report and now use the same type of procurement process. Mr. Burriss explained that the criteria and evaluations are generally the same and that WCPSS' selection process is very similar to that of Facilities Design and Construction in Wake County government.

Mr. Burriss explained that there is a series of steps to the process. First, WCPSS maintains a list of design consultants' statements of qualifications and performance data. Then, WCPSS makes a project announcement, publishes it in *The News and Observer*, and sends it to the design consultants (approximately 50). This

announcement details instructions, the project name and location, the services required, and a description and scope. It also includes selection criteria, information about insurance requirements, and a potential interview date. If firms want to participate, they submit the required information to WCPSS. Of note, WCPSS criteria is the following: 1) specialized or appropriate expertise in the type of project; 2) past performance on similar projects; 3) adequate staff and proposed design team for the project; 4) current workload; 5) proposed design approach for project; 6) recent experience with project cost control and maintaining design schedules; 7) construction administration capabilities; 8) familiarity with the area where the projected is located and application municipal and state codes or ordinances; 9) record of successfully completed projects without major legal or technical problems; 10) other factors that may be appropriate for the project (e.g. expertise in energy conservation, high performance buildings, etc.)

A committee then reviews information submitted. Membership of the selection committee consists of Facilities staff as well as outside individuals like principals or members from other agencies like Wake County government. The selection committee uses a forced-choice matrix. This tool assigns weights to selection criteria. The weights are determined by taking an average of individual committee members weights assigned to specific criteria. This allows for discussion amongst the committee about what criteria matters more for a particular project. Mr. Burriss stated that this could vary. Mr. Burriss provided the example of the selection of a design consultant for the renovation of the former Bepak manufacturing facility into an elementary school. He said that prior experience in such work ranked higher than some other selection criteria.

Mr. Burriss then reported that the selection committee narrows down the firms requested to interview. The interview order is derived from pulling names from a hat. Interviews take place for approximately an hour, 30 minutes for a presentation and 30 minutes for questions and answers. Interviews are scheduled two to three weeks after the RFP deadline. Interviews are ranked above average, average, or below average.

The committee asked Mr. Burriss how many submittals WCPSS generally receives. Mr. Burriss replied that of the 50 firms on the consultant list, 25 to 30 will respond, and depending on the number of projects, the committee will interview anywhere from 6 to 15 firms, and from there 6 architects will say they are available. For renovation projects, there are several firms. Mr. Burriss said because WCPSS re-uses prototypes, there are fewer firms for new school construction. WCPSS currently has Cherry Huffman Architects for the high school prototype, Skinner, Lamb, and Highsmith for the middle school prototype, and Small Kane Architects, PBC&L, and Cherry Huffman as firms for the elementary school prototypes. Mr. Burriss noted that Boney Architects has also designed some elementary school prototypes in the past. Mr. Burriss said that smaller repair and renovation projects, like systemwide projects, are good for attracting firms that have not previously worked with WCPSS and the various municipalities.

The committee then discussed whether fees were allowed as a part of the design selection process. Mr. Burriss replied that the selection process is about looking for a level of quality and that state statute does not allow professional services selection to be based on the lowest bid. Mr. Burriss stated that once firms are selected in priority order, WCPSS negotiates prices with the first choice. If an agreement cannot be reached,

WCPSS then proceeds to start negotiating with the second highest ranked firm. Mr. Blackley, a CFAC member, noted that Wake County could go to the Board of Commissioners and request a waiver so fees are one component of the criteria ranking. David Cooke, Wake County's County Manager, said that county staff does request waivers on some projects.

Committee members inquired about design fees. Mr. Burriss stated that design fees range from 7 to 8.5 percent for renovations, and new school construction ranges from 4 to 6 percent, based on the number of reuses of a prototype.

The committee then segued into a discussion about Construction Manager at risk projects, because construction managers are selected through the professional services selection process. Mr. Burriss stated that WCPSS currently has four or five projects with construction managers: Barnhill Contracting, Clancey and Theys, and DH Griffin, and others. In response to committee questions about the process, Mr. Burriss said that WCPSS is getting more bids, better bids, better MWBE participation, and better sub-contractors. The cost of change orders is reduced. Mr. Burriss stated that in-house staff wouldn't necessarily be decreased because it is already spread thin, but project managers would be able to be more involved. The committee agreed to discuss this topic further at its next meeting.

The committee then discussed WCPSS design guidelines and education specifications. Mr. Burriss explained that design guidelines focus on the standards WCPSS wants to see in its facilities, for example, wall and floor surfaces. Design guidelines for a new school would include specific details regarding what types of HVAC systems should be included in a facility. Education specifications list the type of items needed for instruction to occur. It lists educational objectives, trends, and activities and enrollment. It includes an overview of the space, the design considerations, and physical requirements.

The committee inquired about how the guidelines and specifications were drafted. Mr. Burriss and Ms. Sharma replied that a committee drafts the guidelines based on what the teaching function of the space needs to be. For example, education specifications would include membership from school-based personnel, both veterans and those coming right out of college, and members of the WCPSS facilities department. The committee inquired who reviews the specifications or who says "no" to certain wants. Mr. Burriss and Ms. Sharma explained that often it is the facilities staff saying no after discussing the cost or who would use the technology (like a "Smart Board"). Mr. Stoops, a CFAC member, asked if the education specifications were researched based, and how a style of room was determined based on a given teaching style. Ms. Sharma explained that curriculum and instruction is responsible for making sure that research-based practices were incorporated in the guidelines, and those practices were signed off by the Board of Education. She also said that the rooms are designed to be flexible so that a variety of teaching styles could be implemented.

### **Status Report on School District Comparisons Project**

Carolyn Staskiewicz, DeJong Inc.'s Vice President of Operations, presented to the committee a status report on the school district comparisons project. Ms. Staskiewicz

reported to the committee that all districts have been contacted and that 8 of 9 districts have agreed to participate in the study. As of October 24, 2006 DeJong's sub consultant, Summit Consultants, had visited three districts in addition to Wake County - Orange County, Florida; Fairfax County, Virginia; and Guilford County, North Carolina. Summit Consultants were scheduled to be in Gwinnett County, Georgia the week of October 24. As of October 24, 2006 Johnston County has declined to participate in the school district comparisons study.

Ms. Staskiewicz reported that they have found, to no surprise, that there is no standard amongst school districts for cost record keeping. For example, some districts separate Construction Specifications Institute (CSI) breakdowns into 18 divisions, some 16, and some summarize divisions 3-9 as "building." She reported that DeJong is sending the data template to districts prior to the visit, and asking district staff to fill out the information as far as they were willing to go. Some districts went to great lengths while others provided less information on the template. During the site visit, additional information would be obtained, records copied, and spot-checking completed. The process has been modified slightly at each school, but data is being collected.

Ms. Staskiewicz then moved into discussing with the committee the format of the final report and presentation of data. She reported that DeJong would prepare an executive summary, analysis and comparisons (programmatic, materials and building systems, and site development), and back-up data (electronic and paper) that would be the property of Wake County. Ms. Staskiewicz presented to the committee sample tables with "dummy data" so the committee could sign-off in regards to format. These covered programmatic information, materials and building programs, and site development. It also presented information in cost per square feet. The template also showed where DeJong plans on breaking down cost differences because of location, the program, and the materials. Ms. Staskiewicz also presented a template where DeJong would project how much it would cost to build a "Wake County School" in the different districts.

Mr. Weaver asked what was the time frame DeJong was collecting data. Ms. Staskiewicz replied that they were collecting data from schools built between 2002 to current, but the numbers would be adjusted for location and inflation. Ms. Asefnia, a committee member, asked whether DeJong would provide context so the committee knows what is driving the differences in cost. She also asked whether DeJong would collect information about the permitting process. Mr. Aikens, a committee member, asked if information about technology would be collected. Ms. Staskiewicz indicated that both were on the data templates and that they would try to place into context with additional notes differences in cost.

Ms. Staskiewicz concluded her presentation by informing the committee that data analysis would occur in December after final data collection and that a draft final report would be issued to the committee at its January 22, 2007 meeting.

### **Tour of Lacy Elementary**

Dr. Marcia Alford, principal of Lacy Elementary, provided an overview of Lacy Elementary. Dr. Alford mentioned some problems they have encountered at Lacy, including several teachers coming down with pneumonia, nosebleeds, and migraines.

She mentioned several classrooms are currently unusable because of indoor air quality issues. She also mentioned several exposed hot water pipes that have recently burst. Dr. Alford also mentioned security concerns because of many doors that open to the outside and difficulties with building configuration that results in staff time being diverted to escorting students between buildings.

The committee inquired about how many students were enrolled at Lacy. Dr. Alford indicated that 697 students were enrolled at Lacy Elementary, but the school building capacity is 470 students. The committee also noted that the school has a lack of incoming fresh air because the air conditioning units installed in 1989 and 1992 do not bring in fresh air. The committee also discussed enrollment growth in the area.

Mr. Burriss reviewed the planned renovation program for Lacy Elementary, dependent on passage of the school bond referendum. The proposed plan would be to demolish older buildings on the campus totaling 56,300 square feet, and to construct 64,800 in new square footage consisting of general and special programs classrooms, dining and multi-purpose room, media center, administration, and student support services. Approximately 12,200 square feet would be renovated. Canopies would be installed for student bus and car drop-off, site circulation would be modified, playfields would have ADA accessibility, and playfields would be upgraded. The budget for the renovation is \$21,854,837.

Horace Tart, Wake County Board of Education member, asked Mr. Burriss to review the decision tree of whether to renovate or construct new space. Mr. Burriss said that preliminary analysis conducted by WCPSS staff shows that it would be better to demolish rather than renovate existing space at Lacy Elementary. Once the architect is hired, this analysis will be confirmed. WCPSS looks at whether the renovation would cost more than 75 percent of new construction, and if so, typically chooses to demolish and construct new spaces. A brief discussion also occurred amongst the committee about whether it would be cheaper to sell the land and build another school in the area. Other committee members stated that finding another site in the general area of Lacy Elementary, at a lower cost, would be difficult.

The committee then went on a tour of Lacy Elementary.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting concluded at 7:00 PM. The next Facilities Advisory Committee will be November 28, 2006 at Salem Middle School in Apex.

