

Citizens' Facilities Advisory Committee

Meeting Summary

Wednesday, February 13, 2007

Wake County Office Building, 4:00 PM – 6:30 PM

Highlights

1. Committee Call to Order & Opening Remarks
2. Presentation: School District Comparisons Project Addendum & Additional Questions from 1/31/07 Meeting
3. Subcommittee Selections

Committee Call to Order & Opening Remarks

John Mabe, co-chair of the Citizens' Facilities Advisory Committee called the meeting to order at 4:10 PM.

Billie Redmond, co-chair of the Citizens' Facilities Advisory Committee discussed details about the public hearing scheduled for February 27, 2007 at the McKimmon Center from 5:00 – 7:00 PM. Steve Schuster agreed to facilitate the meeting; the public is invited to offer comments and questions by topic area. School calendar, school assignments, and other academic issues are not slated for discussion.

School District Comparisons Project Addendum & Additional Questions

Carolyn Staskiewicz, Vice President of DeJong Inc. and Robert Kelly Jr., Senior Associate, Summit Consulting Services LLC presented to the committee an addendum to the January 31 school district comparisons project report. The addendum consisted of three primary sections: 1) cost per square foot with a weighted and a direct average, 2) escalated total project cost per student, and 3) answers to questions asked by committee members between January 31, 2007 and February 12, 2007.

DeJong and Summit explained that in the January 31, 2007 report, a "weighted average" was used to calculate the average escalated total cost per square foot. Thus, districts that built more schools during the study period contributed more to the average cost. The addendum also included a "direct average" which weighs the average escalated total cost per square foot equally regardless of how many schools from a district were built within the study period. Thus, Guilford County, who only built three schools in the study period, would contribute as much to the average as Clark County with 57 schools. WCPSS elementary school and high school escalated total cost per square foot was higher than the weighted and direct averages. WCPSS total cost per square foot was slightly lower than the weighted and direct average for middle schools.

DeJong and Summit also provided the committee with the average escalated total project cost per student. Ms. Staskiewicz explained that average escalated total project cost per student was calculated by dividing the total escalated project cost by the design capacity of the school. Design capacity, as reported by each school district, was provided for schools included in the cost portion of the study. DeJong and Summit provided a weighted average and a direct average for this calculation. DeJong and Summit reported that WCPSS had the highest average escalated total project cost per student for elementary, and also had higher total project costs per student for middle schools and high schools.

The committee had significant discussion about the data and findings. There were many questions concerning capacity. DeJong noted that design capacity is not the same as actual capacity or the capacity reported in the districts' planning assumptions. The capacities listed in the planning assumptions section reflect the capacities of schools that districts are planning to build. The capacities for the schools in the cost comparison section of the report were design capacities of the actual school at the time it was constructed. Since the study period included schools constructed between 2000 and 2006, it is very possible that a school built in that time period had a different design capacity than the capacity reported by the district for schools they are planning to build. Simply, the district could have changed its planning assumptions from when the school was built and now plans on building schools with a different capacity. Ms. Staskiewicz also noted that design capacities were provided by the districts and that each district calculates capacity in a different manner.

There was also discussion about comparing WCPSS' design capacity to other districts, and whether the cost per student is actually less because WCPSS utilizes year-round schools. Ms. Staskiewicz stated that all design capacities were reported on a traditional calendar to have a similar basis of comparison. WCPSS staff said that this could not be a similar basis of comparison because their year-round model includes more pull-out spaces that affect the capacity of the building. However, Mr. Kelly noted that most of the eleven WCPSS elementary schools included in the study period were not designed at the larger 800-student (1,124 YR) model.

Questions remained about why WCPSS cost per student was quite high. Ms. Staskiewicz reminded the committee that a majority of the 17 WCPSS schools included in the study period had smaller capacities. The schools built prior to 2005 had smaller capacities, and that WCPSS built larger 800 student (1,124 YR) schools in the later years of the study period. During the discussion, it was realized that the costs and square footage of three community centers built in conjunction with three of the eleven elementary schools in the study time period were included in the analysis because these dollars were included in the schools schedule of values. Summit Consulting said it would revise the analysis to deduct the square footage and costs associated with the community centers.

The committee inquired about whether square footage per student was available for the schools included in the study period. Mr. Kelly said he would follow-up with this data if it was available.

Mr. Kelly then walked the committee through additional charts provided in the addendum that showed the total building cost per square foot and the total site cost per square foot. These charts included a weighted average and a direct average instead of simply a direct average.

Ms. Staskiewicz then discussed with the committee the remainder of the addendum, which provided answers to questions previously submitted from the CFAC members. Mr. Kelly stated that he would provide additional text regarding how off-site improvements have an impact on site development costs and would provide some examples of how specific projects off-site costs drove up the cost of their site work.

The committee also discussed whether Gwinnett's costs were a true "apples to apples" comparison and why was it consistently lower than all of the other districts in most CSI categories. Mr. Kelly explained that some of this is the difference in materials, such as masonry choices, roofing choices, HVAC choices, etc. But he also stated that the construction contract doesn't include furniture, kitchen equipment, and athletic facility costs. Thus, their overall construction contract does not include the items included in the other districts.

The committee also asked whether change order information was included in the cost comparison section. Mr. Kelly said that it was not; and while bid cost and final cost was available for approximately half of the projects, it was not possible to assign change order costs to a particular CSI division.

The committee concluded their question and answer period with a general discussion of test scores and whether any of the districts included in the study were comparable in terms of test scores. Chuck Dulaney, WCPSS Assistant Superintendent for Growth and Planning reported that Fairfax County was the most comparable and who WCPSS looked towards when studying student performance.

Assignment of Subcommittees

The committee then discussed the assignment of subcommittees. The following members were selected for the CFAC subcommittees:

Planning and Site Selection:

Sepi Asefnia (chair)
Justus Everette
Russell Killen
John Mabe
Jimmy Smith

Project Delivery:

Fred Aikens
Glenn Blackley(chair)
Roddy Jones
Eddie Truelove

Program and Design:

Billie Redmond
Jim Smith (chair)
Terry Stoops
Rob Weaver

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM. Ms. Redmond reminded committee members about the public hearing on February 27, 2007.