

Loudoun County School Board Ad hoc Committee on the Academies of Loudoun

Meeting Minutes

12/15/14

Members in attendance: Bill Fox, Eric Hornberger, Jeff Morse

Staff in attendance: Shirley Bazdar, Terri Breeden, Suyi Chuang, Wagner Grier, Cara Le Grys, Odette Scovel, George Wolfe

Volunteer Citizens Work Group members in attendance: Donna Shackelford, Wendy Wooley

Chairman Hornberger called the meeting to order at 5:40 PM.

The committee approved meeting minutes from 8/11/14 (3-0-2 with Mrs. Bergel and Mrs. Turgeon absent). Motion was made by Bill Fox and seconded by Jeff Morse.

Chairman Hornberger stated in his remarks that the funding was approved for the Academies of Loudoun project with a 2/3 margin from the voters on the bond referendum November 4, 2014. The project is finally moving forward. This meeting is being held to discuss the project progress to-date and to discuss the next steps.

Public comment was received from Mr. Raymond Threlkeld, a citizen that lives adjacent to the Academies site in the Goose Creek subdivision. Mr. Threlkeld is a supporter of the program. He would like to have additional information on the design and setbacks of the project. He stated that he would like for the property to remain as TR 10 zoning. Chairman Hornberger stated that zoning responsibilities do not fall under the school board's jurisdiction. The county makes those decisions. Chairman Hornberger thanked Mr. Threlkeld for his comments.

Dr. Terri Breeden reported that her update on partnerships included an invitation to the NAVSEA Warfare Center Carderock Division to attend this Ad hoc committee meeting. Justina Mitchell, NAVSEA Senior Engineer and Sharon Smoot, Executive Director for Maintenance were in attendance. They expressed their desire to partner with Loudoun County Public Schools with this project. Both attendees are Loudoun County residents.

Shirley Bazdar, Suyi Chuang, Wagner Grier, Odette Scovel, and George Wolfe discussed the continuing curriculum framework development that is ongoing and preparing a program pathway baseline that will be shared with advisory committees and stakeholders soon.

Bill Fox asked about the status of promotional efforts for the Academies of Loudoun. He would like to keep something exciting in the press (every couple of months) to keep our citizenry engaged. Additionally, he thought it would be a good idea to list our developing business partnerships on the website. Chairman Hornberger asked about the status of developing a logo for the Academies to assist in marketing efforts to potential partners. Monroe Technical Academy Principal Wagner Grier and Academy of Science Director George Wolfe indicated that students could definitely be a part of that

design process. Jeff Morse suggested a design content open to all students. Staff will follow up on this action.

Dr. Breeden introduced Derk Jeffrey and Taryn Kinney from Stantec architectural firm. Dr. Breeden commented that Stantec “will be taking our vision from white paper to action.” The presentation centered on the following activities:

- What we have done
- What we have learned
- What do we need to do?

The presentation was focused on:

- Creating a culture of independence within the building
- Intentional trans-disciplinary spaces
- Technology and engineering touch all spaces

The aspirational themes for the building are:

- Culture and identity
- Authentic simulation
- Collaboration and flexibility

The next steps are:

- Develop a utilization study for all programs
- Content themes-explore curriculum groupings
- Site analysis- sustainability study

When the Stantec team was asked about additional topics of interest, they remarked that the “identity” piece still comes up in conversations. How will each program function separately and within the total building as the Academies of Loudoun? Dr. Breeden commented that we have a strong foundation, we just want more. We are not simply taking what we have and putting a roof on it. Jeff Morse commented that designing unique spaces will be a challenge. Chairman Hornberger commented that the school should be designed as a real world example and flow like the HHMI building that is 10 years old but looks current and state-of-the-art. Chairman Hornberger further asked if we could make a larger storied building. What is the most effective way to use the sight similar to the construction of the HHMI facility at Janelia Farms in Ashburn? Derk Jeffrey responded that there is the potential to leverage the grade and build into the site with less excavation and still remain within the current high restrictions of the property’s zoning.

The outcomes of the project are:

- Translation of the “vision” through building strategies
- Program verification
- Site concepts incorporated into the conceptual design to allow students to “Think, Make, and Model.”

Chairman Hornberger asked about the schedule. Derk Jeffrey replied that Stantec would likely be finished with the design of the school this time next year.

Chairman Hornberger asked if there were any other issues in terms of the facility design. Bill Fox discussed the nature of the partnerships would be different. He is looking for the business community to shape the vision and for the business community to be actively involved. Additionally, Mr. Fox discussed the need to focus efforts within the middle school STEM efforts to raise the bar for middle school students. Jeff Morse suggested that these students be involved with STEM efforts and activities within the elementary and middle schools. Donna Shackelford of the Citizens Work Group noted that it would be helpful for parents/students to have a list of “look fors” in preparation for applying to academy programs.

Chairman Hornberger asked about next steps. Dr. Breeden replied that the LCPS staff will continue to meet and work on this project. The committee was in agreement that we need to strive to keep the community interested in the project. Additionally, that the communication and marketing was essential in leveraging a brand identity for the program. Committee member suggested the establishment of a business advisory committee.

Chairman Hornberger adjourned the meeting at 6:50 PM. He stated that the Ad Hoc Committee on the Academies of Loudoun would meet on an “as needed” basis or when there were significant program updates.