



Stephen W. Hefner, Ed.D.
Superintendent

May 19, 2017



Dear [REDACTED]

This letter is written as a response to the questions you emailed the Board on Monday, May 8, 2017, and attached to your Public Participation form at the May 8, 2017 meeting of the Trustees of School District 5 of Lexington and Richland Counties.

You asked "In determining the general location of a needed school site what CURRENT student population studies (enrollment studies) and five-year student projection studies have been conducted?"

Answer: Our study of student enrollment is perpetual. As of the end of the first semester of 2016-2017 (January 17, 2017), we had a total of 2055 students enrolled in K-5 in the Chapin Cluster; please note that this number would be higher if we included our 4-year-old and pre-school special needs populations. Clearly, a third elementary school in the Chapin Cluster is needed just to serve the number of students we have enrolled at present. The number of students enrolling in the Chapin Cluster schools is ever-increasing.

You asked "...When will District 5 School Board provide tax payers justification for building a new school in the proposed location and explain how schools currently operating will see a positive impact as a result of this new school?"

Answer: Please note that due diligence is in process at this time on the Amicks Ferry Road site that the Administration has proposed a location for an additional school in the Chapin Cluster. Once due diligence has been completed, the Administration will make a determination as to whether or not to recommend the proceed to purchase the property. If the Administration recommends purchasing the property, the Board will consider the value of the location of this site. Any additional elementary school built in the Chapin Cluster would obviously make it possible for Chapin Elementary School and Lake Murray Elementary School to serve the number of students aligned with their intended program capacities. Our goal is to further neighborhood schools. To continue alignment with that goal, we have determined that it is desirable to place a school west of Chapin. If we are unable to do that, we may end up with a situation where the students west of Chapin are the Chapin Elementary population, the current Chapin Elementary students residing east of Chapin get

moved to Lake Murray Elementary and those students are moved to a location further east. A circumstance like that would not be consistent with our goals and history.

You asked, "What CURRENT traffic pattern/SCDOT traffic safety studies have been or are scheduled to be done to ensure all roads allow safe access to and from site?"

Answer: Approval must be obtained from the SCDOT before the South Carolina Department of Education's Office of School Facilities will approve the site for a school to be constructed. Please understand that the students from the area attending Chapin Elementary are already traversing Amicks Ferry Road to get to school in the morning. That traffic causes more congestion at the Amicks Ferry / Columbia Avenue / Old Lexington intersections. Keeping that traffic more local should have a positive effect on a portion of the traffic load. Our school designs always address ensuring safe and adequate ingress and egress to the property. Our designers work diligently to minimize traffic impact of our facilities.

You asked, "What steps will be taken to ensure reasonable access to water, sewer, etc.? And how will this impact those currently on well and septic?"

Answer: Water and Sewer service through the Town of Chapin are presently on site. There is a twelve-inch water main and a twelve-inch force sewer main. Locating a school on the site will have no foreseeable effect on any neighbors who utilize wells and septic tanks.

You asked "What type of studies will be or have been conducted to test soil conditions/topography and what guidelines are in place to ensure minimal disturbance to wetlands and habitats for endangered species and archaeological deposits?"

Answer: One of the most attractive virtues of the site is that it is largely a flat, open field which will require minimal site work and which our consultant advises is devoid of wetlands. Our initial information is that none of these concerns is present on the land. The District complies with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations regarding wetlands and wildlife habitat. Should any of those issues arise, the District will address them in accord with applicable legal precedent.

You asked "...When will District 5 School Board provide tax payers an update on how the Districts (sic) proactively working with (state) agencies to ensure responsible growth?"

Answer: The District is always eager to work in partnership with county and state agencies as requested or as appropriate. Understand, however, that we are committed to providing an excellent education for all of our students. To do that, we have to have appropriate facilities in appropriate locations. We base our site selection on actual and projected growth numbers arrived at based upon enrollment, building permit and zoning applications and other data coupled with experience.

You asked "...What measures are in place to ensure the purchase of land is used for the sole purpose of building a school only?" And what guarantees are the members of District 5 school board willing to give the community to ensure the District has NO prior/future collaboration with developers?"

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Answer: One of the statutory responsibilities of the School Trustees is to “Provide schoolhouses.”¹ The Board purchases land for District purposes. The District makes land purchases when the opportunity arises to obtain needed parcels for a prospective school or district site. I do not speak for the Board and would point out that board members change and that a current board cannot issue a guarantee which is binding on future boards. As a general rule, if the district purchases land it will be used as a school site. South Carolina law provides a mechanism for property to be re-sold where appropriate.

Respectfully yours,



Stephen W. Hefner, Ed.D.
Superintendent

¹ S.C. Code §59-19-90



Q's

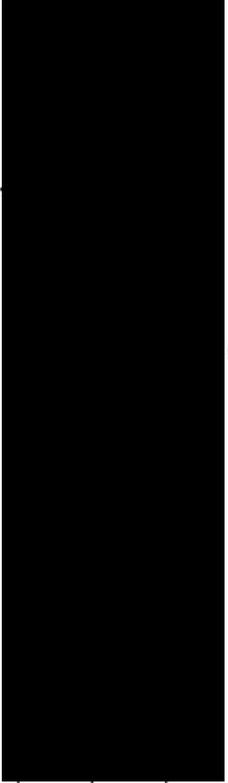
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district five
OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES & ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Public Participation Sign-Up

NAME:

ADDRESS:



TOPIC OF CONCERN:

7 Questions - Due Diligence Process
Emailed to Board Members.

E-Mailed 5/24 5/8/17



Stephen Hefner <shefner@lexrich5.org>

District 5 School Board - Community Questions Concerning Due Diligence Process

1 message

Mon, May 8, 2017 at 5:02 PM

To: ebaumgar@lexrich5.org, michaelcates@lexrich5.org, rgantt@lexrich5.org, lhaltiwa@lexrich5.org, behutchison@lexrich5.org, ewhite@lexrich5.org, shefner@lexrich5.org, jhammond@lexrich5.org
Cc: irmonews@aol.com, chapintimes@att.net, jerrybellune@yahoo.com, cottinghamrob@yahoo.com, allwiswebproducers@wistv.com, saveamicksferry@gmail.com

District 5 Board Members,

I would like to thank you in advance for the opportunity to speak at the school board meeting this evening, Monday, May 8, 2017.

I'm sure you all understand, given the time allotted, it is impossible to share the numerous and valid concerns of your constituents. We, in return realize questions not presented clearly and/or submitted in writing makes preparing a reply to the community you serve a difficult task. For these reason, I've been asked to share with the board a list of key questions pertaining to the Due Diligence process. I respectfully request District 5 School Board acknowledge this email and submit a reply to **SAVEAMICKSFERRYROAD@GMAIL.com**. We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,



SaveAmicksFerryRoad@gmail.com

#SaveAmicksFerryRoad

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has. – Margaret Mead

Following each of the 7 questions you will find just a few of the over 200 statements from the 611 concerned citizens who have signed the SAVE AMICKS FERRY ROAD petition. <https://www.ipetitions.com/petition/save-amicks-ferry-road>

1. In determining the general location of a needed school site what **CURRENT** student population studies (enrollment studies) and five-year student projection studies have been conducted?

 Infrastructure is completely inadequate. Urge enrollment study to be made public, strongly urge consideration to add on more cost effective than new construction. Be considerate

of our tax \$\$\$\$\$.

[REDACTED]: I do not believe this is appropriate use of our tax dollars nor do I like not having a say in how our community funds are being used. I support education just not this idea.

[REDACTED]: Infrastructure FIRST...then a school. Better yet, how about a managed growth master plan where residents have input into its creation.

[REDACTED]

Building a school in this area is irresponsible and shortsighted. It would destroy the nearby land owners' properties and bottleneck traffic in and off Amick's Ferry Road. Without proper planning and road infrastructure plans in place, this is a failure to plan or to take into account the community at large and their right to travel freely to and from their homes. Rarely does the District improve traffic flow when schools are built. Sadly, Kim Murphy was right, decisions were being made without public input for years. This is just one example.

2. There is little community support in the idea that current schools would benefit by having a new school built on the proposed Amicks Ferry road site. When will District 5 School Board provide tax payers justification for building a new school in the proposed location and explain how schools currently operating will see a positive impact as a result of this new school?

Anonymous: I can't believe the local community is not being consulted on this. Once again, our school board begs the question, "Who do they represent?"

[REDACTED] Without a doubt, I disagree. This area has a habit of proceeding with development without consideration of the residents...What happened to announcing the proposal to the public and getting feedback as how our dollars are spent.

[REDACTED]: Traffic flow in Chapin is horrible. They keep adding more business but not improving the traffic situation. We need right turn lanes in many location that works improve traffic flow tremendously. Last thing we need is more traffic on Amicks Ferry!

[REDACTED]: This was supposed to be completed within the last bond referendum... The super and board doubted the Chapin area population projections and spent the money on projects not in the referendum that was passed. Time for board and superintendent to be held accountable to the public.

[REDACTED]: NO NEW SCHOOL- the 5th district board has lied and cheated the taxpayers ENOUGH!

[REDACTED] Signing because this plan is a careless misallocation of resources, and a blatant disregard of the voices of Chapin's constituents

3. What CURRENT traffic pattern/ SCDOT traffic safety studies have been or are scheduled to be done to ensure all roads allow safe access to and from site?

[REDACTED] There are numerous points of concern that come with building a school on Amicks Ferry Road. I believe the most impact will come from additional development that always follows the construction of schools in our district. All one needs to do is ride by Spring Hill High School, Ballentine Elementary, or Lake Murray Elementary to witness this. More subdivisions will bring more traffic to a road that was just inadequately upgraded (minimal shoulders). Numerous teenage drivers already travel this curvy, dangerous road every morning and afternoon to get to/from school. More thought needs to be put into location and the Board members need to actually visit the proposed location before continuing with due diligence. In our District, Dutch Fork Elementary is a fine example of a school built on a major thoroughfare. Traffic in front of that school is a nightmare for parents and commuters. We do not need to repeat this mistake on a main artery of transportation for people living in the Caro Lane, Night Harbor, Timberlake areas of Chapin. It is, quite simply, shortsighted.

[REDACTED] Agree 100% - Amicks Ferry road proposed site is not a good choice for a school as the traffic is already bad & will only get worse as the area grows...even at the rate it is without yet another school! The roads) would have to be upgraded & turn lanes/traffic lights put in for it to even make logistical sense to anyone involved.

[REDACTED]: Absolutely NO ! I fought with the highway department this summer over the paving of Amicks Ferry only to find out in order to get the money to pave it they classified it as a SAFETY project, then lowered the speed limit. Even the school buses don't obey the 40-mph limit.

[REDACTED]: I disagree with building a school on Amicks Ferry Road when land has already been purchased on Mt. Vernon church road for building a school. There is too much traffic on Amicks Ferry Road now. This just doesn't make much sense when the road is one way in and one way out. The last improvement on the road has already proven there's not enough space to make a difference in the traffic flow. Short of running already existing residents off their properties how do you purpose to make traffic flow better? There has to be more outlets for the amount of population that is already there. By adding a school and the planned housing developments you are setting the residents up for a catastrophic event to happen. Should a fire break out residents would not be able to get out and emergency vehicles and equipment would not be able to get in.

[REDACTED] Have we not learned our lesson time after time? You don't build and build and then try to figure out how to deal with the traffic issues. Amick's Ferry Road can barely handle the current traffic flow and there are many more homes soon to be added on Long Pine Road, Lever Creek and Paradise Cove.

[REDACTED] Given that a previous land purchase has already been made it doesn't make sense to pursue this when there is so much local resident opposition.

[REDACTED] Lexington County just spent mega bucks "improving" Amicks Ferry Road. Shoulders on this narrow, winding country road remain at 12" or less with deep ditches on both sides along most of its many miles. Speed limits in many areas are abruptly down to 25 or 30 miles an hour because of blind turns, blind driveways and farm vehicle access. Below Long Pine Rd intersection there is no alternative to leaving the peninsula and no room for an emergency vehicles to pass cars in opposing lanes without drivers going into the ditches. Having a school so far down the peninsula is foolish. The cost of gas for the buses alone is prohibited but when you add in extra man-hours required by bus drivers, teachers, suppliers and the general public it is a bad alternative to a more central location in the area. It should be located on "the mainland" which can be approached by the population of the greater Chapin area and other district schools from directions 360 on the compass without a long drive down an isolated peninsula with very limited access.

[REDACTED] Just moved to Chapin from Northeast Columbia. NE Columbia has been building and building with no forethought to the infrastructure and it has ruined NE Columbia. Please don't ruin Chapin with more traffic problems.

[REDACTED]: The proposed site is very close to the Lexington County Fire Station 22 on Amicks Ferry are. The fire trucks will be traveling past the proposed school location with lights and siren responding to emergency calls. This is a very undesirable situation as school traffic and school busses inhibiting safe emergence response during the start and end of the school day!

[REDACTED]

The road will not be able to handle the increased volume of traffic the way it is presently set up. In that area of the road there is no secondary egress. There is only one way out of that end of Amicks Ferry until you reach the fire station. In the event of a disaster, or need to evacuate, it will cause undue stress on the school and the residents. If other property has already been purchased, then that needs to be evaluated as a more viable option

4. What steps will be taken to ensure reasonable access to water, sewer, etc.? And how will this impact those currently on well and septic?

5. What type of studies will be or have been conducted to test soil conditions/topography and What guidelines are in place to ensure minimal disturbance to wetlands and habitats for endangered species and archaeological deposits?

[REDACTED]: No new school on Amicks Ferry - traffic is already at a dangerous level and it would destroy further wildlife refuges within the area.

[REDACTED] With only one way in and one way out of Amicks Ferry Road, this school would bring nothing but traffic, accidents, and major delays. If there is an accident no one will be able to get through. People needing to get to work and get to the other schools will be inconvenienced with traffic and huge delays. Farmers and livestock will be shaken. There are plenty of other spots that a new school can go that can accommodate for two-way traffic and more than one way in and out to get to a school. It's bad enough we have so many new houses being built on and around Amicks Ferry that will already lead to more cars and more traffic, we DO NOT NEED a new school on Amicks Ferry or down Amicks Ferry Road to add to this. Thank you.

████████████████████ To much traffic add on to the schools already built. Do not destroy any more wet lands we are destroying Chapin and running out wild life there has to be some other way to add on to the schools already here.

6. State agency approvals are required for items listed in the Due Diligence process. When will District 5 School Board provide tax payers an update on how the Districts proactively working with these agencies to ensure responsible growth?

7. A large majority of the Chapin community firmly believe Districts 5's goal is the build the school to meet developer's goals rather than build a school that meets the needs of our community. What measures are in place to ensure the purchase of land is used for the sole purpose of building a school ONLY? And what guarantees are the members of District 5 school board willing to give the community to ensure the District has NO prior/future collaboration with developers?

LETTER TO THE editor

████████████████████

CHAPIN NEWS

MARCH 23

To All Concerned,

My first reaction to the proposed site of an elementary school on Amicks Ferry Rd was... surprise. I wondered, why build a school for our youngest students on a fairly inaccessible road and such a long distance from I26 and emergency/medical services? So, I wondered, is it possible that this rather isolated site is actually a "carrot"? Rather than build a school to meet our community's needs, build the school to meet builders' goals. That is, a school would attract young families into new home developments where none currently exist. Who, really, is being served by a school in this location?

My second reaction was to question the data. While Chapin is undergoing a renewal, how can we assume this means a surge in a student population? Isn't it possible that some of the 4 million who retire each year are creating this increase? They certainly will not place any demand on elementary schools. In order to –wisely – build a school on Amicks Ferry Rd. data needs to be available to those making such an impactful and expensive decision. This is standard due diligence.

I am a retired educator. I thoroughly believe education is a national priority. However, the numbers, the location, the motivations, and the safety issues all need to be addressed. Those who make decisions for our community need to be informed and unbiased in the final decision regarding this project.

████████████████████ The developers are selling our schools! Every new sub division advertises, "Chapin Schools"! The developers don't pay an infrastructure fee nor do they contribute to the schools. They create chaos, take their profits, and leave us with a school bond; and county council thinks that is growth.

████████████████████ As a retiree and 16-year resident of the area I do not want to see my quality of life lowered any further by this construction