

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Kevin Foy and Chapel Hill Town Council

FROM: Doug Ostanek

SUBJECT: Petition for Town Council to consider co-locating the proposed third high school with the proposed Southern Community Park

DATE: January 7, 2003

An informal group of concerned Orange County citizens has been meeting over the past month concerning the site selection process for a proposed third high school in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools district. Our group enthusiastically supports the Board of Education's decision to target the southern area of the district for the third high school given the northern orientation of the existing high schools and the large existing and forecasted population of high school students in this part of the district. This petition is in support of the letter you recently received from Valerie Foushee, chair of the Board of Education. We believe having a high school in the southern part of the district makes sense from an environmental perspective due to shorter and fewer automobile trips, from a safety standpoint due to fewer young drivers on the road and from a general livability standpoint by reducing cross-town traffic congestion.

Our group has closely followed the site selection process and the difficulties the School Board has encountered as they have evaluated suitable locations. As more sites are evaluated and subsequently eliminated, our group is more convinced that serious consideration of the proposed Southern Community Park site be undertaken. This site offers the following advantages as a combined high school / community park location:

1. A significant portion of the site is composed of flat, dry land that is vegetated with early growth pines. The non-buildable portion of the site serves as an excellent buffer to the existing single family homes in the Dogwood Acres neighborhood.
2. The site is within walking and/or biking distance of a large number of households thereby reducing the number of vehicular trips to and from the school and allowing for smaller parking lots.
3. The site is well served by existing transportation systems such as the Town's greenway network, Highway 15-501, and the express bus service to the adjacent Park and Ride Lot.
4. There are excellent opportunities for shared resources ranging from the aforementioned Park and Ride Lot (which could be used for overflow parking at night and on weekends) to the potential sharing of athletic facilities like a gymnasium and ballfields with the Town's Parks and Recreation Department.

We understand that the Town has made significant progress in programming and designing the Southern Community Park and realize that it is difficult to 'throw away' this work; however, we believe this is a unique opportunity to look at all the options before any actual construction begins. Therefore, we request that the Town Council be open to starting a dialog^{ue} with the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Board of Education about the possibility of co-locating the third high school with the Southern Community Park.