

Saratoga Community Consolidated School District 60C

Planning for the Future

Minutes of Building / Life Safety Advisory Committee – October 3, 2006

Present:

Gilfillan & Callahan Architects: Nikki Bridges & Steve Nelson

First Trust Portfolios: Mike Rogers

Board Members: Eric Rasmusson, Steve Barr, Ron Cingrani

School Personnel: Kathy Perry, Supt.; Vern Fatlan, Custodian; Russ Farmer, Principal;

Liz Peterson, Asst. Principal, Cindy Edge, Secretary; Sandy Barbier, Teacher;

Holly Waldron, Teacher; Rita Gemmer, Teacher; Kenneth George, Teacher

Advisory Committee Members: Matt Eber, Anna Hansen, Colin Monk, Kris Torkelson;

Mitch Nystedt; Susan Williams

Nikki Bridges and Steve Nelson presented the Master Facility Plan. They explained that the plan included five sections of each grade plus enough special education classrooms to support the enrollment. The plan also included an additional gym, locker rooms, cafeteria, kitchen, music and art rooms, and new school office. The plan changes the “front” of the building to face west. The plan included relocating the bus barn to the southwest corner of the school site. Additional parking and athletic fields were also included.

The architects presented two options of the plan. One option involved a tear down of the older sections of the building and the other involved renovating the older sections of the building. The costs included were what they considered high estimates. They also explained that the building could be done in phases as the district can afford.

Mrs. Perry then provided information on current enrollment and enrollment history. She explained that all rooms are currently being used in the building. She also stated that current needs are additional gym space, additional classrooms, additional lunch room space, and additional art and music rooms. As the school moves to having four sections of each grade the amount of students in gym classes is becoming a safety concern. Mrs. Perry explained that without constructing any new classrooms, the district could house up to five additional sections. Mrs. Perry said that the current general music room and the north computer lab could be used next year for additional home rooms. This would require moving the existing north computer lab computers to classrooms and purchasing two additional mobile labs at a cost of less than \$25,000 each. The general music teacher would be required to move from room to room to teach music. An additional junior high classroom could become available by changing the junior high schedule. Mrs. Perry then informed the group that the architects estimate that six additional classrooms, necessary life safety work in the older sections of the building, a new gym and locker rooms, new music and art rooms, and relocating the bus barn will cost approximately \$13,000,000.

Mike Rogers then presented financial information to the group. He explained that the term “backdoor referendum” is used when bonds are issued without going through the formal referendum process. His firm estimates that the district could issue up to

\$5,000,000 worth of bonds for construction purposes without increasing the tax rate. The current bond portion of the \$2.7287 tax rate is \$.1906. The current outstanding bonds will be paid off in fiscal year 2009-10. Assuming new debt would continue the approximate \$.19 tax rate until they were paid off.

Another option to finance a construction project would be to ask the voters to pass a building bond referendum. The upcoming election dates are April 2007, March 2008, and November 2008. The district can bond up to 6.9% of the tax base or approximately \$10,000,000. He explained that it is possible to request more than the district's debt limit in a referendum because the district would have up to five years to issue the bonds. This would assume that in the five year time span, the tax base of the district would increase to allow the additional debt capacity. If the tax base does not reach the needed amount, the bonds may not be issued.

Finally, he explained that the district could ask for a voter approved referendum and issue bonds through a "backdoor referendum". The backdoor referendum bonds would be used to address immediate needs. Many present commented that the term "backdoor referendum" seems to have a bad connotation. Mr. Rogers agreed, but explained that that is what the process is commonly called. Mr. Rogers stressed that communication with the community is extremely important regardless of what method is chosen. He explained that it is common for districts to issue bonds through the backdoor referendum process, but that informing the community about the process is important so that they understand why it is necessary and that it is being done openly.

Sue Williams provided some history regarding the last time the district passed a building referendum. The referendum passed in 1993 by eight votes. She said that a committee of volunteers spent a considerable amount of time informing voters of the need for a new building. She also explained that there were a lot of people involved in the effort to pass the referendum.

The next Building / Life Safety Advisory Committee Meeting will be October 17, 2006 at 6:00 p.m. in the Multi-purpose Room.

Kathy Perry
Superintendent