

Testimony of Steve Lucchesi and Cindy Ardinger to the Board of Education on November 8, 2007 concerning the Facility Planning Committee for Mt. Hebron High School.

Steve Lucchesi:

I am here tonight as a member of the facility planning committee for Mt. Hebron High School. I am not here tonight to ask you for more money or to delay the project, I am here because we have been told that only you can change the misguided process we are being forced to follow.

At the first planning committee meeting we were told we could afford a 25,000 square foot annex and our goal that day was to decide where it should be located. This is before existing deficiencies were reviewed or discussion over what functional areas might best be suited for an annex. When we questioned whether we could develop a solution for the school and then determine what it would cost, we were told No - the Board's direction was clear and only the Board could change the process.

While the Board established a budget in the Capital Program, we are not aware that the Board dictated direction on how the planning committee should arrive at the solution. In fact, it was our understanding that the planning committee would be able to decide what the solution should be and how the annex could comprehensively solve the problems of the school.

The meeting ended with no action as to where the annex should be located because we didn't know how big it was, what functions it served, or how it would be physically connected to the existing building and the internal circulation paths. The decision was made to first look at the educational needs of the school based on the programmatic analysis accomplished in the Gilbert analysis.

To assist in understanding the existing school, prior to the second meeting a color coded layout used by Gilbert in their programmatic analysis was distributed. In reviewing, we discovered major discrepancies in the analysis. 28 out of 64 classrooms are assigned to wrong functional areas and at least 5 classrooms used for either storage or staff planning are assigned as teaching stations. Basically, the analysis is worthless as a tool to analyze program needs. There is also a major difference in total program area between Gilbert's and earlier reports. How do two architects measure the same building and come up with such different areas? After spending over \$1M in planning fees, we don't even know what we have. So with no objective data on the existing programs within the school, they want us to vote at the next meeting to decide which programs get improved and which don't.

It doesn't have to be this difficult. There is a simple straightforward approach that design professionals use every day to analyze the needs of a facility.

1. Inventory the building and accurately tabulate what exists.
2. Compare it to standards.

3. Identify deficiencies.
4. Develop solution(s) to remedy the deficiencies.
5. Price out the solution.
6. Compare the cost to the available budget.
7. Determine what elements to defer to meet budget.

Mount Hebron's problems can be solved – but only if it is done in a logical fashion. Let's spend our taxpayers' money wisely.

Cindy Ardinger:

My fellow committee member has presented a logical and time efficient process for the Design Committee to utilize in the determination of the optimal solution to Mt. Hebron's needs. This process is one that has been discussed and adopted by a prior board, this is the process utilized in the 1985/86 renovation of Glenelg, this is the process utilized in the 1986/87 renovation of Atholton, and this is the process recently used to address Howard High School. This process is one that is contained within your policy, specifically Howard County Public School System Policy 6020.

Howard County Public School System Policy 6020 states that due to the size, complexity and potential cost for the program of building new facilities and renovations, the Superintendent is required to submit a design that meets the following guidelines:

1. Educational program spatial requirements and assessment of the adequacy of existing facilities to accommodate present or proposed educational programs, including a broad spectrum of special education programs in a least restrictive environment.
2. Cost/benefit consideration relating to facility modernization, renovation, or new construction.
3. Policy 6020.R.II.b.5. states that the facility planning and design process allow for the orderly and systematic design of school facilities, such process is to be conducted by using the approved educational specifications for elementary, middle, or high schools as the basic policy reference for the facility in question. This document, previously approved by the Board, describes the basic educational philosophy, instructional program, and spatial requirements needed to implement this program. Specifically the architect is required to develop a series of three design studies that meet the objectives of the educational specifications, the planning team, and Board policy.

To proceed in the manner as directed by HCPSS personnel and as set forth in agendas provided to the Design Committee would result in a direct violation of Board Policy 6020. As a committee member and a citizen of Howard County, I cannot in good conscience support a blatant and willful disregard of Board policy, a policy that was enacted with the intent of ensuring an equitable opportunity for all Howard County students, despite their point of entry.

Based on the need for direction from the Board in regards to the application of Policy 6020, combined with the magnitude of this decision on the future of education of Mt. Hebron students, I am requesting the following from this Board:

a. The Howard County Board of Education direct the Design Committee in writing to comply with the guidelines of Policy 6020 or to violate the guidelines of Policy 6020 in regards to the design process for the proposed Mt. Hebron High School renovation.

b. The Howard County Board of Education directs the Howard County School System to identify a comprehensive menu of needs and cost of the programmatic solutions for Mt. Hebron High School, such menu to be shared with the Design Committee.

This request is consistent with County Executive Ken Ulman in his email dated November 4, 2007 and I quote

“I share the opinion that the planning process for Mount Hebron should be comprehensive and assess the full scope of issues to be addressed. This is not only important for Mount Hebron, but also fiscally responsible for a longer-term view of the school system’s budget. “

This request is consistent with the request of Mt. Hebron community members as set forth in various emails sent to you.

This request is consistent with the request of Mt. Hebron High School teachers as set forth in various letters sent to you.

And this request is consistent with your policy, Policy 6020, a policy that you have adhered to in past renovation projects.

Testimony to the Board of Education on the Mount Hebron Facility Planning Committee

November 8, 2007



Help Mount Hebron Committee



Facility Planning Committee Meeting 1

- Goal - Locate Annex on Site
- Board Direction required to modify process
- Annex Location Tabled Pending Analysis of Educational Program



Help Mount Hebron Committee



Educational Program Analysis

- Errors in Gilbert Analysis
 - 28 of 64 Classrooms Assigned to wrong functional area
 - 5 spaces incorrectly classified as “teaching stations”
- Discrepancies in Space Measurements
 - SEA April 2006: 123,808 sf
 - Gilbert June 2007: 137,565sf



Help Mount Hebron Committee



Proposed Process

- Accurate Inventory
- Comparison to Standards
- Determine Deficiencies
- Develop Solutions
- Price Out Solutions
- Compare Cost to Available Budget
- Identify Elements to Defer to Meet Budget



Help Mount Hebron Committee



Policy 6020 Design Requirements

- Assessment of Existing Facilities to Accommodate Educational Programs
- Cost/ Benefit Analysis
- 3 Design Alternatives Based on Ed Specs



Help Mount Hebron Committee



Requested Board Direction

- Require Compliance with Policy 6020
- Comprehensive Menu of Programmatic Improvements and Costs
- Provide Accurate Data to Facility Planning Committee



Help Mount Hebron Committee



County Executive Direction

“The planning process for Mount Hebron should be comprehensive and assess the full scope of issues to be addressed. This is not only important for Mount Hebron, but also fiscally responsible for a longer-term view of the school system’s budget.”

Ken Ulman

11/4/07



Help Mount Hebron Committee

