

**PUBLIC FACILITIES REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING**

**DATE:** June 1, 2016  
**TIME:** 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.  
**PLACE:** Thomas Jefferson Middle School (Library)  
125 S. Old Glebe Rd.

**STAFF COORDINATOR:** Michelle Stahlhut, 703-228-3541

**Site Location:**  
Thomas Jefferson Middle School  
125 S. Old Glebe Rd.  
Arlington, Virginia 22204

**Applicant:**  
John Chadwick  
Arlington Public Schools  
2770 S. Taylor St.  
Arlington, Virginia 22206

**Architect:**  
Wyck Knox, Project Manager  
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200 East Market Street  
Charlottesville, VA 22902

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Robert Gibson	DES – Planning		
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Justin Falango	CPHD – Planning, Urban Design		

**SUMMARY:** Arlington Public Schools (APS) has begun the Building Level Planning Committee (BLPC) and the Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC) processes to evaluate a proposed new elementary school building at the Thomas Jefferson Middle School site. The new elementary school building will house the existing Patrick Henry Elementary School program (located at 701 S. Highland St.). The new school building will provide 725 seats and is projected to open by September 2019. Unique to this process, the new elementary school at the Thomas Jefferson site will also be evaluated by the BLPC and PFRC during joint committee meetings. Joint meetings are currently planned on a monthly basis. Separate BLPC meetings are scheduled and PFRC meetings will be scheduled as needed. The BLPC and PFRC processes are both in the conceptual stage and major topics such as building placement, parking, site access and circulation are currently being discussed.

**BACKGROUND:** There are a number of APS and County processes underway with regard to planning the new elementary school at the Thomas Jefferson site, outlined below.

*APS CIP Process and the Thomas Jefferson Working Group (TJWG) and South Arlington Working Group (SAWG) Processes*

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2015-24 APS Capital Improvements Program (CIP) was approved by the Arlington School Board in June 2014. The CIP called for funding for a new 725-seat elementary school at the Thomas Jefferson site. The CIP also set the total budget for providing the seats

(\$126,000,000) and the deadline for their delivery (September 2019). The Thomas Jefferson Working Group (TJWG) was established to study the site between September 2014 and January 2015. In January 2015, the TJWG issued a report summarizing their findings about the potential for an elementary school at the Thomas Jefferson site. As a result, the County Board decided not to support a process moving forward for this school site option. Out of this process, the South Arlington Working Group (SAWG) was formed with appointments made in June 2015. The SAWG was formed to study various sites for a new South Arlington elementary school. The process ran through November 2015, and the SAWG issued a final report including a preference to build a new elementary school for Patrick Henry on the Thomas Jefferson site. In December 2015, the County Board and the School Board School approved the Thomas Jefferson site as the site for a new neighborhood elementary school.

In March 2016, the School Board approved the first three (3) preferences of the SAWG:

- Build a new school for Patrick Henry Elementary School on the Thomas Jefferson site.
- Relocate an existing Montessori Program from Drew Elementary School to the existing Patrick Henry Elementary school site.
- Open approximately 400 seats at Drew Elementary School as a result of the Montessori program relocation.

The new elementary school project at the Thomas Jefferson site, would consist of a multi-story elementary school building to be located on the northwest corner of the property and provide for 725 seats. In addition to the school building, the elementary school site would contain a structured, parking garage. The layout and design of the site, school building, and parking garage will be determined by the current, APS led, Building Level Planning Committee (BLPC) and the County led Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC) processes. A project budget of approximately \$59 million is proposed.

#### County/APS Review Process

At a joint work session with the School Board held on February 19, 2016, the County Board endorsed a planning process for the Thomas Jefferson site. The APS planning process for the new elementary school at the Thomas Jefferson site will incorporate the APS process, the BLPC, and the County's PFRC process. Unique to the new elementary school at Thomas Jefferson process, both committees will work jointly in designing the new elementary school. The BLPC and PFRC will hold joint committee meetings which are scheduled on a monthly basis. Separate BLPC meetings are scheduled and PFRC meetings will be scheduled (as needed) to provide the individual committees more time when discussing certain topics.

The design process includes three (3) phases: a conceptual phase, a schematic phase, and a final phase during which a use permit for the project would be reviewed by the County Board. The BLPC consists of APS staff, teachers, parents and PTA members, representation from community groups, and County staff. The PFRC is a County Board-appointed committee consisting of representatives of the Planning Commission (one of which is designated by the County Board as Committee Chair) and several other commissions, APS representatives, and at-large members. It also includes project-specific members representing the Arlington Heights and

Alcova Civic Associations. The PFRC also contains community representation from the Arbors of Arlington Condominiums, the Dominion Square Townhouses, and the Dominion Arms Apartments. Other project-specific, representative groups include (but are not limited to): the Sports Commission, the County Fair, Urban Forestry, the Friends of TJ Park, and the APS Facilities Advisory Council (FAC). As part of the joint BLPC/PFRC process, there are five (5) members who are serving as appointees on both committees.

### **Site Characteristics:**

The following provides additional information about the site and surroundings:

Site: The 784,323 square foot or approximately 18 acre site (new elementary school site area and other commonly owned properties related to Thomas Jefferson Park and Community Center) is bound on the north by single family dwellings and Arlington Boulevard, on the east by Thomas Jefferson Middle School and Thomas Jefferson Park and Community Center, on the south by Dominion Arms Apartments, the Dominion Square Townhouses and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street South, and on the west by the Arbors of Arlington Condominiums and South Old Glebe Road.

Zoning: The site is zoned “S-3A” Special District within the [Arlington County Zoning Ordinance \(ACZO\)](#). The purpose of the “S-3A” Special District is to encourage the retention of certain properties in a relatively undeveloped state. Land so designated may include publicly or privately owned properties which have distinct and unique site advantages or other features so as to make them desirable to retain as active or passive recreation (including but not limited to: parks, schools, pathways, and other public facilities). Schools are a permitted use by provision of a use permit subject to ACZO Section §4.1.

Land Use: The site is identified on the [General Land Use Plan \(GLUP\)](#) as “Public”.

Neighborhood: The site is located within the Arlington Heights Civic Association and is adjacent (to the west) to the Alcova Heights Civic Association. The PFRC also contains community representation from the Arbors of Arlington Condominiums, the Dominion Square Townhouses, and the Dominion Arms Apartments.



Source: Google Maps

**DISCUSSION:** The APS community process for the new elementary school at Thomas Jefferson (or NES at TJ) site began on April 20, 2016 with the first joint BLPC/PFRC meeting. Since that time, the BLPC has met once as an individual committee (with the most recent meeting occurring on May 4, 2016) and the second joint BLPC/PFRC meeting occurred on May 18, 2015. The second, joint committee meeting included a discussion of conceptual site options for the NES at TJ site based on a previous interactive site analysis exercise. The next, individual BLPC and PFRC meetings are scheduled for June 1, 2016 (these will be held as successive meetings on the same evening), and the next joint BLPC/PFRC meeting is scheduled for June 15, 2016. Presentations and Minutes from BLPC meetings can be found on the [APS Design and Construction: New Elementary School at the Jefferson Site](#) website and on the PFRC's [Thomas Jefferson \(New Elementary School\)](#) website.

The project architects, VMDO Architects provided [a presentation](#) on background information on the history of the site (including the outcomes of both the TJWG and SAWG processes), sustainable school design, and a Toole Design Group transportation planner provided a short overview of the role of transportation analysis for the site. At the May 18, 2016 joint BLPC/PFRC meeting, APS and VMDO presented a series of conceptual options for the NES at TJ site. The proposed options are viewable as part of their [May 18, 2016 BLPC/PFRC presentation](#).

### Proposal

The NES and TJ will accommodate 725 seats within a multi-story building located next to the existing Thomas Jefferson Middle School building. Some conceptual site design issues to

consider include site access and transportation impacts along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street South and South Old Glebe Road (and with the proposed bus loop north of the site), street parking availability along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street South and South Old Glebe Road, the design and number of parking spaces within the structured parking garage underneath the proposed school building, final building placement along the northwest corner of the site, coordination between the existing middle school and community/parkland facilities associated with the site, and stormwater management.

Principles of Civic Design and Thomas Jefferson Working Group (TJWG) “Appendix A”

The [\*Principles of Civic Design in Arlington\*](#) were developed by the PFRC in 2008 and are intended to inform the design of civic facilities in Arlington, including buildings and other projects, to ensure they meet community goals for attractiveness, durability, and functionality. The principles reinforce and supplement existing County planning documents and policies, and are meant to promote compliance with certain basic principles, but not to inhibit creative design. The Principles will inform and guide the PFRC’s discussion of the proposed addition with regard to civic values, site and orientation, building form, and building details and materials.

As further guidance, the BLPC/PFRC are also considering [“Appendix A” of the TJWG \(Guidelines, Conditions, & Design Principles\)](#) for the development of the school project and site. The guidelines include:

1. Recover and improve green areas as usable, open spaces.
2. Protect the parkland east and north of the APS/County property line.
3. Minimize construction related impacts on associated, site facilities and maintaining coordination among APS, Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), and other major stakeholders (the County Fair Board, theater users and others).
4. Minimize impacts on surrounding communities.
5. Enhance existing community amenities on the Thomas Jefferson site.
6. Provide recreation needs of additional students which does not impact general community use of Thomas Jefferson Park.
7. Provide for a comprehensive, well-planned approach to parking for the site.
8. Locate environmental or energy-related features anywhere on the site (as both school and community enhancements).
9. Provide for a comprehensive transportation solution.
10. Determine school programming for the NES at TJ site through a transparent and engaged community process.

## Use Permit

The ACZO distinguishes between uses permitted “by-right” and uses allowed by “special exception.” The use permit is one form of special exception, and is required for schools in the “S-3A” zoning district. The use permit offers a process for considering and approving such uses, subject to special conditions particular to the character of the use. Potential areas that may be addressed by conditions include but are not limited to: construction, transportation, environmental impacts, and recreational fields. After the BLPC and PFRC processes are complete, APS will file a use permit for the proposed school addition. Use permits are approved by the County Board.