



July 14, 2017

The Honorable Jay Fisette, Chair  
The Arlington County School Board  
1426 N. Quincy St.  
Arlington, Virginia 22201

*RE: Lubber Run–Concept Plan Design*

The Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC) held a meeting on May 31 to discuss the current concept proposals for the new Lubber Run Community Center. The PFRC consists of representatives from County Commissions, as well as project specific representatives.

The PFRC process for Lubber Run is different from recent reviews of school projects as the County project is not subject to a use permit. The Department of Parks and Recreation has been conducting a robust community engagement process during the initial concept development phase. PFRC review is one of many inputs in the concept design process.

Generally speaking, the PFRC supports the proposed design, although would prefer a building with a smaller footprint. In addition, PFRC expressed a desire to have more of the open space at grade and not separated by the building.

The sections below describe PFRC’s discussion and its conclusions regarding the proposal.

***Building Massing and Design***

The Lubber Run architect, VMDO, presented an “Integrated Scheme” design that focused the gym in the NE corner, moving half of the program space into the park and raising the height of the office space to reduce overall footprint which resulted in a centralized entrance which increased accessibility and maximizes connectivity.

PFRC members provided comments on the Integrated Scheme as detailed below.

*Traffic*

A PFRC member asked about the parking requirement and if there is an opportunity to share parking with Arlington Public Schools (APS). Staff responded there is no current agreement with APS. There was a question about adding additional parking garage floors and staff added it is less efficient in terms of costs

*Preserving trees*

PFRC member asked about removal of trees along the street and the architect responded they are trying to keep the trees but will replant as required.

### *General Design*

PFRC members said the right side of the design is good with the open lawn, parking, and courts but the footprint extends too far into the park and not having two big “spokes” would preserve open space. Another comment included this building is a low building and it should be built up more to accommodate future needs. A member asked whether it would be possible to build on top of the building in the future. Staff responded that they would have to check, but it might need additional support to the structure, but most likely it could be done. Members like the naturally sloped playground.

### *Public Art*

In response to a question about if there will be public art, staff responded there is no budget for public art although a PFRC member suggested elements of the new project such as play equipment could be art.

### *Sustainability*

Members asked about the potential for solar panels and the architects responded solar panels could go over the gym and form the canopy, although it is subject to budget constraints. A PFRC member requested that staff show renderings of what the project would look like without solar integrated into the design. Staff responded that the opportunities for solar and net zero were related to cost which would be evaluated as the project continued.

### *Open Space*

Members asked about open space and if there was real grass or artificial turf being installed. Staff responded it would be grass and the architect added there is a net gain of useful park area.

### *Accessibility*

In response to questions about access, the architects pointed out access across the site which includes a set of switchbacks at the rear of the site near the more natural areas. PFRC members expressed concern about the long distance of travel from the street to the entrance to the building which also poses an access problem for emergency responders. Additionally, the west end stair is a problem.

### *Public Comment*

There were two public speakers.

The first public speaker said this is a gratuitous removal of open space and the courtyard will not be used and should remain grass. The community would like less space as this is a sprawling design.

The second public speaker said there should be an extra floor on the community center and the current design should be able to accommodate future expansion.

***Final Concept Design***

On July 14, staff provided details of the Final Concept Plan. The Final Concept Plan revised the “Integrated Scheme” design in response to feedback from PFRC and the community by:

- Reconfiguring the storage area from the north edge of the building which reduces the foot print slightly;
- Reducing the western wing by 30 feet and angling the north edge of the courtyard to minimize impact of building on trees and nature;
- Reducing the extent of PV roof to the south; and
- Moving the courts north, further from adjacent neighbors.

***Conclusion***

The PFRC believes the revised design incorporates much of our previous feedback and supports many aspects of the design, but the Committee would like to see a taller building with a smaller footprint that meets broader community needs and maximizes available, at-grade open space. There are concerns regarding accessibility of the site, specifically when it comes to some of the ramps and switchbacks that are incorporated on the building and at the rear of the site. Finally, PFRC is concerned that sustainability features which are necessary to achieve a Net Zero building may be part of cost cutting measures and would like to see a list of different options related to different cost scenarios.

The PFRC looks forward to working with staff as the design continues to be refined. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns about the Committee’s feedback about the project.

Respectfully submitted,



James Schroll, Chair  
Public Facilities Review Committee

Cc: Mark Schwartz, County Manager  
Jane Rudolph, Director, Department of Parks and  
Recreation  
Arlington County Board Members  
June Locker, DES  
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