

**CASTLE ROCK TOWNSHIP  
OPEN FORUM RE: NEW FARMINGTON HIGH SCHOOL  
APRIL 7, 2004**

Castle Rock Township held an open forum April 7, 2004. The purpose of this forum was to allow residents of Castle Rock Township to voice any comments or questions regarding the possible construction of a new Farmington High School in Castle Rock Township, and to compile a list of questions and comments to convey to the appropriate entity.

The Township citizens came in to ask questions and give input.

Statement: Jim Ozmun should not be attending meetings with the school as he is a School District employee.

Response: Jim Ozmun has stepped down and will no longer attend these meetings.

Statement: Citizens should be allowed to, and want to attend the meetings with Farmington.

Response: The Township has not been invited to, nor attended any School Board meetings.

Statement: The fact that a School Board member has purchased property in the Township near the proposed school site represents a serious conflict of interest.

Question: If the school is built on the Alyn Angus property, will the five houses (residences) next to the property be condemned or removed?

Statement: The Board should move ahead and not wait for things to happen, it is better to be pro-active than to wait and try to react.

Question: When the property was purchased for Meadowview Elementary, wasn't there enough land purchased with the intent of building a High School at the same site?

Statement: Although the building of a school may increase our property value, our costs as Township residents will go up also, so we will not come out ahead.

Statement: There will be a safety issue on the gravel roads, not just 225<sup>th</sup> Street, and also the other residential roads. The outlets to Highway 3, and Highway 50, will be safety issues.

Question: Will the City of Farmington annex the area? If so, the assessments will be high, probably on a square foot basis. Recommendation was made to contact the city as the city has final say.

Statement: Concerned about the cost of bussing. Stated the costs will increase each year, and will erase the land savings.

Question: Who will pay for the wet land survey cost?

Response: It is always the responsibility of the builder to take care of that.

Question: Will MUSA allow sewer and water south of Highway 50? It was the understanding that they would not.

Response: It is the Townships understanding that the City of Farmington must provide sewer and water for the school wherever they choose to locate.

Comment: Thank you to the Township for holding these meetings.

Statement: The City of Farmington does not want to grab Castle Rock Township land.

The land purchased for Meadowview was purchased with the possibility of adding another elementary there, a high school was never considered for that site.

Comment: Jim Ozmun was not aware of the land negotiations with Alyn Angus, was not involved at all prior to the agreement.

Statement: The school has looked at property SW of Farmington, north of 220<sup>th</sup> Street, and W of Denmark. Some of the property is full of gravel, which would need to be excavated before building could begin, which could take 5 to 7 yrs. Also, restrictions are placed on choosing a site: it cannot be near a major gas line, railroad, or federal building. (It was pointed out that Farmington's present site violates all these restrictions!)

Statement: Dr. Meeks was asked who would pay for the road improvements (to widen etc.) that would be necessary, and he said he didn't know, and couldn't stop traffic from going thru the neighborhood.

Question: Who will police the area if the school is built? Will it be the responsibility of the City, County, or Township? He stated that the sheriff is rarely a visible presence.

Response: Arlyn Lamb told about the County Township meeting, where the Sheriff said he has directed his deputies to do less driving, and more sitting and watching, and that more offenders are caught this way.

Question: Has the City of Farmington proposed building a fire station on the east side of the railroad tracks if this school is built? It is a serious safety concern if emergency vehicles would be unable to get to the school due to a train, considering the amount of traffic and the events that would be held at the school.

Comment: The police station is also on the west side of the tracks, so not only fire and paramedics would be delayed, but police response also.

Question: Who polices the area of North Trail Elementary, considering it is a Farmington school but located in Lakeville?

Response: It was noted that the City of Lakeville provides police for the school when any events are held there.

Question: Has the School or City been asked if it is feasible to extend an entrance from Highway 3 to the Angus property, rather than using 225<sup>th</sup> Street as the major entrance? Also, could Canton Court be extended to 225<sup>th</sup> Street to provide access from Highway 50?

Question: If the City annexes all of Section 5 from the Township, what would the Township lose in tax base?

Response: Randy Becker pointed out that there is a restriction on annexation at this point, where only 60 acres may be annexed from one owner per year.

Dan Halvorson showed the Board members a copy of some information he had received from Dr. Meeks regarding annexation. His point was that the Angus property did not meet the guidelines set forth by the school which were to be used in a property search.

Comment: There is an article in the Thisweek paper stating that there are property owners in Farmington eager to sell – 2000 acres.

Response: It was pointed out that the article was referring to MUSA, and the desire of the property owners to be considered for sewer and water.

Comment: Agrees with holding these meetings

Question: What keeps the School Board from making decisions without notifying the Township?

Comments: He does not approve of the process, or the way the school district informs the public. He stated that the public is allowed only 5 minutes at the beginning of the meeting, but was not positive if that was 5 minutes total or 5 minutes per person. He said it was a public meeting, the public may attend but may not speak. He also stated the Superintendent did not return his calls, but did write him a letter.

Would like to request a meeting with the residents of Castle Rock and the Superintendent and School Board.

Comment: Pointed out that the School District is in a difficult position, they are criticized if too much is spent on land, and land in the Township is less expensive than in the city.

Comment: Kids have to go to school somewhere, and schools will need to be built.

Comment: Pointed out again that other costs will offset any land savings in the long run.

Question: Will the Township be able to negotiate an easement to avoid annexation and keep tax base? Will the School/City be willing to pave and improve more streets that just 225<sup>th</sup> Street?

Comment: Why would the school be built south of the city? There are very few kids in the Township, all the bussing would be from the north.

Comment: The land is cheaper here. The school does not pay for road improvements, that would fall to other agencies.

Statement: A decision must be made now, whether the Township will fight to prevent the school from coming here, or what has to be done if it does come. We need to develop a list of conditions that will have to be met and present it to the school and city before they make a final decision. It will be better to be up front with them to get a result we can all live with. All issues that will need to be negotiated should be stated, including the roads, police, fire, paramedics, etc. and all other points.

Comment: The school tried to take Donnelly land for a school in the past, but they didn't get it because Donnelly's fought it.

Question: Does the Township have the power to deny a Conditional Use Permit allowing the school to be built?

Response: According to Township Ordinances 6.05 and 8.05, stipulations considered necessary can be added that must be met before a Conditional Use Permit is granted.

Comment: The school can come here if they want. He agrees with statement to not fight a losing battle – rather prepare by being up front with the needs of the Township, so the School can consider them when making a decision.

Question: Will the citizens of the Township back the Board of Supervisors if they fight this issue? He pointed out that legal costs would rise. A show of hands indicated the residents will back the Town Board if legal fees result from opposing the school location.

Question: Can the Township get a legal opinion, in writing, on zoning, on whether the Township can stop the school or not, and exactly what power the Board has.

Comment: He has heard that increased bussing costs would be \$300,000 to \$500,000 per year – he noted that he did not get these figures from the bus service that the school uses.

Comment: The school will need to pass a Bond Referendum before the school can be built, this gives the citizens bargaining power, a citizens committee could be formed to oppose this.

Comment: He had heard that the existing Farmington High School could be added on to or another story added.

Response: It was stated that that is not true. Due to Federal restrictions, the school could not go any closer to the FAA Building, and structurally could not support another story. The existing building would have to be leveled and rebuilt, which is not feasible.

Comment: She stated she has worked with a lawyer on issues pertaining to Waterford Township, and supports consulting a lawyer regarding this situation; citizens can do a lot, but sometimes a professional opinion is needed.

Comment: She would like to fight the school building in the Township, and would like to see research proving that this school is necessary.

Response: It was stated the school is currently holding a series of 9 meetings with a task force committee regarding buildings and facilities review. They will look at every building and facility needs and growth issues. The first meeting is tonight (April 7, 2004). Interested persons should contact the school for information on how to become involved. She also commented that if the Township wants to have any input on the decision, it should be done soon.

Question: Will the fact that there was a dump on the Angus property at one time be an issue with building a school there?

Response: It was stated that the School District had been made aware of that.