

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY

INFORMATIONAL REPORT

DECISION ON AWARD OF CONTRACT BUILDING CONCEPT REVIEW AND PRELIMINARY SITE DOCUMENTATION FOR THE NEW COMBINATION HARFORD ACADEMY AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROJECT

April 15, 2024

Background Information:

Built in 1971, the existing Harford Academy (HA) is the only Public Separate Day School serving students ages three to twenty-one with severe and profound disabilities within Harford County. In 2009, Smolen & Emr Associates completed a scope study to assess the current building condition, safety, and educational program efficiency of the HA facility. It was determined that the existing building had reached a point where components and systems needed to be replaced. The scope study also concluded that the instructional needs, as well as the support service requirements of the students attending the school, have changed since the construction of the original building. Due to the medical fragile nature of the students attending the Public Day School, modernizing the facility through a phased occupied renovation is not an option.

Due to fiscal constraints, the HA project was deferred. Thirteen years have passed since the original scope study, and the HA Project is now the highest major capital priority. On August 10, 2020, the BOE approved a contract with FLO Analytics for the Balancing Enrollment project and an update of the site location study for HA. FLO Analytics partnered with Banta Campbell Architects to conduct a site location study as part of the overall Balancing Enrollment project.

At the BOE business meeting on August 16, 2021, the BOE voted in favor of completely replacing the school and building the replacement school on the Campus Hills site, located at 301 Schucks Road.

At the business meeting on February 14, 2022; the BOE of Harford County approved a Balancing Enrollment plan for HCPS that included adding an elementary school to the HA project to increase elementary capacity within the County's growth envelope and to help meet the needs related to expansion of Pre-Kindergarten and Special Education programs. Building a combined special education and elementary school facility would:

- Assist with addressing current and future capacity issues within elementary schools.
- Keep HCPS in line with the current county administration funding trends of completing one major capital project at a time.
- Prevent the current major capital priorities from being deferred.
- Provide HA students direct access to learning opportunities with their typical developing peers.

On April 25, 2022, the BOE approved a contract with Grimm + Parker Architects, Inc. for feasibility study services for the new Harford Academy at Campus Hills.

The Campus Hills site is located just outside of the Maryland Priority Funding Area (PFA). In the “Regulations for the Administration of the Public-School Construction Program”, COMAR 23.03.02, require school projects to be within a Priority Funding Area (PFA). HCPS submitted a waiver request to the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) on December 07, 2022, for the Campus Hills site based on three factors.

- The existing Harford Academy is not within the PFA and less than a mile away from the Campus Hills site.
- HCPS completed a site study of existing BOE properties, and the Campus Hills site was determined to be the best location.
- The Campus Hills site is just outside of the PFA; less than a mile and will serve students living within the PFA.

MDP reached out to HCPS and requested HCPS to work with the local government to complete one of the following:

- The local government extend the PFA to include the proposed Campus Hills site and commit to updating the master plan to extending public water and sewer to the site within 10-years.

or

- Work with the local planning department to locate a property within the PFA.

HCPS has been working with our local government to develop a solution. Harford County Government (HCG) will not update the master plan and commit to extending public water and sewer to the area due to the vast area it will open to development. However, HCG has been working with HCPS to identify and obtain new property located at 301 N Fountain Green Road, Bel Air 21015-2703 for the school. On February 26, 2024, the Board of Education approved the site located at 301 N Fountain Green Road, Bel Air 21015-2703 made up of two parcels: Plat Book No. 210, folio 89 and Plat Book No. 203, folio 20, as the location for the new Harford Academy and Elementary School combination facility.

Discussion:

Grimm + Parker Architects, Inc. completed the feasibility study services for the new Harford Academy at Campus Hills. Part of that process included working with stakeholders to define the program requirements of the new building. Grimm + Parker also participated in the Education Specification process to further refine the facility needs to meet the program requirements.

HCG funded the FY 2024 Capital improvement program for planning and design of the Harford Academy School in the amount of \$16,000,000. Grimm + Parker submitted a proposal to update the Harford Academy concept and complete the preliminary site analysis for the new school site as approved at the February 26, 2024, BOE meeting. The scope includes boundary and topographic surveys, wetland delineation, forest stand delineation, utility survey, traffic

study, Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment, a graphic analysis of the existing conditions on the new site, and a high level “test fit” of the building footprint from the BOE approved Feasibility Option (option 3) on the new site. Based on the “test fit” study and interior building configuration analysis, Grimm + Parker will generate schemes that demonstrate alternative relationships of the building footprint to the new site and site entry and adjust the interior building configuration as needed to address new site conditions. This will include an analysis/comparison of the program used for the Feasibility Study against the new, completed Educational Specifications, to verify that the building program meets the planned needs of the new school.

This data collected through this process will meet all requirements for HCPS to request site plan approval from the State. Once the concept is refined based on the new site, HCPS will request a full design proposal from Grimm + Parker and bring it to the BOE for approval.

Superintendent’s Recommendations:

The Superintendent of Schools recommends that the Board of Education approve the contract in the amount of \$181,080.00 with Grimm + Parker Architects, Inc. to update the Harford Academy concept and complete the preliminary site analysis for the new school site as described above.