

**Washington Waldorf School
Neighborhood Meeting Summary
November 18, 2009**

On Wednesday, November 18th residents of the Fort Sumner and Sumner communities attended an informational evening at the Washington Waldorf School. Dan Wacker, chairman of the school's Trustees Council, explained the school's proposal to seek a 30-year lease and, if successful, to make improvements to the facility.

The Washington Waldorf School has leased the former Brookmont Elementary School since 1982, first on a ten-year lease with two five-year renewals and then annual extensions for the past seven years. WWS has tried to be a good steward of the building, spending approximately \$50,000 per year on maintenance and actively improving the hardscape and landscaping around the school. The building is over 50 years old at this point and many of the systems are reaching the end of their useful lives. WWS has conducted a thorough engineering review of the facility that revealed that the building is structurally sound but significant costs and actions need to be taken to protect the asset and to improve efficiency. \$1 – 2 million is required to rehabilitate or replace the roof, HVAC systems, electrical systems, fenestration and improve energy efficiency, life safety, ADA compliance and others. This would keep the facility robust for 30 years or more. The building also lacks a gymnasium and the school would like to add a modest sized gym to the site. The gym is initially proposed to be located on the north side of the building primarily on pre-existing impermeable surface.

Washington Waldorf would undertake to raise approximately \$3 million to rehabilitate the existing building and to build a gymnasium in exchange for obtaining a long-term lease of 30 years. WWS would raise these funds in full seeking no funding support from the county. The school would undertake to significantly improve the energy efficiency of the building and is committed to following LEED and other sustainable standards as permitted by its budget. WWS would seek to maintain terms of the current lease concerning use of the park land during school hours. As required by county regulations, a new lease agreement would include an 18-month kick out clause allowing Montgomery County Public Schools to retake possession of the property upon 18 months notice and reimbursement of the unamortized value of agreed capital improvements. Our licensed capacity is 350 students with 270 students currently. WWS will not seek an increase in this capacity. The school would continue to maintain existing access to the county parkland behind the school and continue to allow access to the facilities (including the new gymnasium) to the neighborhood, in accordance with county regulations.

The proposed lease would be negotiated with the County in full compliance with the existing County Regulations that apply to the leasing of surplus school buildings. This is a process that takes approximately 2 years. In the initial stages of the process, the county will determine if the site is needed for any other government purposes. If the county determines that the site will remain a rental asset, the building goes up for public bidding. County Park & Planning would hold hearings on this proposal. If WWS is successful in

obtaining a lease, it could take another 1-2 years to agree with the County on a final design and obtain all necessary building permits.

WWS has hired Cho Ben Holback of Baltimore as architects to advise in this process. Cho Ben Holback has worked on numerous school renovations and were involved in the Glen Echo Rehabilitation project. WWS wants to be good neighbors and ensure that traffic, parking, noise and future design issues are handled with the least impact to the community.

WWS believes that the proposed lease renewal and improvements to the site offer benefits to the community including an improved quality and increased longevity of a local building, better landscaping and visual impact and a “Green Renewal” project that will improve the energy efficiency and reduce the environmental impact of the structure.

Some residents stated an interest in having the building returned to the Montgomery County Public School system. We understand that MCPS does not have any plans for this location in their current 6 year plan. If this were to change, MCPS can request that the county return the building to them for educational use. The County will have the right to reclaim the property upon giving an 18-month notice and reimbursing WWS the value of unamortized agreed capital improvements. County regulations require that all leases contain this clause (the “kick-out” clause).

Residents expressed concerns about possible noise both from the gym and from individuals accessing the gym after school hours. Residents also expressed concern that access to the gym not be from the existing playground on the north side but rather be through the existing school structure (so as to limit the flow of people past the back yards of homes located on the north side). These concerns will be given serious consideration as design moves forward with focus on sound proofing insulation, screening and limiting access to the gym. WWS is also willing to work with the neighbors to limit hours of use after the school day as part of the terms of the lease. Residents also expressed interest in potentially locating the gym on the south side of the building rather than the north side. The school will review this suggestion with its architects and civil engineers along with concerns for old growth tree preservation, storm water management issues, and the concerns over limiting noise.

Wednesday’s meeting was scheduled to inform the local community at the very outset of the lease process. Meetings will continue to be scheduled as the process moves along. In particular, WWS will include neighbors in discussion as a final site plan is developed and later as architectural plans are drafted.

Two questions remained unanswered after Wednesday’s meeting:

- 1) How many children from the immediate neighborhood attend Washington Waldorf School?

Currently, WWS enrolls 18 children from the 20816 zip code and 31 from the 20817 and 20818 zip codes.

2) What is the current rent for the facility? \$111,302.76 annually