

Opening remarks from Liz Bartlett, GMES PTA President. Liz welcomed Vice Mayor Amy Jackson (Mayor Justin Wilson and Council Member John Taylor Chapman arrived and were welcomed later). From ACPS, Liz welcomed Dr. Alicia Hart (Facilities; she attended virtually), as well as Dr. Rene Pascal (HR). (Board Member Dr. Ashley Simpson Baird arrived and was welcomed later.)

Presentation from Capital Program – Sophie Huemer – Director of Capital Programs, Planning & Design Arthur Carpenter-Holmes - oversees all capital projects –

1. Project history
 - a. Initial construction 1939
 - b. Feasibility study was completed in 2021
 - c. School Board voted for swing space in 2021. – Director of Capital Programs acknowledged importance of open space to our community
2. Project timeline
 - a. Currently we are 2/3 way through selection process of design firm selection. Once the design firm is selected then the community outreach begins. In ACPS, we have a different way of doing things – we don't follow the design, bid, build sequence. While we are designing, we are iterating – this is a more compressed timeline – we can be more dynamic and adjust the project for external events, e.g., the pandemic.
 - b. By fall 2024 –we should begin the permitting process
 - c. By summer 2025 – vacating this building moving to the swing space which will have been completed in spring 2025,
 - d. During the summer of 2027, we will come out of the swing space and come back here.
 - e. The swing space is proceeding well – demo is complete and construction is beginning next month and it is on-track.
 - f. Where are we in the design process: we are a couple months away from the procurement – then we will move into the heavy design process. There will be options for the design process – we will bring this into the public and into the school – we will be doing the virtual community meetings. There is a dedicated project webpage – there will updates shared monthly. There's going to be a Superintendent's Advisory Team (SAT), which will be made up of members of the school community, officials, community group representatives. The goal for the SAT is to be established in the summer of 2024.
3. Budget:
 - a. FY24 budget (already allocated) \$17.4m planning and design

- b. FY25 budget (in process): City Manager proposed \$67m – School Board requested \$87m. We are still in the budget process.

Following this presentation, the ACPS Facilities representatives took questions from the PTA:

Q – How can we be locked in on a timeline when we don't have a budget?

A - There's a lot of pre-planning that has to happen, history, building's need for HVAC, etc. We know we need to meet minimum educational specifications for our school, for example larger classrooms to accommodate larger class sizes.

Q – How do you plan HVAC if you don't know the size of the building?

A – We are going to meet all the new space requirements for 675 children that meets the educational specifications. Minnie Howard is going to be LEED Platinum, net zero energy. We might have to go LEED Silver if we don't get higher end of the budget. Even though the space may meet our needs there's flexibility with finishing and furnishing. Once we know our budget and our space and size then we will design our HVAC to meet that.

Q – Typical time between selection of design firms & breaking ground?

A-Don't know about typical time – but we are going to break ground next summer. We can start work even before breaking ground – that is what we used at Minnie Howard – that is going to open a month early and that is going to be a much more complicated project than what is going to be here.

Q- What is going to be cut in the \$20m budget variance?

A - We can't give specifics right now – it takes a month to do this. Non-negotiables are 1) capacity 2) educational specifications 3) playground – RCPA will be a partner in this.

Q – What kind of playground will we have at the swing space?

A – That's a very important question. We are still exploring the playground at the swing space. There will be a \$500k add to CIP project – that money is going to be coming from other sources in the CIP. We hope to give an update before the end of the year – there will be a playground. It will be for all 5 grades – there will be equipment that is appropriate for all grades.

Q – When will there be more information about move to the swing space for the children? Buses, scheduling, etc.

A – Transportation is a big key to the swing space – transportation will be provided for all children to and from school. We are still working through details of the after school programs. The Swing space schedule will be staggered with Ferdinand T. Day so that 900 children aren't converging onto one spot at the same time. We will provide steady updates.

Q – Bus schedules typically don't go out until days before school starts. Can we get these schedules out sooner rather than later – maybe a week early?

A - Our team would make sure that bus schedule go out earlier than normal – we have experience with MacArthur build. This is a blueprint that worked well, what needed improvement. The plan will keep progressing throughout. The last day of school is the day the move will commence – the move will take 3-4 weeks for a school this size.

Q – Will there be a basketball hoop at the swing space? Also please clarify remarks on bussing for after school programming.

A – The swing space will have a gym with a half sized basketball court and will also have rock climbing wall. There will be no outdoor basketball or areas for ball games. For after school care – Campagna will be at the swing space We have gotten questions from Campagna about providing late buses back to the neighborhood. We will explore this – we are optimizing bus routes this year so we hope to be able to accommodate.

Q – When CC approves the CIP budget for ACPS, is this a project by project approval or a lump sum approval?

A – It generally has been approval of lump sum and not project per project. There have been recommendations of potential project that we could cut or modify.

Q – If it is an overall CIP budget for ACPS then it's ACPS's responsibility to allocate dollars to specific projects?

A – Our recommendation is our roadmap is for what will be best allocation. If there's a variance we use roadmaps to figure out which projects that can be deferred or downsides. However they don't want to further delay or reduce GMES.

Q - Is that process public?

A - Our public portion of the CIP budget process occurs late fall early winter. That is our public process – a lot of things that we are sharing tonight we have shared over the fall and winter – we do not make any additional public work sessions once we get the final budget. The overall internal process is generally not public. The process from now to end of year – we post the material and will keep the community updated as well.

Q – Is keeping original façade still on the table

A – That's a requirement for the project, even though this isn't a designed historic building. This is a requirement that we have put out to the design firms.

Q – What if we move to the swing space & construction on GMES is delayed 6 months? How can we avoid this?

A – If construction is starting any time in 1H25, our goal is to move over the summer given lead time – We can't guarantee that it will be a 24 month construction process – we will know well in advance of the summer of 2027 if there's delay.

Q – What about the Baroody enrichment programs – part of the conversation needs to be the activities bus – we also need bussing for Dragon tutoring.

A – Noted – will work with principal.

Q – There was a mention of RCPA – there are no plans for a collocated rec center?

A – No – but Douglas MacArthur has an expanded gym which they are partnering with RCPA, which is what they are envisioning for the new GMES. It won't be like Patrick Henry with a collocated rec center.

Q – Is a pre-kindergarten program happening here in the new build?

A – Yes, and it's included in the 670 children count – we want to expand our daycare access in the city and all new construction will have pre-K element.

Q – For Douglas Macarthur, have there been cost overruns? How does this work when it happens?

A – For Minnie Howard there haven't been cost over runs. For Douglas Macarthur there were – they are still working that out. There were minor cost implications for Douglas Macarthur. We don't have the ability to go over budget – we have to make sure that we are dealing with cost overruns in the moment – we have to make sure that we are staying in line with budget. We have built Douglas Macarthur, 1703 Beauregard (i.e., Swing Space), Minnie Howard, we also built new multipurpose room at Ferdinand T. Day – we have worked as a team to figure out cost overruns, reducing scope if necessary, built in contingencies

Q – As the program manager, what is the biggest risk with the project?

A – I am feeling comfortable. It would be nice to know what the final budget is. I am comfortable delivering a very nice school even with our minimum budget – a more

sophisticated system opens you up to possible lead time issues – that's a possibility if the higher end of the budget is approved.

Q – The potential budget reduction seems big. Have other projects faced this? Have Douglas Macarthur or has Minnie Howard gotten less than what they requested.

A - \$67m plus \$17m is not unique. What's important to us? Air quality, we know from pandemic. But other items from LEED checklist. Note, FCPS follows a CHIPS standard not LEED. FCPS is going through a process of switching to LEED, initial construction cost is going to be 30% higher than current costs.

Q – With the age of building, is there potential for surprise issues that will need abatement?

A – We have done many surveys and we have done abatement in areas – we don't think there's surprises...but there's no guarantees.

Q – Is it unique for GMES to have our budget cut? Did Douglas Macarthur and Minnie Howard get cut?

A – It's hard for our team to recall details – we will post budgets on the website. No it's not unique to GMES – Cora Kelly is also getting cut.

Q – What is the difference between LEED Platinum or LEED Silver?

A – Douglas Macarthur and Minnie Howard are both net zero buildings – they have geothermal wells that have incredible upfront cost – but you don't know as a user what is powering your school, it is not going to make a difference to the children and teachers' comfort on a daily basis.

Q – is there a way to design this so that we could add geothermal in the future – how can we plan ahead so that we can get a net zero building?

A – These wells are hundreds of feet under the ground – the geothermal would be added the next HVAC upgrade cycle in 20 years – you need a large open area for Geothermal – the good news is that we will have that.

Q – What are your specific plans regarding our green space?

A – The new building is going to be bigger than the old building – priority of the design is to maintain as much of the open space as possible but we don't have details yet...we need to finalize the footprint of the new building, which will be bigger than the current building.

Q – Are you going to use astroturf?

A – We don't even know what kind of a field we are going to have.

Mayor Justin Wilson

- The GMES budget is not a unique situation. This is exactly what happened with Minnie Howard & Douglas Macarthur.
- In the case of Douglas Macarthur it was not funded as it was originally missing from the Capital Improvement Plan. The City Council made decisions back in 2017 2018 raised taxes to fund several projects – to address a significant series of school facilities – 5 schools over a decade.
- in the case of Minnie Howard what was funded originally was 16 additional classrooms, not a full rebuild. The City Council gave money for a comprehensive rebuild of Minnie Howard so George Mason is not a unique situation.
- Our City Manager is required to present a balanced budget. Given there was less than 1% growth in real estate taxes this year, the City Manager had to look at operating and capital size of the budget – if you look at the budget items that are funded by taxes – the schools are the largest part of that – the City Manager provided some “pretty aggressive” guidance to the superintendent.
- City Council will adopt the final budget on May 1. Next week is the preliminary add/delete session. Hopefully we come out of that session with an understanding of what is in and what is out of the budget. There is an amendment that currently enjoys majority support, to increase the real estate tax by \$0.01. This would close the \$65m gap in the school board CIP, that would include GMES. This amendment is enjoying majority support, and he imagines that will be part of what the City Council adopts on May 1.
- Mr. Wilson stated that he will attend DragonFest on Friday April 26th.

Dr. Simpson Baird

After City Council adopts the city budget, it returns to the School Board, which will do a smaller version of their budget session – May 9 is add/delete. This year there will be more during this process. By the end of May, beginning of June this will be solidified. July 1 new budget takes effect.

Q - Can we get an FAQ out to parents with answers to specific questions

A – we can share the URL to the GMES project and the Swing Space – Arte'a can get quickest answer out of all of them.

Liz again the ACPS and City Council attendees and turned to PTA business:

- Members of the Nominating Committee were proposed and unanimously approved: Charlotte Preston; Danielle Sims Vote; Brooke Johnson; Rachel Peacock; Liz Bartlett
- Mr. Finan reminded the PTA that this week, parents/caregivers may join their students for lunch in cafeteria
- Ms. Miezán: Registration for summer school is open – lots of opportunity – there is lots of opportunity to sign up – questions, please ask Ms. Miezán
- Julie - Baroody programs start tomorrow – thanks to the PTA's funding, we have 25 scholarship students attending enrichment sessions this spring.
- Brooke/Suzie – Dragon Week is starting next Friday – at 8am the silent auction opens. Purchase your Party on the Patio tickets, we would love to see you all there.
- Sara – sign up for shifts at DragonFest!
- Catherine – PTAC needs to get their positions filled. If you're interested in helping out – please see Catherine. GMES PTAC liaison is open. PTAC has new resources page on their website to make information more accessible – ACPS has a gun safety page. We will have a BE SMART Table at the Dragonfest.
- Treasurer's report, delivered by Liz: We have about \$60k in the bank but this will be drawn down during the spring, so fundraising is extra important.
- Spring to Action – next Wednesday – we are raising funds for a sensory space that we can take with us to the swing space and then bring back to the new school.