

Introduction:
ANC Community Meeting
June 25, 2007
Opening Remarks

Good evening and welcome to the ANC 3E Community meeting. My name is Anne Sullivan, and I am one of the ANC 3E Commissioners. I serve as chairperson of the ANC 3E Special Committee that is looking into the Roadside proposal for a public/private/partnership. Thank you to all the community members for coming here tonight, thank you to Amy McVey, our ANC 3E Chairperson, Talia Primor, ANC 3E02, Council Member Mary Cheh, Ward 3, Cathy Wiss, ANC 3F Chairperson, Scott Cartland, Janney School Principal, Barbara Kelly, Principal of St. Ann's Academy, Armond Spikell and Susan Linsky of Roadside Development, for their presence. Thank you also to our guests who are here at the table, Ms. Kimberly Driggins, Director of the DCPS Office of Strategic Funding Opportunities, Mr. Archie Williams, from the DCPL, and Mr. Eric Scott from the Office of Planning and Economic Development. As you know, control of DCPS is now under the Mayor's Office. The Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development is involved because the concept and proposed project involves multiple government agencies and their office typically works on public-private development projects for the city.

We are here tonight to discuss the Roadside Development's Public—Private Partnership Proposal with the Tenley-Friendship Library and Janney Elementary School. Roadside Development is proposing to buy public land and air rights to build a residential building partly on top of the library and on about half of the Janney soccer field. They suggest that the proceeds from the sale the public land, the money that is already in the District Government capital budget and future tax revenues from the residential building will all be used to build the public facilities.

Our purpose tonight is not to give a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" on this proposal from the ANC, nor is the meeting tonight intended to be a referendum for everyone to decide about the proposal. Instead, the ANC 3E would like to present our Special Committee findings and partial analysis of this proposal and to allow the community members here to speak directly with representatives of DCPS and DCPL. There are many questions to be asked, I'm sure.

Background:

Janney Elementary School and the Tenley-Friendship branch library are two vital anchors for our community. Having been a Janney School parent for 15 years and a Tenley-Friendship branch library patron for over 22 years, I can attest to the fact that these two public facilities are outstanding public entities that serve our children and community members. The school and library both help our community to weave a social fabric that is strong, vibrant, and colorful and a major part of our community identity. I am sure that everyone who is here tonight is here because they care greatly about what happens to these two public institutions. Tonight's meeting, and subsequent meetings, can begin with a consensus: that we all want a branch library to be built, and that Janney Elementary School is an excellent school that is overcrowded and in need of larger and better facilities.

In January of 2007, representatives from Roadside Development met with some of the Janney School PTA Executive Members, Members of the Janney School Improvement Team and some of the people from the Tenley Library to discuss a proposal to enter into a public—private partnership. Representatives from Roadside Development spoke at our regular ANC 3E meeting on May 10 to introduce the concept, and they have presented at an ANC 3F meeting and to various other community groups. At the May 10th ANC3E meeting, over 100 people attended to listen to the proposal that generated great interest. The ANC 3E Chairperson, Amy McVey, decided to convene a special committee to investigate and learn about the proposal and to

disseminate this information to the community at large as a logical “next step” before the ANC 3E would weigh in on the merits of the proposal.

The Special Committee has met four times: first to get a general sense of the proposal, second to understand the financing involved, third to consider the impact on Janney School, and fourth to consider the impact on the Tenley-Friendship Library. In order to provide transparency to our proceedings, the minutes from each of the special committee meetings have been posted on our website, www.anc3e.org. A small number of our special committee will be meeting soon with Dr. John Ross, senior advisor of Economic Development and Finance. Dr. Natwar Ghandi, DC’s Chief Financial Officer has assigned Dr. Ross to discuss this proposal with us.

Funding: Under this proposal, the developer pays fair market value for the use of the land and asks the city to issue a bond based on future property tax revenues and to use whatever money it can from the capital budget to pay for the library and school rebuild and/or renovations. The money being used to build the public facilities, in essence, would be public money only. The “contribution” from the developer can be viewed as an opportunity for the city to use tax revenue to contribute towards the facilities along with the sale of public land and what is already in the capital budget.

Library: The library square footage could be slightly more under the PPP, and the footprint of the first floor could be larger, although sunlit rooms toward the back would not be an option as that part of the building would be underground. For both the library and school, there would be underground parking.

I’d like to refer you to the second page of our handout packet that compares what (and when) things could happen to the school and library under the status quo and with a PPP. Please be advised that the parameters of this proposal are subject to change---we are being asked to endorse a concept rather than the specifics of what you see here. In order to endorse any kind of a concept like this, though, we need to understand what is being given up and what is gained and what the alternatives are.

Basically, under the Roadside Proposal, the resulting Janney School facility will be 52,000 square feet that will meet the current educational standards for only 347 students (Janney’s student population was 485 in 2006-07). Under the School Master Facilities Plan that was passed by the Board of Education in January of 2007, DCPS envisions Janney School to have 82,500 square feet in order to meet current educational standards for a maximum of 550 students. The Master Facilities Plan starts with perceived needs (according to code and educational standards) and plans from there. This does not appear to be the case with the Roadside proposal---instead, they have started with a budget based on land value rather than on any educational criteria and have planned using the budget as a starting point for planning a facility addition. The Roadside proposal will result in the elimination of the demountables, an upgraded library, and a separate gym from a multi-purpose room and adds some offices, storage and bathrooms. Assuming that Janney gets 2 new demountables it’s expected to receive next year, at the end of Roadside’s project, there will be a net gain of only 1 classroom for instruction. Clearly, this is not a project oriented toward adding capacity.

Because the Tenley-Friendship Library rebuild is fully funded, DCPL is already engaged in its reconstruction project for our neighborhood. The library personnel and Library Board of Trustees have stated very clearly that they intend to continue with the plans to build this branch library with all deliberate speed. They have hired an architect, and Ginnie Cooper (the Head Librarian) has made it clear that they will retain control over the library’s design. In contrast, because DCPS is in flux, and because they aren’t already working on Janney (feasibility study scheduled for 2011) they haven’t weighed in on the design for this proposal yet. The Roadside plan proposes to build

¼ of the size that DCPS says it need, and builds it in a way that makes it unclear how the other ¾ will fit in later.

Through the Special Committee meetings, we learned from DCPS officials that money from a public—private partnership would not be added to the funds that are projected in the Capital Improvement Plan for Janney School; rather, the money from a PPP would replace whatever portion of the budget DCPS had planned on using. There is a policy in place that a public—private partnership would not move the school ahead in line for modernization unless the entire budget was provided. In contrast, money generated from the sale of library property is supposed to accrue to a Library Trust Fund, according to current policy.

It is worth noting that no other offers for this type of proposal have been considered. A DCPS official stated that there was nothing in this proposal that would recommend it for a sole source (or non-competitive) project. Roadside hasn't built schools or libraries before, and they are not suggesting that they would be the ones to build them here.

There are other important questions of timing that we need to consider as well. There is a paper in your handout that outlines two public—private partnerships (Oyster School and School Without Walls) and compares them with a potential partnership for Janney. (This is the last page of the handout.) Please note that the length of process for Oyster was 6 years from DCPS approval to the doors opening on the new facility. The time frame for the SWW project is projected to be at least 5 years. Both of those partnerships did not involve a mixed-use building or additional public partners. Ginnie Cooper, the Head Librarian of DCPL has stated that in her experience, a mixed-use project always requires a delay and never results in significant savings. However, Ms. Cooper said that the library won't stand in the way if there's a community consensus that the partnership serves some other collective goal -- she was just indicating that, in her experience generally, PPPs weren't a way to get libraries built more quickly or more cheaply and in our particular case, the funding is available and work is already underway.

Basically, we are being asked to sell off a public asset (land and air rights), and delay the reconstruction of the library (which is fully-funded) in order to help fund these school facilities on an undetermined time table.

Tonight we have representatives from DCPS, DCPL, the Office of Deputy Mayor of Planning and Economic Development to provide information and answer questions you might have both about what's in store for Janney and the Tenley-Friendship Branch already and what's involved in deciding to use a public—private partnership to redevelop that site.