

To: 7-11 Committee
 From: Joel Holliday
 Re: Public Comments at 7-11 Committee Hearing on 12/7/09
 Date: December 8, 2009

Here is a written version of my comments to the Committee last night. I appreciate your consideration of these suggestions. They are made in the spirit of finding a process that will stop the current destructive process that is pitting one part of the community against another and is encouraging “beggar your neighbor” comments that are dividing the community. This division is occurring at a time when the entire community should be coming together to support the District in dealing with the current financial situation in ways that will not compromise the District’s quality of education.

- The 7-11 Committee’s charge from Board of Trustees (5/09) was to:
 - Determine amount of **Surplus** space and real property
 - **Prioritize** potential uses that will be **acceptable to the Community**
 - Report to the Board on **Recommended Uses** of space and property
- The fundamental finding so far, is that there is no **Surplus** property (as most of us know that term). Whatever un-utilized capacity there is in the current school system (currently at 80% of modified capacity), will be used within 9 years
- Determining a true **Surplus** is different from answering the question: “How can we shoe horn more uses into the existing properties?”
- The **Criteria** by which proposals are to be ranked, should become involved only after:
 - The Committee has found that there is truly surplus space, and
 - The Committee has found that School closure or reconfiguration is the only way to find space for the functions being displaced at the Shores
- The **Report to the Board** from the 7-11 Committee should be:
 - There is no true surplus property.
 - There are no school closures that are justified or are acceptable to the Community that we can recommend.
 - Certain reconfigurations to provide for the after school/daycare functions being moved to some school sites might be workable.
 - New District Offices cannot be accommodated in any way in the existing school facilities that would be acceptable to the community.
 - M&O can be accommodated inexpensively at other locations.
- **Step Back a moment to look at the broader picture:**
 - The district had truly **surplus** property at the Shores School Site, which it sold for \$8.5M
 - We now have to find space to house the functions being displaced when the District has to vacate the Shores Property. This is currently **12K s.f.** (6K for District Offices, 5K for after school and daycare, and 800 s.f. for Maintenance & Operations. (Some modest increase in this space would be desirable.)

- **The focus should be on finding space to accommodate these modest needs, and spending some of the \$8.5M to do this, without compromising the current schools and educational program.**
- This should be relatively easy to do in today's real estate market-
- Now is not the time to consider a new large investment in an expended and much-upgraded District Office
- **In Conclusion**
 - There are alternatives to house the District Offices, the After School Programs and Daycare, and M&O that do not involve a school closure or substantial reconfiguration.
 - It's a Board decision to deal with whatever short-term and long-term financial issues are facing the District. It's beyond the 7-11 Committee's charter to try to solve these issues.
 - You will have exercised your responsibility if you conclude that closure of a school is not recommended.
 - In fact, if the Committee recommends school closure, then I don't think you will have fulfilled the charge of the board to find a solution that is **acceptable to the public.**