



# CITY OF BELLAIRE TEXAS

## MAYOR AND COUNCIL

JUNE 9, 2014

Council Chamber

Public Hearing

6:00 PM

7008 S. RICE AVENUE  
BELLAIRE, TX 77401

### SPECIAL SESSION (PUBLIC HEARING) - 6:00 P.M.

#### A. Call to Order and Announcement of a Quorum - Dr. Philip L. Nauert, Mayor.

**Dr. Philip L. Nauert, Mayor**, called the City Council of the City of Bellaire, Texas, to order at 6:02 p.m. on Monday, June 9, 2014. He announced that a quorum was present consisting of all members of City Council as follows:

Full Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Dr. Philip L. Nauert	Mayor	Present	
Mayor Pro Tem	Mayor Pro Tem	Present	
Councilman	Councilman	Present	
Councilman	Councilman	Present	
Councilman	Councilman	Present	
Councilman	Councilman	Present	
Councilman	Councilman	Present	
City Manager	City Manager	Present	
City Attorney	City Attorney	Present	
City Clerk	City Clerk	Present	

#### B. Reading of Notice of Public Hearing - Tracy L. Dutton, City Clerk.

**City Clerk Tracy L. Dutton** read the "Notice of Public Hearing" ("Notice") into the record. She indicated that notices were mailed to property owners of record within 200 feet of the site of the specific use permit on May 20, 2014. The notice was also published in the legal notices section of the *Southwest News* and posted on the City's website on May 20, 2014.

#### C. Summary of Public Hearing Procedures - Paul A. Hofmann, City Manager.

**Paul A. Hofmann, City Manager**, summarized the public hearing procedures for the evening.

#### D. Presentation - Specific Use Permit Application and Request Submitted by HISD related to Condit Elementary School.

VLK Architects, representatives for the Houston Independent School District (HISD), will present an application and request submitted by HISD for a Specific Use Permit to construct and operate a new school to replace Condit Elementary School on the northern portion of a tract of land owned by HISD and more commonly known as 7000 South Third Street, Bellaire, Texas 77401, in the R-4 Residential Zoning District. Representatives from HISD will be present and available to provide information and/or answer questions.

**Daniel Bankhead, General Manager for Facilities Design, Houston Independent School District (HISD)**, introduced the HISD representatives who were in attendance and available to answer questions as follows: Robert Sands, Officer for Construction Facility Services, HISD; Tim Kunz, VLK Architects; Todd Lien, Principal, VLK Architects; and Gabby Tassin, Traffic Engineer, Cobb, Fendley & Associates, Inc.

Following introductions, General Manager Bankhead advised that the Condit Elementary School project was a very important project for HISD. General Manager Bankhead indicated that a PAT (Project Advisory Team) made up of parents, administrators, and teachers held monthly, public meetings regarding Condit Elementary School. HISD also held several community meetings in October 2013, February 2014, March 2014, and June 2014 for the purpose of involving the community in the process. Other means of communication included HISD's website, weekly newsletters, newspaper articles, and television interviews.

**Todd Lien, Principal in Charge of the Condit Elementary School Project, VLK Architects**, provided an overview of the application submitted by HISD for a specific use permit to construct and operate a new replacement school for Condit Elementary School. Principal Lien provided a site plan and indicated that the majority of the new building would be constructed on the north end of the site, which was currently a City park. The remainder of the new building would be constructed in the areas where the existing buildings were currently located. Parking was noted to be along South Third Street and on South Rice Avenue, as well, as part of the Joint Use Agreement between the City of Bellaire and HISD.

Reference was made to the traffic study by Cobb, Fendley & Associates, Inc., and Principal Lien indicated that the traffic flow that currently existed would be maintained. That flow consisted of the queuing of children on South Rice Avenue and along South Third Street to the main entry of the building. The desire was to try not to change the traffic pattern that currently existed around the campus, but rather improve the pattern to try to get children off of the streets.

With the parking and drive on South Third Street, some cars would be taken off of the street and the actual transfer of children would occur inside a secured parking lot on campus. The transfer of children off of South Rice Avenue by means of a drive had been improved as well.

Principal Lien presented a proposed mobility plan was presented depicting areas where traffic control personnel would be located around the campus, and stated that the idea was to get 10-12 cars off of South Third Street by restricting some of the parking that currently existed along the street.

Principal Lien referred to a Board of Adjustment variance related to parking which required that HISD install a landscape buffer and fencing along the drives. He indicated that fencing would be constructed around the entire site, and that an opening would be provided for the public to use the green space.

Reference was also made to utility relocations necessary for the new construction. It was noted that the storm sewer and one water line would be relocated around the building to Jessamine Street.

Landscape buffers, four-five feet in height would be planted to shield the parking lots along South Rice Avenue and South Third Street.

In closing, Principal Lien showed some conceptual elevations of the new building. He indicated that HISD planned to maintain a number of the historical elements of the existing school either within the new building or on the grounds to respect the history that was part of Condit Elementary School.

(Requested by John McDonald, Community Development)

**E. Recognition of Citizens and/or Other Interested Parties - Dr. Philip L. Nauert, Mayor.**

**Eddy Donalson:**

Mr. Donalson addressed City Council and advised that residents from Linden, Laurel, and Willow Streets were not asked to participate on the Project Advisory Team (PAT) or in the monthly meetings held to discuss the new plans for Condit Elementary School. Mr. Donalson also questioned the reasoning behind the Planning and Zoning Commission's permit for a new, joint use parking lot in a residential area. He additionally questioned the effect the parking lot would have on the value of nearby homes. In closing, Mr. Donalson thanked Councilmen Pat B. McLaughlan, Roman F. Reed, and Gus E. Pappas for standing behind the residents and acknowledging their concerns.

**Janice Donalson:**

Ms. Donalson advised that she and her husband, Eddy (previous speaker), had more at stake than anyone in the room as their home was located 100 feet from Condit Elementary School. Ms. Donalson expressed sadness for the contention between neighbors, friends on the City Council, and the school.

Ms. Donalson continued and referenced a petition that had been submitted to City Council in their agenda packet requesting an alternate parking plan with 12-14 parking spaces at the front of the school and the remainder of the parking on South Rice Avenue for several reasons. One, the Condit Elementary School parking lot represented a rare opportunity to benefit the entire community, and more parking was needed for City functions. For example, many residents attending the public hearing this evening had carpooled due to a swim meet, baseball tournament, and the well-attended City Council public hearing all occurring at the same time in close proximity. On the other hand, a 66-space parking lot on South Third Street was useless for City events. The proposed parking lot would be located directly across the street and could be seen from a front window of her home.

Further, Ms. Donalson stated that the petitioners did not appreciate being dismissed by City Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission. She noted that the Planning and Zoning Commission felt that a reduction in the number of parking spaces from 168 to 128 would make the nearby residents happy. HISD ended up putting less than one-half of those parking spaces on South Rice Avenue.

In closing, Ms. Donalson strongly urged City Council to protect the residents.

**Swati Narayon:**

Ms. Narayon noted that she was a member of the Condit Elementary School Project Advisory Team (PAT) and indicated that PAT was formed to serve the best interests of the students, the community, and Condit Elementary School.

Ms. Narayon urged City Council to vote in favor of the design plans for the new Condit

Elementary School as developed by the architects and the PAT. Given the confines of the area, the design reflected the safest and most efficient way of getting students in and out of the building in her opinion. Placing the burden of drop-off primarily on South Rice Avenue would create gridlock and frustration among motorists and unsafe road conditions for pedestrians and students being dropped off. Reference was made to Bellaire High School where students and teachers had to walk through a maze of cars just to get into the building.

Ms. Narayon advised that common sense dictated that a sizable parking lot for an elementary school be placed as close to the front entrance as possible. Ms. Narayon indicated that PAT meetings were scheduled on HISD's website and open to anyone. She regretted that residents felt they were never included.

In closing, Ms. Narayon urged City Council not to compromise student safety for the vistas of a few or because people had been accustomed to a particular view. She stated that no one had more at stake than the students, and their safety should be paramount. She recommended moving forward with the PAT, HISD, and the Planning and Zoning Commission-approved design.

**Michal Lutfak:**

Ms. Lutfak indicated that she was in support of the plan for a new school as designed. She thanked HISD, VLK Architects, and the Project Advisory Team for the job each had done.

With respect to parking, Ms. Lutfak indicated that two parking lots, one on South Rice Avenue and one on South Third Street, was the best solution. She asked the City to install better signage on Willow and Laurel Streets to restrict the parking on those streets and to enforce the City's rules.

**Mark Sass:**

Mr. Sass addressed City Council and advised that the issue in the neighborhood was a failure on the part of HISD and the Project Advisory Team to notify the adjacent neighborhood regarding the plans for a new school and a parking lot on South Third Street.

Mr. Sass indicated further that the neighborhood was not against the rebuilding of Condit Elementary School or against any child, parent, or family's right to get to or leave school safely. The neighborhood wanted to be a "neighborhood."

The neighborhood felt that it was being punished with traffic problems, parking issues, and increased traffic during non-school areas according to Mr. Sass. He urged City Council to listen to the residents that lived in the neighborhood as the neighborhood did not deserve another parking lot. He urged City Council to vote to delay the issuance of a specific use permit to HISD for Condit Elementary School.

**Mary Sass:**

Ms. Sass addressed City Council and advised that one of the main reasons the Condit parents and the Project Advisory Team supported the specific use permit as designed was that it effectively addressed the safety of the Condit children. However, not one of the members was from the neighborhood. The aesthetics and impact on property values of a parking lot inside the neighborhood were not considered. None of the members addressed the traffic issues currently faced or potential traffic issues that could occur

during campus use at non-school times.

The proposed South Third Street parking lot would have a negative effect on property values, the enjoyment of homes by residents, and would increase traffic and safety concerns, in Ms. Sass' opinion. She advised that the City Council and HISD had seen an alternate plan which equally, if not more so, met the safety concerns for Condit children and would not detract from the quality of the neighborhood or create traffic issues. Residents had provided the alternate parking plan to HISD on several occasions; however, HISD had never addressed the plan.

Reference was made to the traffic study performed for HISD. That study indicated that there would be no significant changes to the traffic flow immediately around the school with the new design at peak times. The traffic study included patterns with the current parking lot on South Rice Avenue and Linden Street. Keeping the parking lot at South Rice Avenue and Linden Street in lieu of relocating it to South Third Street would not change the current traffic patterns immediately around the school. Additionally, the traffic study did not address non-school times.

Ms. Sass urged that some credit be given to the residents' input regarding the effect of potential increased traffic on the neighborhood. At the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting to pass the specific use permit in May, Commissioner Marc Steinberg was considerably concerned about the safety of students and parents as they crossed South Rice Avenue at Jessamine Street with the new parking lot at that location. The intersection was already very busy for pedestrians before and after school, and the proposed site plan would increase the traffic at that intersection significantly in Ms. Sass' opinion. By keeping the parking lot at South Rice Avenue and Linden Street, in addition to new parking at South Rice Avenue and Jessamine Street, much of the traffic would be diverted away from the busy intersection.

Further, the proposed parking lot on South Third Street was intended to be used for school staff and then parents who wished to park and walk their children into the school. It was unreasonable to expect that parents motivated by efficiency and convenience would sit through the queue in order to park. Those parents would still park on the streets. For those parents that would use the lot, the queue line would increase causing it to back up onto the neighborhood streets. It would also slow down the queue as cars exiting the queue would have to wait for other cars pulling and backing out of the parking spaces.

In closing, Ms. Sass urged City Council to consider the negative effects that the South Third Street parking lot would have on the neighborhood and asked City Council to request that parking be placed on South Rice Avenue in order to minimize the damage to the neighborhood and make it safer for children.

**Suzi Nelson:**

Ms. Nelson addressed City Council and indicated that she resided directly behind a commercial district and her property values had not been negatively impacted. She could not imagine that a parking lot near a school could hurt property values that much. She advised that she and her children walked to school every day, weather permitting, along South Rice Avenue. She noted that she had seen a great deal of bad behavior by motorists on South Rice Avenue (i.e., speeding and rolling through the pedestrian crosswalk). She also referenced cars that parked all over the residential streets, which was unsafe and inconvenient for the homeowners in her opinion.

The parking lot proposed on South Third Street would do a great deal to alleviate the

problem associated with parking along the streets. She indicated that City Council's decision on this matter would affect thousands of students in the near future. She felt that the community sometimes had to elevate the needs of the community, especially the needs of the children, over the needs and desires of a few.

In closing, Ms. Nelson advised that a better school, better traffic flow, and safer environment would raise the property values for everyone. She asked City Council to approve the plan as proposed by HISD and the architects.

**Julia Tamm:**

Ms. Tamm addressed City Council and advised that she walked her three children to school every day and agreed with the previous speaker. She referred to a statement made earlier that children would be dropped off through an active parking lot. Ms. Tamm indicated that the current parking plan had the teachers parking head-in toward South Third Street. The teachers would only arrive and park there before the car line started.

HISD had followed the City's parking space requirements and had already received a reduction in the number of spaces required. The school needed car line areas and parking on both sides of the line to ensure the safe ingress and egress of staff, teachers, and students.

Given approximately 750 students and teachers plus parents, there were approximately 2,000, if not more, person trips each day (i.e., someone getting in and out of the school building). Ms. Tamm referred to accidents where numerous crossing guards, teachers, and students were hit at the heavily trafficked intersection of South Rice Avenue and Jessamine Street. Both parking lots could simply not be placed on that side of the block for safety reasons in her opinion.

Ms. Tamm advised that the opposition of a handful of local neighbors who did not wish to view a four-foot shrub-screened tree-lined five-foot depth fenced parking lot from the end of their blocks should not supersede the safety of at least 2,000 person trips in and out of the school building each day.

In closing, Ms. Tamm urged City Council to approve the current specific use permit request from HISD.

**Ron Bilow:**

Mr. Bilow addressed City Council and indicated that he worked in the Trauma Center at Hermann Hospital and, as a result of his job, he had seen many children hit by cars--not in parking lots, but on the street. Anything that would keep the children from crossing the streets, South Rice Avenue in particular, would be great in his opinion.

Mr. Bilow referenced the parking issues along South Third Street and advised that he was one of the parents that had to park along the street to get his son to school, which was of concern to him as it was disruptive to the neighborhood. He advised that he was glad that HISD and the architects were trying to do something to make the school look nice for the residents and that he hoped that a solution could be found that was satisfactory to the neighborhood.

**Mary Jayne Robbins:**

Ms. Robbins addressed City Council and indicated that she wished to make five points

clear this evening regarding the new Condit Elementary School.

First, the new Condit Elementary School had been designed while taking into account Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, state requirements for educational facilities, HISD's requirements for educational facilities, and the City's requirements which related to parking, height of the school, and ground coverage. Ms. Robbins indicated that the design of the school had also been vetted by the City's Planning and Zoning Commission.

Secondly, the school design was developed with three criteria in mind as follows: 1) student safety while arriving to and leaving school; 2) traffic flow patterns; and 3) reducing the use of curbside parking in the neighborhood.

Thirdly, with respect to property values, Ms. Robbins noted that many factors went into the calculation of property values that could not be predicted. Ms. Robbins challenged City Council to think logically about a new school versus one the age of the existing Condit Elementary School.

The fourth point referenced by Ms. Robbins related to traffic flow patterns. She indicated that the traffic flow patterns had been vetted by Cobb, Fendley & Associates, Inc. (traffic engineers), and were designed in conjunction with the involvement of the Bellaire Police Department.

In conclusion, Ms. Robbins reminded City Council that the cornerstone shown earlier in Principal Lien's presentation read "Erected 1928." Bellaire was home of one of the oldest elementary schools in the City and in HISD. Teachers were educating students and leaders of tomorrow in a facility that was 86 years old. She understood that change was difficult; however, the new design of the school had been based on regulatory agency requirements, best practices, and well thought-out community input. Ms. Robbins indicated that it was time to embrace the excitement that a new school would bring to the City of Bellaire and to move forward with the specific use permit as proposed to the City Council.

**Michell Driscoll:**

Ms. Driscoll addressed City Council and advised that she was a teacher at Condit Elementary School. She stated that her concern with the location of both parking lots on South Rice Avenue was an increase in traffic on an already busy street and how the safety of pedestrians crossing at the crosswalks would be affected.

Ms. Driscoll referred to numerous school-related pedestrian accidents at the corner of Jessamine Street and South Rice Avenue. She advised that the school's crossing guard was hit twice in one year and a middle school student was hit last year while crossing the intersection. Ms. Driscoll advised that she had personally experienced being hit by a truck making a left-hand turn from the Fire Station at Jessamine Street onto South Rice Avenue despite the fact that she had the pedestrian light signaling that it was okay for her to cross. Because of the experience, she stated that she crossed that intersection very carefully.

Ms. Driscoll stated that she believed drivers saw South Rice Avenue as a thoroughfare and did not recognize that the crosswalks on the street led to a school where many children and teachers walked daily.

She indicated that she was sympathetic to the residents with regard to their concerns, but believed that the safety of the students and faculty was of the utmost importance.

She added that she was a member of the Project Advisory Team and felt very strongly that the Committee had made the greatest efforts that could possibly be made to invite the community to their meetings.

With respect to the alternate parking plan presented earlier in the evening, Ms. Driscoll indicated that South Third Street was currently a "parking lot" because there were so many cars on the street at school dismissal time. Basically, HISD's application would take all of the cars off of the street and into a lot that would be landscaped with shrubbery. Reference was made to the current Parent Teacher Association ("PTA") and the wonderful job the PTA did on the grounds of Condit Elementary School, in Ms. Driscoll's opinion.

In closing, Ms. Driscoll stated that she hoped that a conclusion could be reached so that everyone could celebrate the opening of a new school. Her main message was that safety must come first. Since the front entrance of Condit Elementary School faced South Third Street, most parents drove to the front of the school to drop their children off in the morning amidst the cars parked on either side of the street. The area became a hazard, in her opinion, because parked cars became visual obstructions between which children and parents were walking.

**Pegi Newhouse:**

Ms. Newhouse addressed City Council and advised that she was currently a resident, an active Condit Elementary School parent, and a member of the Project Advisory Team ("PAT"). In addition, Ms. Newhouse formerly served as President of the Condit Elementary School Parent Teacher Association.

The current lack of a parking lot caused many safety issues in Ms. Newhouse's opinion. Cars were parked illegally so that parents could walk their children into school (i.e., blocking driveways, parking in unsafe spots, etc.) because there was no nearby parking. The cars visually blocked the intersections and the driveways. In addition, HISD buses picking up middle school students were squeezing through tight, blocked areas putting the bus riders, bus drivers, and cars at a greater risk.

With the new design for Condit Elementary School, the parents driving their children to school (dropping off in the morning and picking them up in the afternoon) would be able to queue off the street. Ms. Newhouse felt that many safety concerns could be alleviated with the design.

Additionally, the new design would provide adequate parking near the entrance and more on South Rice Avenue to be used for community events, as well as for staff, teachers, and parents to safely come to and leave the school.

With respect to traffic flow, Ms. Newhouse indicated that early in the process individuals from the Bellaire Police Department asked the architects to keep the traffic flow for the new school consistent with the current flow at drop-off and pick-up times. There were carpool lines along South Rice Avenue heading north and along South Third Street heading south both in the mornings and afternoons, which worked well, in Ms. Newhouse's opinion. She believed that if all of the parking was relocated to South Rice Avenue, there would be a traffic problem on South Rice Avenue.

Ms. Newhouse clarified one of the concerns mentioned earlier that none of the PAT members were from the neighborhood surrounding Condit Elementary School. She indicated that one of the members of PAT lived one block away from the school on Willow Street.



**Ali Suptimis:**

Ms. Suptimis addressed City Council and indicated that she was in support of the current plan for Condit Elementary School. She stated that she felt very strongly about respecting the neighborhood and that it was incredibly important to park legally. Ms. Suptimis indicated that it frustrated her to see fellow Condit parents who blocked driveways and parked on the other side of the street.

In closing, Ms. Suptimis stated that she was concerned that valuable money would be spent on a parking lot that might be of little use as she felt that another parking lot on South Rice Avenue would be a waste of money.

**Vivianna Ramirez:**

Ms. Ramirez addressed City Council and advised that she was a Condit parent and happened to be married to a Bellaire Police Officer. She did not understand how a new school would negatively affect homeowners' property values. She stated that a parking lot would not be seen from the front of nearby homes as none of them faced South Third Street.

Ms. Ramirez advised that she was sympathetic to the concerns of the neighbors, but indicated that the safety of the children should be at the forefront of the issue, not property values or a parking lot.

**Susan Schexnayder:**

Ms. Schexnayder addressed City Council and advised that she had only lived in Bellaire for two weeks, but felt the neighbors had a valid concern. She advised that there was not a single person in the room who did not care about the safety of children. Ultimately, however, the parents were responsible for the safety of their children.

Ms. Schexnayder indicated that her decision to buy in Bellaire was due to the neighborhood. She had met and talked with people on both sides of the issue and felt that a win-win situation could be accomplished. The new school provided an opportunity to help solve a problem and not waste dollars. She recommended having an entrance to the school on South Rice Avenue and on South Third Street. Ms. Schexnayder advised that she had seen the plans for the new school and indicated that the architects had done a beautiful job.

She closed by advising that the parking lot would not be used by the students attending school. She urged City Council to do the right thing and require a parking lot that was accessible for all of the residents of Bellaire.

**Judy Thrasher:**

Ms. Thrasher addressed City Council and advised that she had expressed her concerns to City Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission on numerous occasions regarding the Condit Elementary School issue. She stated that none of the immediate neighborhood was in opposition to the building of a new school. She requested that all parking lots on the proposed plan be relocated to South Rice Avenue and that no parking lots be placed on South Third Street.

Ms. Thrasher indicated further that the behavior of motorists, as a general rule, was very difficult to change. Drop-offs, pick-ups, and parking were very likely not to change

at all with the parents taking their children to school.

In closing, Ms. Thrasher urged City Council to hear the residents' comments and give great consideration to them.

**Leslie Little:**

Ms. Little addressed City Council and stated that the public hearing this evening was the neighborhood's last opportunity to try to make an impact regarding their concerns with the site plan in the specific use permit application submitted by HISD for Condit Elementary School.

Before there were planned Project Advisory Team and community meetings, the Condit Elementary School project was handled without consideration to the immediate neighbors in Ms. Little's opinion. There were initial meetings held between HISD and the City of Bellaire to get the gist of the process begun. At that point, it was decided to put all of the parking on South Third Street without regard to how that would damage the residential quality of life for nearby residents.

Thankfully, City Council wrote a letter to HISD regarding the terms of the Joint Use Agreement between the City and HISD. As a result, HISD moved 62 spaces on the site plan to create a new parking lot at South Rice Avenue and Jessamine Street. At that time, the specific use permit for Condit Elementary School had not been submitted to the Planning and Zoning Commission, and HISD was able to easily change the site plan. Ms. Little asked why the existing parking lot at South Rice Avenue and Linden Street could not have been maintained as well or be addressed by the parties in the fall of 2013.

Ms. Little urged City Council to continue the support of the residents in the area by considering their proposed alternate parking plan on the Condit site. The steering group from Laurel Street had done their research and due diligence with the issues not favored by them. One hundred percent of the citizens had been communicated with in the 4900 blocks of Willow, Laurel, and Linden Streets plus additional citizens in the 4800 and 4700 blocks of the same streets. Residents had emailed the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council, spoken at meetings, met with Bellaire Director of Community Development John McDonald and HISD Trustee Mike Luncford, talked with HISD project managers, demanded an additional community meeting with HISD, and emailed and walked the referenced blocks on numerous occasions to let citizens know what was going on. The residents had signed two petitions and had sent their own emails to City Council and commented at several meetings. After all of the efforts by the residents, Ms. Little felt that it would seem clear to the decision makers that there was a valid opposition to the current site plan in the specific use permit application.

Ms. Little advised that eighty percent (80%) of the residents in the 4900 block of Willow, Laurel, and Linden Streets supported the alternate site plan. Of the remaining 20% of the residents, 11% were not home or were vacant lots.

Further, Ms. Little indicated that the neighbors felt that their alternate site plan made minimal adjustments to HISD's site plan and offered a small compromise. The neighbors had shown a way to maintain a front of school on South Third Street with a pull-through for drop-off and pick-up and a small amount of visitor parking. The alternate plan kept the required additional parking spaces on the site and kept the current South Rice Avenue student drop-off in the design. The school could still maintain their dual drop-off and pick-up routine, and all of the parking would be accessible and used by Condit staff and parents during school hours.

Once the new Condit Elementary School was built, nothing could be done for the next 50 years. Condit was an integral part of the community and unique in its position as a great school and a central part of Bellaire and Bellaire Town Square. She urged City Council to support and give consideration to the request of the neighbors.

**Mark Cummings:**

Mr. Cummings addressed City Council and indicated that all of the neighbors were supportive of having a brand new school. None of the neighbors were running over people on South Rice Avenue or driving emergency vehicles. The neighbors just wanted to ask that HISD not build a parking lot in their neighborhood.

**Melissa Braums:**

Ms. Braums addressed City Council and agreed with a previous speaker's statement that South Third Street was a "parking lot." People currently parked on both sides of the street and there was not a safe area where children could cross the street.

She indicated that she felt safer knowing that there was a queue line that would be taking cars off of the street. She indicated that she had been on the Parent Teacher Association Board for the last number of years and knew what the Project Advisory Team had done and how many countless hours had been spent to make sure that the design was as safe as possible.

**David Little:**

Mr. Little addressed City Council and indicated that he appreciated the work that HISD had done in designing a beautiful school; however, he was against having a parking lot on South Third Street. He referenced the existing parking lot on South Rice Avenue and Linden Street, noting that the lot should be allowed to remain and be utilized.

Mr. Little stated further that the alternative proposal shown to City Council this evening was very well thought out. He had not heard anything against the proposal from HISD, despite having presented the proposal many times before. The proposal did maintain the dual direction drop-off queues, with a drop-off on South Rice Avenue and a drop-off on South Third Street.

He urged City Council to take the alternate proposal into account in making a decision on the specific use permit application.

**Freddy Ramirez:**

Mr. Ramirez advised that many good points had been made during the public hearing. Everyone was in agreement that safety came first for the children, parents, and staff.

Mr. Ramirez indicated that he was not able to agree with a parking lot on South Rice Avenue. As a Bellaire Police Officer, Mr. Ramirez saw a great deal of what went on along South Rice Avenue on a daily basis.

He agreed with a statement made previously with regard to drivers' habits not changing. Drivers would continue to speed and accidents would occur. Adding a parking lot on South Rice Avenue and throwing children into the mix could be hazardous, in his opinion. He advised that the parking lot on South Third Street might not solve the problems, but he would consider it a "plus" if the lot reduced the problems.

**Lennette Pruet:**

Ms. Pruet addressed City Council and advised that she was a teacher at Condit Elementary School and currently served as the "dismissal person" in the afternoon on South Rice Avenue. Ms. Pruet advised further that she was very concerned about having two parking lots on South Rice Avenue for safety reasons. She felt it was important to continue with the K-2 and 3-5 drop-off on either side of the school. Having cars come past the drop-off zone and park in the parking lot would not be beneficial and would negatively impact traffic flow in Ms. Pruet's opinion.

**Molly McGee:**

Ms. McGee addressed City Council and advised that she wanted to make sure that everyone understood what HISD was proposing. HISD would like for the teachers park at the first part of the queue. Then, at the end of the queue, parents who wanted to drop their children off would pull into the lot. She found it difficult to believe that parents would sit through a queue line so that they could park and walk their children into the school.

She advised that the neighbors did not want a parking lot inside the neighborhood. By asking parents to park in the Linden Street lot, traffic would be diverted from the busy intersection of Jessamine Street and South Rice Street and from the neighborhood. Ms. McGee indicated that there would be continued traffic on South Third Street. If parents that wished to park and walk their children into school had to remain in the queue line until they reached the parking spaces, then the queue line would back up down South Third Street. The neighbors did not mind having a queue line on South Third Street. The neighbors wished to see a protected pull-through for the students.

The alternate design presented to City Council would be just as safe for Condit students (and probably safer), in Ms. McGee's opinion. The neighbors were also concerned with traffic at non-school times (such as evenings, weekends, and all summer). In addition, there was concern with regard to the negative impact that a parking lot would have on the neighbors.

Ms. McGee urged that the parking lot be made available for the benefit of the community. If the plan went through as was, the neighborhood would be affected, as well as the community as a whole, for the next 50 years.

**Anne Wallace:**

Ms. Wallace addressed City Council and stated that after attending several meetings regarding the rebuild of Condit Elementary School and hearing opposition from her neighbors, she was concerned that more attention had not been given to moving most of the parking out of the neighborhood. The neighborhood had never opposed a new school.

She inquired as to why the current plan provided parking for teachers near the front door. Places of business and medical facilities did not let their employees park by the front. Ms. Wallace indicated that she had been a teacher herself and parked a distance from the school during her tenure.

Ms. Wallace advised that she believe a gross injustice had been made by appointing only one neighbor to the Project Advisory Team. In addition, those persons who had spoken in favor of the plan were not from the neighborhood.

In closing, Ms. Wallace referred to the alternate plan that had been submitted by Mrs. McGee and indicated that it was much more desirable and safer, in her opinion.

**Dan Greenberg:**

Mr. Greenberg, Principal of Condit Elementary School, addressed City Council and echoed the sentiment of many of the speakers this evening. He did lament that the issue had gotten to a point of contention. He knew that everyone wanted to design a safe setup and he believed that the final result would be something that everyone could celebrate.

Principal Greenberg stated that he wished to clarify the drop-off and pick-up times. He stated that the morning drop-off could be likened to a slow drip. The drop-off started as early as 7:00 a.m. and was completed by 8:00 a.m. Principal Greenberg indicated that concerns with traffic and parking occurred between the hours of 7:45 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. He believed that the new queue line would alleviate some of those concerns. With respect to pick-up, Principal Greenberg likened the afternoon pick-up to a "pipe break," as it was completed within 15 minutes on both sides of the school.

Principal Greenberg advised that he did believe that the new site plan created a safe drop-off for loading and unloading directly onto a sidewalk. The site plan allowed the school to maintain current traffic flows with Kindergarten through Second Grade on the South Third Street side of the school and Third Grade through Fifth Grade on the South Rice Avenue side of the school.

In addition, there would be no students crossing any parking lots from Jessamine, Willow, and Linden Streets. Those students would be crossing South Third Street and following a sidewalk that led to the front door of the school. Students that arrived from Laurel Street would cross two monitored and manned crosswalks before reaching the school building.

Principal Greenberg stated that he did appreciate the alternate plan that was submitted, but expressed some concerns with the plan. For example, students would be dropping off on South Third Street into a parking lot adjacent to parking spaces. This was a safety concern in Principal Greenberg's opinion. He advised that he had further concern with putting two parking lots and a drop-off on South Rice Avenue, which many had mentioned was a problematic space for citizens, students, teachers, and crossing guards. He felt that the congestion would eventually drive parents to go back to South Third Street, with no place for them to go except for a small drop-off adjacent to cars.

Reference was made to two community meetings held with respect to Condit Elementary School. Principal Greenberg advised that both meetings were well attended, which was an indication to the Project Advisory Team, the school, and HISD that a cross-section of the community was attending the meetings. Principal Greenberg advised further that HISD and the architects had been very responsive as documented by those speaking this evening.

In closing, Principal Greenberg advised that although he sympathized with the parking woes of Bellaire, HISD's focus needed to be on student safety. He fully supported the specific use permit application and felt it would be a win-win for everyone.

**Fred Boyer, Past Principal of Condit Elementary School,** advised that he understood that the parking issue was one that was very emotional. Both sides believed their views had merit and, in reality, both views had merit. Putting the majority of

parking on South Third Street would cause some aesthetic change to the neighborhood.

Mr. Boyer stated that the Project Advisory Team ("PAT"), in working with HISD and the architects, had determined that parking on South Third Street would be safer for students, teachers, parents, and the community. As a member of PAT, he agreed with that view. Mr. Boyer made the following four determinations in reaching his conclusion: 1) the front of the school would be on South Third Street, which was the focal point of the school; 2) the closer the teacher parking could be placed to the entrance, the safer it would be. Reference was made to the month of January where teachers often walked to a dark parking lot; 3) South Rice Avenue was by far busier than South Third Street; and 4) the safety issue for students on South Rice Avenue.

In closing, Mr. Boyer advised that he firmly believed that South Rice Avenue would always be busier than South Third Street. He indicated that the architects had assured him that they could create a plan with enough green space to make the parking lot on South Third Street tolerable. He knew this was not a perfect solution. Reference was made to negotiations that HISD had tried to make with the neighborhood regarding the number of parking spaces on South Third Street. He urged City Council to focus their decision on keeping the children safe and doing what was best for the children.

**Jennifer Cross:**

Ms. Cross addressed City Council and lent her support to the specific use permit application as it was currently written and echoed much of what had been said with respect to the safety of children being the primary concern. To suggest that parents walk their children to school down South Rice Avenue, was a daunting thought in her opinion.

Ms. Cross appreciated the drop-off lane included in both plans. She urged that the safety of the children be considered first.

**Robin Minturn:**

Ms. Minturn addressed City Council and indicated that she and her husband were new to Bellaire, having moved in a year ago. One of the reasons Bellaire was selected was the great neighborhood feeling and Condit Elementary School.

One of Ms. Minturn's concerns was parking. One solution was to provide a parking plan that worked. She indicated that the current plan did not work. Ms. Minturn did not wish to wait in a queue line on South Third Street to get to parking spaces. She urged City Council to take human behavior into consideration, and noted that she believed that people would do what was fastest and easiest, which was not waiting in a queue line.

Of further concern was the fact that people exiting the parking lot would shoot down Willow Street or Jessamine Street, both of which were not designed for a great deal of traffic, in her opinion.

Reference was made to a parking lot that could be shared with the City. Ms. Minturn advised that her mother was disabled and had mobility issues. Frankly, there were a number of city events that her mother could not go to because she could not park anywhere.

Finally, with respect to the process, people had mentioned that the Project Advisory Team ("PAT") wanted feedback. She advised that PAT had not wanted her feedback and, after expressing her opinion at a public meeting, had been told by a member of PAT

that she was a bad parent and should just move.

**Gaylon Gullquist:**

Ms. Gullquist addressed City Council and referenced a point in time when Laurel Street went all the way through to South Rice Avenue from IH-610. During that time, Laurel Street became a major cut-through street. When HISD came through with a petition to close the street off between South Third Street and South Rice Avenue, the residents were very excited. She advised that what the residents had agreed to was what existed now--green space and parking along South Rice Avenue for city events, not a parking lot on South Third Street.

Ms. Gullquist referred to City Council and advised that she believed that HISD was bullying the City of Bellaire. She inquired as to the reasoning for HISD to put a parking lot in the middle of a residential neighborhood, and implored City Council to go to HISD and ask them to come up with a revision.

**Linda Hester:**

Ms. Hester addressed City Council and advised that she was so excited to have a new school in the neighborhood, but was saddened by how much controversy had come up regarding the design.

Ms. Hester advised that she did not sign the petition against the Condit specific use permit and was present this evening to support the Condit specific use permit even though her home and the traffic patterns would be impacted by putting additional parking on South Third Street. However, with respect to the project and providing input, Ms. Hester indicated that she was able to monitor what was going on by looking at HISD's website.

When reviewing the early plans for Condit Elementary School, she was shocked at the amount of parking in the plan. Ms. Hester was told that the City of Bellaire wanted all of the parking on South Third Street and was planning to use the parking as well. A redesign was done and some of the parking was moved.

Ms. Hester urged City Council to support the specific use permit application as proposed and to work with the neighborhood on traffic patterns.

**Karen Diaz:**

Ms. Diaz addressed City Council and advised that she wished to talk about carpools. Ms. Diaz advised that she worked at a school and worked the carpools five days per week. Her school had two carpool lines and 12 faculty staff members as opposed to students working those lines.

Ms. Diaz stated that she did not care if cars parked on her street. She referenced the possibility of permit parking on the streets, but advised that permit parking would not help Condit Elementary School or the parents walking their children into the school building.

Ms. Diaz closed by urging City Council and HISD to consider having the queue line come in off of the corner of Linden Street and come across the entire front of the school, but not to consider the parking lot in the neighborhood.

**Nancy Freed:**

Ms. Freed addressed City Council and noted that she was a teacher. Her concern was that all of the cars streaming down Laurel Street to hit IH-610 quickly was disadvantageous to the neighborhood and to their children. She indicated that she had not purchased a home on a busy street, such as South Rice Avenue, because she wanted to live on a neighborhood street.

Ms. Freed referred to the creative energy, capability, and wisdom of the architects in the room and asked them to reconsider the plan. She thought Molly McGee's plan was perfect, but noted that she was not an architect or project manager. She urged all parties to work together and asked City Council to allow more time for the parties to work together.

**Richard Freed:**

Mr. Freed addressed City Council and echoed the comments of residents in the neighborhood and his wife, especially. It was obvious from the comments made this evening that safety was an overriding concern for everyone.

By placing the parking lot on South Third Street, Mr. Freed believed that the queue line would be negatively impacted and, perhaps, more dangerous for the children going to school, as well as for children living in the neighborhood. He urged City Council to consider the alternative plan.

He believed that the people speaking in favor of the plan this evening did not live in the neighborhood. The sixty-two space proposed parking lot on South Third Street was too much. He urged City Council to move that parking lot to a better location on South Rice Avenue and to provide more Bellaire Police Officers to protect the area.

**George Williams:**

Mr. Williams addressed City Council and indicated that he was in strong opposition to the plan submitted to City Council by HISD. He also agreed with the comments made by his neighbors.

If the Team process worked and neighborhood input was seriously considered and integrated into the plan, then Mr. Williams believed that City Council would not see the opposition they were seeing this evening.

For example, nearly everyone that lived near the school was standing in opposition to the current plan. City Council was now left with a choice to make. City Council could choose to represent the neighbors that lived next to Condit Elementary School or HISD.

Once the school was built, the city was vested in the design. Mr. Williams implored City Council to allow the residents an opportunity to improve the design of Condit Elementary School.

**Omar Khan**

Mr. Khan addressed City Council and advised that he wished to make an observation. He stated that he moved to Bellaire eight years ago. Every day from 7:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m., he dealt with speeding related to Walgreen's customers. He indicated that he did not wish to be callous, but as he chose to live nearby, it was something that he had to deal with.



Mr. Khan stated that as much as everyone from the neighborhood disliked the Condit plan, the school parking for West University Place faced homes at all times. He understood that it might not be aesthetically pleasing, but felt it was necessary for the safety of the teachers and children. He believed that HISD had probably spent thousands of man-hours on the plan. He urged City Council to let the plan continue.

**Written Comments:**

**Dr. Philip L. Nauert, Mayor,** read the following written comments into the record:

***Jamie and Robert Allen:***

*Dear Mayor and Members of City Council,*

*My husband and I support the construction of a new building for Condit Elementary School.*

*However, we OPPOSE any and all parking lots on Third Street which will undoubtedly have a negative effect on the quality of life for Jessamine Street, Willow Street, Laurel Street, and Linden Street residents.*

***Lori Aylett, Greg Gordon and Genene Gordon:***

*Dear Honorable Mayor Dr. Phil Nauert and Councilmembers,*

*I am writing to express my support for your Council's approval of the Condit SUP as recommended and brought forth from the Planning and Zoning Commission. I attended the public hearing at P&Z concerning the proposal and have reviewed the SUP application in some detail. I am sorry that I am not able to personally appear at your Council meeting on Monday, but I have a work commitment that prevents my attendance. I respectfully request that you read this comment into the record.*

*I live on Chelsea Street and walk my daughter to Condit every weekday morning, so I get to observe the traffic patterns and issues on a first-hand basis. My daughter will be serving on the school's safety patrol next year and will be on the street as a crossing guard; therefore, our family takes the safety issues very personally. The provision of parking at the front of the school (Third Street side) is necessary and will help to alleviate neighborhood street parking. Getting the queue lines off the street will result in a safer environment for children to enter and exit the school via the carpool. The traffic study provided in the application indicates that there will be no change in the level of service and no negative impact over the current operational status as a school. Property values of the neighboring homes will be enhanced by the construction of a new facility. The Condit SUP as presented and recommended for approval by P&Z is a win-win--the school wins and the neighborhood wins.*

*The site has a number of constraints, and HISD has done a commendable job in designing the best school possible within those limits. The school has sought and received community input into the design of this school, and community and parent volunteers have worked many long hours with the architects in coming up with this design. Nothing is perfect, but this design is best for Condit and best for the community.*

*P&Z did an admirable job in reviewing the application to make sure that the concerns of all were addressed. I have the utmost respect for all of the P&Z Commissioners and the hard work that they do, and I believe that their recommendation should be given great*

*weight and acted upon favorably by Council.*

*On behalf of my family, I respectfully request that the Council approve the Condit SUP as recommended by P&Z. Thank you for the hard work that you do for our community, and thank you for your consideration of this letter.*

**Eric Tamm:**

*Dear City Council,*

*VLK Architects and the Condit PAT have worked hard to develop the best design for the Condit rebuild taking into account student and staff safety as they enter and leave the building. We need a parking lot on South Third Street near the entrance of the school for teachers, visitors, and guests. Please approve the Condit SUP as it currently stands.*

*Please read this into the public record.*

**Jane McNeel:**

*I would like to submit my comments into the public record for tonight's public hearing on the request for a specific use permit to construct a new Condit Elementary School in Bellaire.*

*When Condit was built it was a quiet area of Bellaire, however traffic along South Rice has increased a great deal. It continues to be a main route for our emergency vehicles as well. During the busy times at the school, when children are dropped off or picked up on South Rice, I am always fearful that a child may be hit by a vehicle and it's my understanding that our crossing guard has been struck at least twice by a vehicle ignoring the school zone.*

*I have reviewed the proposed site plan for the new school and I feel it provides for the most safe and efficient procedures for the drop-off and pickup of children attending Condit. This plan appears to be similar to the existing design by dividing the areas used for these purposes, and it allows for northbound vehicles to pick up students on South Rice, and southbound vehicles to pick up students on Third Street.*

*I cannot imagine that moving all parking to the South Rice side of the campus, thereby encouraging all drop-offs and pickups to be made along South Rice, would be the best choice. Therefore I fully support the current design for the new Condit, and I hope City Council will support it as well.*

**Jamie Fowler:**

*We need to have a parking lot on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street because the entrance to our school will be on that street. Putting a parking lot anywhere else will make those parking lots obsolete and encourage even more street parking along 3<sup>rd</sup> and directly outside of residents' houses. Parents and teachers are simply not going to park on the other side of the school and walk all the way around to get in . . . and the idea of moving our entrance onto South Rice is dangerous and completely irresponsible. As a mother of two young boys, we go well out of our way to avoid South Rice. We walk 5 extra blocks to school to avoid walking along the busy and oftentimes congested street. The dangers of South Rice are clearly evident by the multiple accidents we have already seen on the corner of South Rice and Jessamine this last year. An Elementary School simply has no business opening up to a busy street. Children and their parents have the right to be as safe as possible when dropping off and picking up their kids. I understand the aesthetic*

*implications of putting a parking lot on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street but the safety of 670 plus students should be the priority here. Thank you.*

**Sheryl Moore:**

*Dear Bellaire City Council Members,*

*I would like to express my support of the rebuilding of Condit Elementary in Bellaire.*

*I am a Bellaire resident and also a Condit parent from 2004 to 2013. In each of those years, I was actively involved in the school and the school's PTO, including serving as the PTO President for two years. I have watched Condit Elementary become an exemplary school in many ways, with student achievement continuing to increase each year. Condit prepared both of my children for the next level and beyond through its rigor and its high expectations for student performance and conduct. Condit students are widely recognized as not only being prepared for middle school academically, but also prepared with organizational and time-management skills.*

*As you know, Condit is a neighborhood school, and HISD does not need to bus in kids in order to fill the school. Unlike many area schools, Condit has never needed a magnet program to attract students. Condit is a thriving school composed of students in the immediate area, and many choose to live in Bellaire due in part to the high standards and performance at Condit. Bellaire property values have increased dramatically in recent years, and Condit continues to be an asset to the community rather than a liability.*

*Condit is one of the oldest school structures in HISD. Over the years, a significant portion of the School's budget has gone to maintaining the aging school and bringing infrastructure and technology needed for students to learn and compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Newly constructed HISD schools automatically include SMART boards, wireless internet, and other technology. Condit, in contrast, equips its classrooms with similar technology using its own budget and drawing on support from its active PTO.*

*Over my nine years at Condit, I have witnessed countless traffic and parking issues in the neighborhood surrounding Condit:*

- In the afternoons, there is a southbound carpool line on South Third for pre-K to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students. The carpool lane takes up a significant portion of South Third and Linden Streets, often backing up eastbound traffic on Linden and southbound traffic on South Rice before Linden. Having a portion of the new South Third parking lot serve as a carpool lane would reduce the number of cars stopped on the streets and cause less inconvenience and delays for neighboring residents.*
- Since the front of the school currently faces South Third, parents have overwhelmingly chosen to park on South Third or on adjacent streets (Jessamine, Willow, Laurel, and Linden) rather than parking on the backside (South Rice side) of the school. By parking on both sides of these small residential streets, traffic becomes congested--often forcing a one-way path down the street with little room to allow for cars needing to travel in the opposite direction. Having a parking lot on South Third will reduce the number of cars parking in front of neighboring homes and alleviate traffic congestion.*

*In the early 2000s, HISD added the wonderful field space at Condit--space that is open to the public outside of school hours. Many area families enjoy the exercise track, playground equipment, and open field in the evenings and on weekends. Local sports*

*organizations have also used the field space for practices or games. Condit's new building plan includes field space that the community-including neighboring residents-can continue to enjoy.*

*Please help Condit continue to be an asset to our community. The school provides an excellent education for area students, and having a new building will ensure that Condit will remain a top-notch school for many years to come.*

**F. Questions from the Mayor and City Council - Dr. Philip L. Nauert, Mayor.**

**Dr. Philip L. Nauert, Mayor,** called upon members of City Council with questions of HISD and/or their representatives regarding the application and request submitted by HISD for a specific use permit to construct and operate a new Condit Elementary School.

Questions related to the student drop-off and pick-up line procedures, location of parking lot(s) and hours and types of usage, percentage of impervious cover, aesthetics (such as landscaping and type of fencing), lighting, traffic control, and traffic flow.

**G. Close of Public Hearing - Dr. Philip L. Nauert, Mayor.**

**Dr. Philip L. Nauert, Mayor,** closed the public hearing regarding an application and request submitted by HISD for a specific use permit to replace Condit Elementary School at 9:25 p.m. on Monday, June 9, 2014. He noted that oral comments would not be received following the close of the public hearing. Written comments could be submitted to the City Council in care of the City Clerk until noon on Thursday, June 12, 2014.

**H. Adjournment.**

**Motion:** Adjourn the Special Session (Public Hearing) of the City Council of the City of Bellaire, Texas, at 9:25 p.m. on Monday, June 9, 2014.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Pat B. McLaughlan, Councilman
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Gus E. Pappas, Councilman
<b>AYES:</b>	Nauert, Nathan, Reed, Avioli Sr., Pappas, McLaughlan, Friedberg