



CITY OF BELLAIRE TEXAS

MAYOR AND COUNCIL

SEPTEMBER 29, 2014

Civic Center

Community Meeting

6:30 PM

7008 S. RICE AVENUE
BELLAIRE, TX 77401

COMMUNITY MEETING - 6:30 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 6:32 p.m. on Monday, September 29, 2014. He announced that a quorum of the members of City Council were present as set forth below.

Member Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Dr. Philip L. Nauert	Mayor	Present	
Mr. B. Nathan	Mayor Pro Tem	Present	
Mr. J. Reed	Councilman	Present	
Mr. J. Aviola Sr.	Councilman	Present	
Mr. J. Appas	Councilman	Present	
Mr. J. Laughlan	Councilman	Present	
Mr. S. Friedberg	Councilman	Present	
Mr. J. Hofmann	City Manager	Present	
Mr. J. Dutton	City Clerk	Present	

B. Summary of Meeting Procedure - Dr. Philip L. Nauert, Mayor.

Dr. Philip L. Nauert, Mayor, summarized the procedures for the evening's community meeting. Speakers were given three (3) minutes to address City Council.

C. Presentation on Bellaire High School Reconstruction Process - Sue Robertson, General Manager of Facilities Planning for HISD, and Mike McDonough, Principal, Bellaire High School.

Mike McDonough, Principal for Bellaire High School (BHS), greeted City Council and the residents in attendance at the Bellaire City Council Community Meeting, and provided an overview of his 15-year educational career, noting that over 13 of the 15 years had been spent in the City of Bellaire. He indicated that the reconstruction project for BHS was very important to him as he was passionate about and invested in the school.

Principal McDonough next took a few moments to describe the work of the Project Advisory Team (PAT) for the Houston Independent School District (HISD). He stated that the PAT played a vital part in designing the school and the educational program that would exist, as well as working with HISD's architects in terms of the look of the building and the function that it served. The PAT was not a major power of influence over how much money the school was going to cost. The PAT's charge was building a building based on the project approved by the voters. The size of Bellaire High School (enrollment) was not part of the charge of the PAT. Conversations regarding enrollment were occurring between HISD and himself. HISD wanted to make sure that they were

respectful of the community and the needs of the students.

Principal McDonough offered to continue to make himself an available resource for the members of the City Council and the community. He turned the floor over to Sue Robertson.

Sue Robertson, General Manager of Facilities Planning for HISD, noted that several members of the PAT were in attendance this evening. She recognized the members, who received a round of applause, and advised that the PAT had spent hours and hours looking at options, thinking about options, and considering variables.

General Manager Robertson referred to HISD's September 4th BHS Community Meeting, noting that 387 people signed in to the meeting. Individual questionnaires were completed (235) were completed by the attendees. In addition, 73 comment cards were received, followed by eight emails. Of the 235 people who completed the demographics portion of the individual questionnaires, 144 were residents of Bellaire. Eighty-nine residents were parents of current, past, and/or future students of BHS, and 29 were residents with no students at BHS. Of the 91 attendees who were not residents of Bellaire, 72 were parents of current, past, and/or future students.

General Manager Robertson continued and advised that options were shared at the HISD September 4th Community Meeting--one option showed BHS located on South Rice Avenue and Maple Street, while the other option showed BHS located on Ferris Street and Maple Street. The option to reconstruct the BHS at its current location would require the students to be moved off campus during construction. The other option showed putting a "wall" down the middle of the campus and constructing the new building at Ferris Street. Concerns related to the options focused on increased traffic on Maple and Ferris Streets, parking garage location and height, ingress and egress to the garage, safety of students and faculty within the garage, relocation of students during reconstruction, size of enrollment, lack of viable options, and general impact to the neighborhood. General Manager Robertson stated that there was no other campus within HISD that could take an entire high school at this time. Students would have to be moved to several campuses within HISD, some of which were not in close proximity to BHS.

General Manager Robertson advised further that one more piece of critical information was currently being gathered--a traffic study, which was ongoing. Additional options could not be developed until the traffic study had been completed as HISD did not have all of the facts needed. Based on the input from the community, HISD knew that there had to be additional options. After a great deal of deliberation internally within HISD, the following ideas were placed back on the table: temporary buildings to house students, construction phasing, and potential swing space for 9th and/or 10th grades to shorten the construction phasing process.

Reconstructing the school in its current location was the most desirable option according to the majority of attendees. If the City were acceptable to the notion, once the Mandarin Chinese School had moved to their new site, temporary buildings could be added to the current Mandarin Chinese School site to accommodate the 9th grade students. General Manager Robertson indicated that HISD hoped the 10th grade would not have to be relocated. Possible alternative locations for the 10th grade were noted to be the Michael E. DeBakey High School for Health Professions or the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts (HSPVA).

In conclusion, General Manager Robertson advised that HISD was in the process and already developing new options based on community input. Those options would

continue to be reviewed with the PAT. Once HISD had an option that the PAT was pleased with, another Community Meeting would be held by HISD to obtain community feedback. Feedback provided to City Council this evening would be incorporated as well.

D. Recognition of Citizens - Dr. Philip L. Nauert, Mayor.

Swati Narayon:

Ms. Narayon, a member of the HISD PAT, addressed City Council and the residents and stated that she understood that the building design was very important to the residents, but much of the PAT's meeting time had also been spent on what went on inside BHS with respect to academics, fine arts, and athletics. With respect to enrollment or size, Ms. Narayon indicated that the PAT's charge was not related to enrollment or size, but advised that Bellaire High School had always been large. She indicated that HISD was experiencing exponential growth in all of their schools, especially within and near Bellaire, such as Condit Elementary School, John J. Pershing Middle School, Pin Oak Middle School, and Horn Academy.

{The speaker's allotted time ended at this point in the meeting}

Liana Wang:

Ms. Wang addressed City Council and noted that she was the Vice President of the Student Council at BHS. She advised that she wanted to bring the student voice to the Community Meeting. She shared her experience as a freshman at BHS and advised that juniors and seniors were very important in terms of the positive impact those students would have on freshmen and sophomores.

Ms. Wang urged City Council and the residents to focus on the school as more than a building. The cultural of BHS was the student population, and she encouraged City Council to preserve that culture.

Louis Rodriguez:

Mr. Rodriguez addressed City Council and indicated that he supported the phasing process as a means of expanding the school with the least amount of turmoil. He was also in favor of keeping the school population intact. He closed by indicating that he was interested in seeing a timetable for the reconstruction process.

Ajay Singh:

Mr. Singh addressed City Council and advised that he, too, was present to provide a student voice on the BHS reconstruction plan. Because the tentative plan for phasing was to remove one or more grades from the campus, he believed such a removal would be detrimental.

Mr. Singh stated that Bellaire gave the students a taste of the real world, in his opinion. The diversity of the student body was extraordinary and, as a result of that diversity, BHS could offer an amazing cultural immersion to its students. He stated further that a school was more than just a building or an institute for the student body. Moving the freshmen off of the campus would be detrimental . . .

{The speaker's allotted time ended at this point in the meeting}

Judy Poteet:

Ms. Poteet addressed City Council and advised that the cars that lined the street in front of her home had literally caused a depression in the asphalt on the street. She expressed concerns regarding the blockage of sunlight on the surrounding neighborhood if a parking

garage were constructed, traffic, and vehicles parked in front of her home.

Ms. Poteet advised further that she frequently observed drug deals at BHS and expressed concern that these deals might occur in her front yard.

Lynn McBee:

Ms. McBee addressed City Council and advised that HISD had a small site that catered to a shrinking City as well as the environs around it. The problem was that the school HISD wanted was too big for the site they had. She suggested that the school population be capped at a maximum of 3,000. Since the site could not grow, the school must shrink.

She closed and stated that BHS could continue to have the diversity it currently had in a smaller school.

Tony Gray:

Mr. Gray addressed City Council and advised that, in his opinion, two disastrous options for BHS were presented to the community on September 4th. He referred to the students who had spoken earlier and complimented them on their very articulate statements.

Mr. Gray noted the importance of listening to the students, but also noted the importance of voices speaking for the students of the next half century. As bad as it might be for a freshman class to move off-site, HISD could not spend \$106 million just because of that one constraint. The building needs to be the most aesthetically pleasing, most convenient, and safest building for students. Options to construct the campus on the west side of the site would not be in the best interest of the community.

Mr. Gray, in closing, stated that he appreciated hearing from Principal McDonough and Trustee Mike Lunceford and took them at their word that the population size would be addressed.

Larry McKinzie:

Mr. McKinzie addressed City Council and indicated that he was a neighbor from the Medical Center. He referenced the closure of schools by HISD in that area of Houston. Mr. McKinzie stated that his community had been asking for better academic programs from HISD since 2003. He urged HISD to put students first by placing the same academic programs in schools lacking in enrollment, and expressed an interest in having diversity in his community as well.

He urged City Council to make sure that HISD followed through with the reconstruction plans. Referenced was made to Jack Yates High School and Sterling High School, both of which started with a large budget to construct a new school, but both budgets were reduced significantly. Mr. McKinzie indicated that student enrollment was controlled through good academic programs--he asked HISD to share the academic equity.

{The speaker's allotted time ended at this point in the meeting}

Travis Laqua:

Mr. Laqua addressed City Council and advised that it was the responsibility of the City Council to listen to the people they represented. HISD also had a responsibility to listen to the students and the community.

The student body needed to be reduced, in his opinion. Mr. Laqua commented that HISD had allowed excess students to attend BHS through magnates and transfers in.

Sue Ellen Richardson:

Ms. Richardson addressed City Council and supported efforts to keep the entrance to BHS on South Rice Avenue for safety reasons.

Steve Freeman:

Mr. Freeman addressed City Council and advised that he had attended almost all of the PAT meetings and advised that HISD's "stated" number one priority was safety of the students. HISD was talking about the safety of the students while the building was constructed and not the safety of the students for the next 50 years, in his opinion.

Mr. Freeman stated that if the main structure of the school was constructed facing Ferris Street, the safety value for students and neighbors would go downhill. If there were ever an incident at BHS, first responders would not be able to travel down Holly, Maple, or Valerie Streets, the result of which might be a drastic disaster for the City, in his opinion.

In closing, Mr. Freeman stated that moving students off of a campus was always a bad idea; however, moving 1/60th of students off campus was not so bad.

Peter Spencer:

Mr. Spencer addressed City Council and noted that he had attended the September 4th community meeting at HISD. He referenced numerous instances of speeding vehicles ending up in his yard and a great deal of trash; however, he knew what he was getting into when he moved into the neighborhood.

Traffic management was key in determining the location of the school on the site. Mr. Spencer indicated that he did not intend to be mean-spirited, but he did not care about two-three years of students being inconvenienced when talking about a 50-year school life. He urged HISD to look at the "right" long-term solution.

Mr. Spencer advised further that although he did not have any statistics to back up his thoughts, but he felt that the feeder schools (elementary schools) had started to burgeon and bust at the seams.

{The speaker's allotted time ended at this point in the meeting}

Scott Frankel:

Mr. Frankel addressed City Council and thanked HISD Trustee Mike Lunceford for meeting with him and Tony Gray after the HISD community meeting. Mr. Frankel advised that Trustee Lunceford was looking out for the best interest of the City.

Mr. Frankel advised further that all of the options being drawn now for BHS contemplated the school being located on South Rice Avenue. The key issue left was the size of the school population, which was critical in Mr. Frankel's opinion. He urged the City Council to provide some guidance to HISD on what an acceptable number of students would be for the site.

Gil Baumgarten:

Mr. Baumgarten stated that he was encouraged by the changes that had occurred with respect to the reconstruction plans over the last three weeks. The rhetoric had changed at the PAT meetings as a result of the September 4th meeting from his perspective.

David Upton:

Mr. Upton addressed City Council and urged them to encourage HISD to make the new

facility an outstanding representative of our community. The concept of building the minimal building possible for the dollars and not doing anything that was state-of-the-art or a credit to the community would not be acceptable. The City needed to ensure that BHS was an outstanding facility for the children of Bellaire for the next 50 years.

Mr. Upton continued and asked what the maximum number of students the City's Fire Marshal would permit in the existing facility or the proposed new facility. At some point, there had to be a cap put on HISD related to the size of the building. The City's first responders had to be able to understand what they were dealing with if they walked into an emergency situation.

In closing, he encouraged City Council to find out the answer from the Fire Marshal and enforce the cap on HISD.

Christianne Melanson:

Christianne Melanson addressed City Council and indicated that she lived across the street from the Episcopal High School ("EHS"). She and her neighbors had experienced parking problems as well; however, once EHS completed construction of their parking garage, the parking problems for the neighborhood went away. For that reason, she was in favor of a parking garage.

Ms. Melanson stated that BHS was very important to the community. Residents reaped the benefits through measurably higher property values as a result of being zoned to BHS.

In closing, Ms. Melanson urged City Council to consider an amendment or change to some of the City's building codes that limited the height of the facility in order to get more building in a smaller footprint. She stated that she was glad to see the idea of phasing on the table.

Kathryn James:

Ms. James addressed City Council and stated that one of her major concerns was overcrowding. She stated that her children had to sit on the floor in their classes, and many times they did not have textbooks or lockers.

Ms. James expressed her support for the comments made by Mr. Upton related to the number of students that could occupy a building safely. She also did not understand the concept of reconstructing the school and then determining how many students could attend BHS. She urged HISD to look at where the student populations were and to try to balance them. Safety was the number one issue, followed by traffic, in her opinion.

Ezra Charles:

Mr. Charles addressed City Council and stated that he had recently attended a meeting at BHS. He noticed that the hallways were littered with students sprawled on the floors with papers and books. He asked a teacher why the students were in the hall, and the teacher advised that there was not enough room in the classroom for them. He also noticed that there was nothing wrong with the BHS building. It was well maintained, in his opinion.

Mr. Charles showed a drawing to the audience that depicted how BHS was zoned. The two communities traditionally served by BHS were noted to be the City of Bellaire and Meyerland Subdivision. Also included in Bellaire's zone was a large area near the NRG Stadium. Inclusion of that area qualified BHS to receive federal funding.

Mr. Charles advised that the area near the NRG Stadium needed a high school, and encouraged HISD to build the new high school near NRG Stadium and remodel the existing BHS campus.

{Speaker's allotted time ended at this point in the meeting}

Ray Richards:

Mr. Richards addressed City Council and stated that he was affected heavily by the traffic around the school, but acknowledged that in order to live near the school, he knew he would have to deal with that issue.

Flipping the school would not be such a bad idea if the student population did not have to be moved. Associated traffic could be handled safely with one-way streets, in his opinion. Mr. Richards indicated that Mr. Charles had made a good point in that the school might not need to be demolished.

Belinda Schmidt:

Ms. Schmidt addressed and indicated that her comment was solely in response to what she heard regarding the Mandarin Chinese School (formerly Gordon Elementary School). She referenced parking and traffic problems there as well and urged HISD to have a good plan for issues at that location.

Michelle Jeffery:

Ms. Jeffery addressed City Council and advised that she was a near neighbor to BHS and advised that she was in favor of the new school being located on South Rice Avenue. She was also concerned about the overcrowding and was happy to hear that HISD was looking into capping the school.

In closing, Ms. Jeffery commended PBK Architects for developing the phasing options so that reconstruction would be as minimally impactful to the neighborhood as possible.

Ann-Marie Hedberg:

Ms. Hedberg addressed City Council and advised that she lived near BHS and agreed that BHS had a wonderful culture.

Ms. Hedberg stated that she was concerned about traffic, and indicated that she, too, had seen students using drugs. A parking garage at BHS could not be monitored properly, in her opinion. She urged HISD to consider a shuttle from Meyerland to the school to minimize traffic and parking issues.

{The speaker's allotted time ended at this point in the meeting}

Nathan Wesely:

Mr. Wesely addressed City Council and advised that he lived close to BHS. He indicated that he was glad to hear that HISD would reconstruct BHS on South Rice Avenue.

The school needed to be capped; however, if the demand was there, the students would be there. He was glad to hear the various potential solutions and wished to add that the school did not have to be located at its current site--it could be relocated elsewhere. Mr. Wesely felt that it would make a great deal of financial sense for HISD and be safer for the students if the school were relocated.

Ori Hampel:

Mr. Hampel addressed City Council and advised that when school was in session, the street that he resided on was outright dangerous, in his opinion. When trying to access South Rice Avenue, he was unable to see oncoming traffic due to all of the cars parked along the street.

Mr. Hampel referenced the fact that Bellaire had its own Fire Department and its own City Council and suggested that Bellaire consider having its own school system and divest from HISD. Mr. Hampel also supported Mr. Charles' idea of building a new school for the area near NRG Stadium, leaving BHS to serve the traditional communities of Bellaire and Meyerland. He also supported moving the school to another site.

Susan Hawes:

Ms. Hawes addressed City Council and stated that Bellaire's feeder elementary school pattern was bursting. She urged HISD to plan for the student population growth.

Secondly, Ms. Hawes indicated that the citizens needed to be able to trust that what HISD said would actually happen. She was concerned that HISD might listen to the concerns of residents.

Bob Black:

Mr. Black addressed City Council and indicated that the simple solution to the problem was to limit the size of the school. By limiting the size, a parking garage would not be needed and traffic would go away.

Reference was made to BHS originally consisting of 10th, 11th, and 12th grades. He did not understand the concern with moving the 9th grade off-site as it was a pretty simple solution in his opinion.

Mr. Black urged City Council to have some muscle with HISD. He encouraged HISD to remodel rather than reconstruct.

Brigitte Minkowitz:

Ms. Minkowitz asked City Council during this exploratory phase to ask HISD to consider the feasibility of selling their very valuable piece of land and relocating to a property that could accommodate all of their programs and students.

Chris Young:

Mr. Young addressed City Council and stated that he was very supportive of BHS and Bellaire, but agreed that it was overcrowded. He indicated that he was bothered to learn that not that many Bellaire residents attended BHS. In conclusion, Mr. Young advised that he was not in support of a parking garage.

{Speakers allotted time ended at this point in the meeting}

Debbie Campbell:

Ms. Campbell addressed City Council and stated that she lived close to BHS, worked at BHS, and was on the PAT. She stated that she had spent a great deal of time over the last year speaking with many residents.

Ms. Campbell stated that her daughter had never sat on the floor in a classroom. The people and teachers that served on the PAT were very conscious of the surrounding neighbors. The support of the community on September 4th helped the PAT and HISD go back to the board and get some results.

She understood the size issue, but had faith in Principal McDonough and Trustee Lunceford that the issue would be worked on. She urged residents attending future PAT meetings to focus on the facility. Building a state-of-the-art facility was of the utmost importance. She

urged residents to get behind the PAT and help them build the best possible building on South Rice Avenue.

{The speaker's allotted time ended at this point in the meeting}

Frank Gerow:

Mr. Gerow addressed City Council and referred to statements made earlier by students that they looked at a building as an opportunity to grow and the flexibility to achieve the academic goals that they wanted to achieve. As it stood right now, the building under consideration did not allow Bellaire to grow nor would it give students the flexibility to have a better economic environment, in his opinion

Mr. Gerow advised that he could understand how politically charged it could be trying to redistrict a district BHS drew from a great variety of socioeconomic groups and trying to say which group could attend BHS was a difficult position for the HISD Trustees.

Bellaire had the opportunity to stand up to the district and force the issue. If Bellaire wanted to control the population, City Council had the opportunity to force the issue through a specific use permit to be granted by the City. He hoped that the voices City Council heard from the community this evening would empower them to force the issue.

Mr. Gerow continued and advised that was 100% opposed to the parking garage. Two big issues that the parking garage would create were traffic (one entrance and one exit to get in and out of the parking garage) and security (how the garage was maintained and policed).

Rachel Crochet:

Ms. Crochet addressed City Council and stated that she had been concerned about the zoning for BHS for some time and agreed that it needed to be smaller. She also agreed that 9th grade could be put on another campus.

Ms. Crochet continued and expressed her opposition to the parking garage. She noted that 90 cars could be parked down South Rice Avenue. Traffic was also an additional issue for the neighborhood.

E. Questions from Mayor and Members of City Council - Dr. Philip L. Nauert, Mayor.

Dr. Philip L. Nauert, Mayor, thanked everyone for their attendance and indicated to the residents that every member of City Council had heard their comments and respected and appreciated their input.

He opened the floor for questions from City Council. Following questions from City Council, Mayor Nauert closed the community meeting.

F. Close of the Community Meeting - Dr. Philip L. Nauert, Mayor.

The Community Meeting was closed at 8:37 p.m. on Monday, September 29, 2014.

G. Adjournment.

Motion:

To adjourn the Community Meeting before the City Council of the City of Bellaire, Texas, at 8:39 p.m. on Monday, September 29, 2014.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Amanda B. Nathan, Mayor Pro Tem
SECONDER:	James P. Avioli, Sr., Councilman - Position No. 2
AYES:	Nauert, Nathan, Reed, Avioli Sr., Pappas, McLaughlan, Friedberg