

PUBLIC FACILITIES REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE: October 15, 2014
TIME: 7:00 p.m. Meeting
PLACE: Abingdon Elementary School Media Center (Library)
3035 South Abingdon Street

STAFF COORDINATOR: Arlova Vonhm (Acting), 703-228-3428

Site Location:

Abingdon Elementary School
3035 South Abingdon Street
Arlington, Virginia 22204

Applicant:

John Chadwick
Arlington Public Schools
2770 S. Taylor Street
Arlington, Virginia 22206

Architect:

Peter Winebrenner; Principal
Hord Coplan Macht (HCM)
225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 205
Alexandria, Virginia, 22314

Staff Members:

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SUMMARY: Arlington Public Schools (APS) has begun the Building Level Planning Committee (BLPC) process and is starting the Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC) process to evaluate a proposed renovation of and addition to the Abingdon Elementary School. Both processes are in the conceptual stage and major topics such as building placement, parking, and site circulation are currently being discussed.

BACKGROUND: The 2013-22 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) was approved by the Arlington School Board in July 2012. The CIP included funding for 1,875 new elementary school seats in order to accommodate increased enrollment within the school system. The plan includes funding for construction of additions at three (3) existing elementary schools, and the construction of two (2) entirely new elementary schools on APS property. The APS’ “Multi-Site Study” was completed in Spring 2012 and identified the locations and priorities for the construction projects. A use permit for the Ashlawn Elementary School expansion/renovation was approved by the County Board in May 2013, the new Elementary School #1 on the Williamsburg Middle School campus was approved by the County Board in September 2013, and the McKinley Elementary School expansion and renovation was approved by the County Board in September 2014.

As with the three previous school projects that have been reviewed over the past year, the planning process for the Abingdon addition/renovation will incorporate the APS process, the Building Level Planning Committee (BLPC), and the County’s Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC) and requires them to work in tandem in designing the school addition. The design process will include three (3) phases: a conceptual phase, a schematic phase, and a final

phase during which a use permit for the project would be reviewed by the County Board. The use permit is currently anticipated to be heard at the July 2015 County Board meeting; however, this date is preliminary and subject to change.

The BLPC consists of APS staff, teachers, parents and PTA members, representation from community groups, and County staff.

The PFRC is a County Board-appointed committee consisting of representatives of the Planning Commission (one of which is designated by the County Board as Committee Chair) and several other commissions, APS representatives, and at-large members. It also includes project-specific members representing the Fairlington and Claremont Citizens Associations, as well as the Court Bridge I and II Condominium Association.

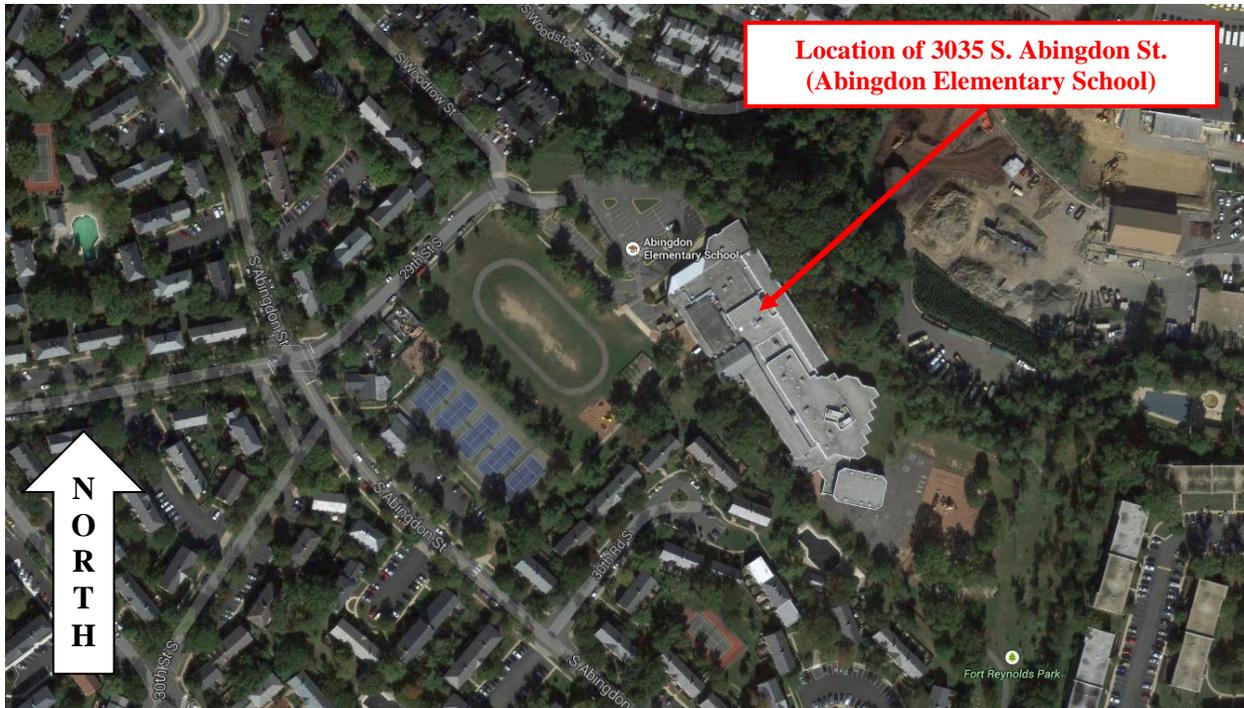
The following provides additional information about the site and surroundings:

Site: The 426,888 square foot (9.8 acres) site is bound on the north by South Woodrow Street and 29th Street South, on the south by South Abingdon Street and 30th Road South, on the east by Fort Reynolds Park and the Arlington County Equipment Division Trades Center, and on the west by South Abingdon Street.

Zoning: The site is zoned “S-3A” Special District. The purpose of the “S-3A” Special District is to encourage the retention of certain properties in a relatively undeveloped state. Land so designated may include publicly or privately owned properties which have distinct and unique site advantages or other features so as to make them desirable to retain as active or passive recreation (including but not limited to: parks, schools, pathways, and other public facilities). Schools are a permitted use by provision of a use permit subject to Section 4.15 of the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance (ACZO).

Land Use: The site is identified on the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) as “Public”.

Neighborhood: The site is located within the Fairlington Citizens Association and is adjacent to the Claremont Citizens Association. The Court Bridge I and II Condominiums are located adjacent to the school and will be represented on the PFRC.



Source: Google Maps

DISCUSSION: The community process for the Abingdon addition and renovation began on September 16, 2014 with the first BLPC meeting. This meeting included a presentation by the architect and associated design team who began to identify areas of discussion for the proposed expansion to guide both the BLPC and the PFRC through the public process. The second BLPC meeting was held on September 30, 2014. This meeting included a discussion on sustainability, a recap of discussion points from the first meeting, and a preliminary site analysis (group activity).

The planned addition at Abingdon School would be slightly smaller in scale and scope to the recently approved addition at McKinley Elementary School (approved with 9 new classrooms and support spaces). The planned addition would be designed to accommodate 6 additional classrooms and support spaces. A major portion of this project will consist of renovating the existing school building. The addition will expand capacity at the school by 136 seats, from 589 seats to 725 seats.

Principles of Civic Design: The *Principles of Civic Design in Arlington* were developed by the PFRC in 2008 and are intended to inform the design of civic facilities in Arlington, including buildings and other projects, to ensure they meet community goals for attractiveness, durability, and functionality. The principles reinforce and supplement existing County planning documents and policies, and are meant to promote compliance with certain basic principles, but not to inhibit creative design. The Principles will inform and guide the PFRC's discussion of the proposed addition with regard to civic values, site and orientation, building form, and building details and materials.

Parking: Section 14.3 of the ACZO calls for one (1) parking space for every 7.5 students of design capacity for employee parking at elementary and middle schools, plus one (1) space for every 40 students of design capacity for visitor parking. Based on the proposed design capacity of 725, the ordinance would require 97 employee parking spaces and 19 visitor parking spaces for a total of 116 parking spaces. In the event that the required parking cannot be accommodated onsite, the Ordinance allows the parking requirements for elementary schools (among other listed public uses) to be modified provided that the modification will preserve and create recreational facilities and provided that a transportation demand management plan is submitted that demonstrates that the modification will not adversely impact the neighborhood.

Abingdon Elementary School Parking	
<i>Current Building Capacity:</i>	589
Parking Required for Employees:*	79
Parking Required for Visitors:**	15
Total Off-street Parking Required:	94
<i>Proposed Building Capacity:</i>	725
Parking Required for Employees:*	97
Parking Required for Visitors:**	19
Total Off-street Parking Required:	116
Current Off-street Parking Provided:	80
*ACZO requirement: 1 parking space for every 7.5 students of design capacity (requirement for employees).	
**ACZO requirement: 1 parking space for every 40 students of design capacity (requirement for visitors).	

Use Permit: The ACZO distinguishes between uses permitted “by-right” and uses allowed by “special exception.” The use permit is one form of special exception, and is required for schools in the “S-3A” zoning district. The use permit offers a process for considering and approving such uses, subject to special conditions particular to the character of the use. Potential areas that may be addressed by conditions include but are not limited to: construction, transportation, environmental impacts, and recreational fields. After the BLPC and PFRC processes are complete, APS will file a use permit for the proposed school addition. As of the writing of this report, APS is projecting to apply for a use permit in May 2015. Use permits are approved by the County Board.