TOWN OF FAIRFAX
STAFF REPORT

To: **Mayor, Members of the Town Council**

From: **Michael Rock, Town Manager** MR

Date: **February 3, 2009**

Subject: **Update on the Ross Valley School District Plans for a new K-5 School (Deer Park site) and a remodel and addition to White Hill Middle School**

DISCUSSION

The Ross Valley School District (RVSD) Facilities Committee met again on Monday, January 25, 2010. The Committee reported that the Marin Town and Country Club (MTCC) site was off the table and that negotiations with the MTCC property owner were over and an agreement over price and terms was not reached. The Committee reported that there were four generic options left to consider for a K-5 facility:

1. The Red Hill Campus (owned by RVSD) –Requires Bond Measure
2. Deer Park Campus (owned by RVSD) – Currently leased by the Fairfax-San Anselmo Children's Center – Requires Bond Measure
3. Increase the size of existing schools (primarily at Manor School) – Requires Bond Measure
4. Add portables and increase class size on all K-5 campuses – No Bond Measure needed

The Committee also submitted a project timeline for both the K-5 and the White Hill sites which projects a June 2010 bond measure on the ballot.

The Committee also stated that there will be several "Town Hall" meetings in the next two weeks. The meetings are designed to get input from the public on the four generic options above.

R O S S V A L L E Y S C H O O L D I S T R I C T
110 Shaw Drive San Anselmo California 94960 Tel 415.454.2162 Fax: 415.454.6840 www.rossvalleyschools.org
Interim Superintendent: Catalina Nocon Board of Trustees: Chris Carlucci, M.D. - Conn Hickey - Rick McCallum - Sharon Sagar – Heidi Kritscher Weller

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Catalina Nocon, Interim Superintendent / Tel: 415.454.4060

ROSS VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT ANNOUNCES COMMUNITY TOWN HALL MEETING DATES

--Meetings to Provide Public Forum for Discussion of Solutions to District's Classroom Shortage and Growing Enrollment --

SAN ANSELMO, Calif., January 29, 2009 – The Ross Valley School District today announced dates for a series of community Town Hall Meetings to take place in early February. These public forums will include discussion of potential solutions to the District's current classroom shortage and growing enrollment. Solutions to be addressed at these meetings include rebuilding a K-5 school on either the District's Red Hill or Deer Park property; adding more classrooms to current campuses; or taking no action at all.

"While we are not recommending adding classrooms to our current campuses or taking no action concerning the classroom shortage, we want our community members to understand the pros and cons of all potential options," commented Sharon Sagar, president of the District's Board of Trustees. "We encourage anyone that cares about our schools and their impact on our communities to ask questions, give feedback and let the District know their opinions about this important issue at one of our upcoming meetings."

The district currently serves its 2,000 students in permanent structures built to accommodate 1,800 students. Future trends indicate that District schools will have 2,300 students and be almost 30 percent beyond capacity by 2014, with growth projected for many years beyond. Enrollment growth is due to an increase in the ratio of San Anselmo and Fairfax births to kindergarten enrollments and continued migration into District schools after kindergarten.
"In the past, the ratio of births to kindergarten enrollments was much lower in our District," explained Sagar. "Today, the ratio is such that for every baby born we will have a kindergartner five years later. In addition, the quality of our schools is attracting more young families with school-age children."

Community Town Hall Meeting Schedule
For more information on the Town Hall Meetings, contact the District Office at 415.451.4060 or visitwww.rossvalleyschools.org.

Tuesday, February 2	7pm	Manor School - Multipurpose Room
Thursday, February 4	7pm	Brookside School, Lower Campus - Multipurpose Room
Monday, February 8	7pm	Wade Thomas School - Multipurpose Room
Tuesday, February 9	7pm	Manor School - Multipurpose Room
Wednesday, February 10	7pm	White Hill Middle School - Library

About the Ross Valley School District
The Ross Valley School District (RVSD) serves the towns of San Anselmo and Fairfax with three elementary schools and one middle school. RVSD is dedicated to providing the quality educational experience that all students deserve, which is grounded in best practices, reflects the highest academic standards, and is responsive to community expectations. The District maintains its focus on students and is committed to providing a program of academic excellence; cultural richness; and social, emotional and physical development to educate, support, challenge and inspire the whole child. For more information visit www.rossvalleyschooldistrict.org. ###

Town & Country land appears out as Ross Valley school site

By Rob Rogers
Marin Independent Journal

Ross Valley School District officials have broken off negotiations with the owner of the Marin Town & Country Club, ending speculation that the Fairfax site could host a new elementary school.

District officials had chosen eight acres of the 23.5-acre Town & Country Club property as one of three potential sites for a new elementary school, following an enrollment increase of 14 percent since 2006. Officials say the district's schools are now over capacity by almost 200 students.

Many of those new students are coming from Fairfax, particularly in the Pastori Avenue area of the Town & Country Club — one reason why Ross Valley officials favored the site. The area also lacks the traffic problems faced by the other two properties chosen by the district: the former elementary schools at Fairfax's Deer Park and San Anselmo's Red Hill.

IF YOU GO

The Ross Valley School District board will hear reports from its facilities committee, communications committee, and town representatives facilities group related to the construction of a new elementary school at a 6:30 p.m. meeting Thursday, Jan. 28, at the district office at 110 Shaw Ave. in San Anselmo.

The board will discuss the merits of those sites at its meeting Thursday night.

"Neither one of our closed sites is ideal. We know that. But we have a limited number of choices," said board President Sharon Sagar. "Now that we don't think we can reach an agreement with the Town & Country Club, we need to go back and look at what we have, and then communicate to the community the drawbacks and advantages of each site."

The board declared an end to negotiations for the Town & Country Club site at its Jan. 14 meeting, after owner Michael Mackintosh declared its $4 million offer too low.

"From prior offers and current interests, we believe the as is value of the entire property exceeds $20,000,000," Mackintosh wrote in a Jan. 8 letter to the district. "If your interest is for the approximate eight acres on the east end of the property, the price will be $12,000,000."

With the Town & Country property off the table, the former Deer Park School in Fairfax has become the top contender for a new school site, based on the recommendation of the Ross Valley district's facilities committee. Yet Fairfax officials believe the repairs required at Deer Park should put the school out of contention.

"When I look at what they would have to do at Deer Park, it's huge," said Fairfax Mayor Lew Tremaine. "They don't have enough water flow back there for adequate fire suppression, in terms of what the state fire code says for a public school."

San Anselmo officials, for their part, believe reopening Red Hill Elementary — situated on a busy intersection beside the Red Hill shopping center — would cause a traffic nightmare.

"It sounds like the bulk of the increase in students is coming from Fairfax," said San Anselmo Councilman Tom McInerney. "It doesn't make a whole lot of sense to reopen a campus in San Anselmo."

The district board plans to hold a series of community meetings — from Tuesday, Feb. 2 through Wednesday, Feb. 10 — to give Ross Valley parents and voters the opportunity to weigh in on the site of a new school, or the possibility of no new school at all.

"We want to have a community conversation," Sagar said. "Do we really value having schools and classrooms in areas where people walk and live, or can we live with having families traveling from one town to another to go to school?"

Contact Rob Rogers via e-mail at rrogers@marinij.com

Marin I.J. MARIN VOICE 1-28-2010

Speaking up for Deer Park center

ELEMENTARY school enrollment in Ross Valley has exploded and the old Deer Park School site in Fairfax is being considered by the Ross Valley school board as a possible place for a new school.

The only trouble with this idea is that this site already has a very worthy tenant, the Fairfax San Anselmo Children's Center, which has served the community with distinction for the past 37 years.

But what an irony! This anticipated enrollment growth has occurred because the Ross Valley residents, who live in Fairfax and San Anselmo and send their children to the center, also send their children to the local schools — a winning combination.

Each year, 15 to 18 of these children who turn five are enrolled in these elementary schools. If the center moves, the children move — perhaps to other districts. The center fills essential hours outside of the school day, thus meeting the comprehensive needs of the families and children, and after all, Marin is known for having schools of notably high quality.

Why bite the hand that feeds you? These children contribute significantly to the expected increase in enrollment for which a bond is proposed in order to construct a new elementary school.

ETHEL SEIDERMAN

Ethel Seiderman of San Anselmo is the founder and longtime director of the Fairfax San Anselmo Children's Center in Fairfax.

Let's go a bit further. The state dollars follow the child. On the low end, 15 children at $7,000 (at least) per child is no small change. Add in $70,000 in annual rent the center pays to the district and the result is an even more substantial source of income.

This potential loss of revenue could produce a grim picture for the district.

The center has been more than a generous tenant. As a nonprofit, it receives grants, contributions and state funds. These funds support, improve and maintain the center at a high standard in order to meet and exceed the state education, health and safety guidelines.

For as many years as I can recall, the district has barely done anything to maintain this property.

The main purpose of our mutual work is providing the best care and education for all our children, and the statistics indicate that the families who already lived here or moved here did so to attain that winning combination; good schools, and good child care.

The district formally committed itself to support child care generously.

Justice, equity and fairness aside, you don't co-opt a historically and nationally recognized program by relegating it to a lesser degree of importance by "solving" a problem by shifting it to someone else.

These children are all our children.