

**TOWN OF FAIRFAX
STAFF REPORT**

To: Mayor, Members of the Town Council

From: Michael Rock, Town Manager 

Date: January 13, 2010

Subject: Update on the Ross Valley School District Plans for a new K-5 School (Deer Park or Marin Town and Country sites) and a remodel and addition to White Hill Middle School

DISCUSSION

The Ross Valley School District (RVSD) has been working for the last year through a School Facilities Committee made up of several RVSD Board Members, staff, teachers, parents and the Town Managers of San Anselmo and Fairfax on a needs assessment for a new K-5 school and for major upgrades and additions to White Hill Middle School. The Facilities Committee and the RVSD Board have determined the best way to meet increased enrollment is to build a new K-5 school and do major upgrades and additions to White Middle School.

The cost of these projects will have to be approved by voters in the RVSD at the June 2010 election. The RVSD has bonding capacity of about \$41 million. There is an additional \$7 million available through the State for new construction. White Hill upgrades and additions are estimated at \$30 million and a new K-5 school is estimated to cost \$23 million.

The Facilities Committee started with three preferred sites for a new K-5 school. They were Red Hill, Deer Park and Marin Town and Country Club (MTCC) property. About two months ago the Facilities Committee informally eliminated Red Hill as a preferred site due to a traffic study that showed very poor services levels if a school was built there. It should be noted that a Middle School did exist at the Red Hill site some years ago. The Fairfax-San Anselmo Children's Center has been operating at the Deer Park site for twenty years under a lease with the RVSD and would have to move if a new K-5 school site was constructed there.

The RVSD received a fair market appraisal of the MTCC site in mid-December 2009. The RVSD has not released the appraisal figure because they are negotiating price and terms with the owner, Michael Mackintosh. The MTCC property would have to be sold to the RVSD before it could become a viable site and there are many other contingencies regarding the MTCC property before the RVSD would become the owner.

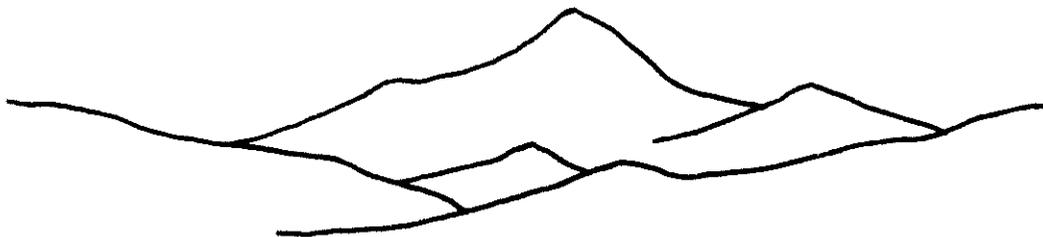
Three Town Hall meetings were held in November and December 2009 in the RVSD. More Town Hall meetings are being planned in the coming months. RVSD only has until late February to have a selected site for the K-5 school and the ballot language complete in order to qualify for the June 2010 ballot.

Many concerned residents of Deer Park and Council Member Reed attended the January 4, 2010 Facilities Committee meeting and voiced concerns about the Deer Park school and MTCC locations. In addition, the Fairfax Open Space Committee sent a letter to Sharon Sagar, President of the RVSD Board regarding their objection to the MTCC site for a new K-5 school.

ATTACHMENT

Fairfax Open Space Committee letter to Sharon Sagar, President of the RVSD Board

AGENDA ITEM # **17**



FAIRFAX OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE:

Mimi Newton - Chair

Michael Ardito	Ruth Horn
Ted Bright	Jack Judkins
Barbara Coler	Ryan O'Neil - Co-Chair
Niccolo Caldararo	Jane Richardson-Mack
Helen Fauss	

Sharon Sagar, President
Ross Valley School Board of Trustees
110 Shaw Drive
San Anselmo, CA 94960

Dear Ms. Sagar:

On behalf of the Town of Fairfax Open Space Committee (FOSC), I am writing to express the Committee's views with respect to one of the three potential sites being considered by the Ross Valley School District for a new elementary school. The FOSC has serious concerns about the potential development of a new school at the location of the former Marin Town and Country Club (60 Pastori Ave., Fairfax).

FOSC's interests lie in the preservation of open space lands in our Town and the Fairfax Planning Area. The property that was once the Marin Town and Country Club is, we believe, precisely one of those "environmentally sensitive lands in the Town of Fairfax that are subject to development pressures which threaten the loss of unique environmental and aesthetic qualities for future generations of citizens . . ." which the resolution creating our Committee specifically charges us to endeavor to protect.

As you know, the property that is the location of the former Town and Country Club (MT&C) is currently zoned for Commercial Recreation uses only. Our Committee's understanding is that any changes in that zoning classification would need to be submitted to the voters of Fairfax before the change would be effective. We believe this process will help to ensure that the residents of Fairfax have a direct voice in any future development (other than Commercial Recreational development) that may occur there. We believe that this, in turn, will help to ensure that the undeveloped portions of the property remain so. To the extent that the Ross Valley School Board would attempt to circumvent this important protection by arguing that uses of the property by the School Board would not be subject to the voter approval initiative process (which I heard one of your members assert at a recent meeting of the Board), the FOSC is concerned.

The FOSC is aware that the School Board's review of the options available to it for the new elementary school is fraught with complications of all sorts and we appreciate the thoughtful consideration that the Board is giving to each of the locations it is currently considering. However, in light of the significance of the undeveloped portions of MT&C to the residents of Fairfax, we strongly urge the Board to focus on its other options.

Sincerely

Mimi Newton, Chair
Fairfax Open Space Committee