

Report on the RVSB meeting of 2/25/10

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At the Ross Valley School Board meeting this last Thursday, the Board voted to do something that is not reflected in the Town Manager's report, which reports the events up to and including the meeting of the Facilities Committee meeting on Feb 22 only.

With 4 of the 5 members present (Carlucci absent), the board discussed the upcoming decision on accommodating the school population. They are faced with a number of options; none of them perfect, and have just received much input from the community via "town hall" meetings.

The Board felt that while they had several options that were worth investigating, and a decision between these options warranted a vetting of all of their details, going through this process was more than they could achieve in the short period before March 11, the date at which they must decide to either go for a bond on the June ballot, or wait until November. They had earlier voted to try to make that June ballot.

They then narrowed the discussion to either:

(Option H) moving the 5th grades to White Hill, and building two campuses on that property, a 5-6, and a 7-8. This option has a number of ramifications in terms of academics, teacher input that has not been collected, traffic issues, whether parents are OK with 5th graders on busses, administration, and social issues with the kids. It also has the disadvantage of not alleviating the overcrowding at Manor, so many Fairfax kids would still be sent to various elementary schools in San Anselmo.

(Option I) involves replacing the Children's Center at Deer Park with 120 kids (either drawn from the immediately walk-able neighborhood – ½ mile or so radius- or consisting of the MAP community), with the Children's Center offered a spot at Red Hill. Six new classrooms would be added to existing elementary schools in the rest of the district, bringing them all to an average 20 classrooms, the "optimum size". Deer Park would be upgraded seismically, fire improvements made, etc. The disadvantages of this option are its location in a box canyon and the issues that come up from that, namely fire egress and traffic, as well as liquefaction (mudslides), ecological issues, and vocal local opposition to a school at Deer Park.

Since option H had many unknowns that probably could not be figured out before the March 11 deadline, the board narrowly voted to vet only option I, with the understanding that if they decided to not go for the June ballot, they would revisit all of the options still on the table, or perhaps something else that may come to light as a part of that process.

Accordingly, staff has been directed to come up with financial figures, mitigation plans and details around other aspects of this choice, and come back to present these at a Board meeting Thurs March 4th, where more discussion will take place. A week later at a board meeting March 11, a decision will be made whether to go for a ballot measure for a bond in June.