

August 22, 2005

Memorandum

To: Brother Edmond, Saint Mary's CHS
Rich Brown, Peralta Park Neighborhood Association

From: Joan Chaplick, MIG, Inc.

Re: Summary of Listening Session on 8/22/05

Participants: Lucas Guttentag (PPNA), Amy Tick (PPNA), Joan Chaplick (MIG) and Sharon McNamee (MIG).

MIG hosted a listening session with representatives of the Peralta Park Neighborhood Association to hear their issues and concerns regarding the resolution of the conditional use permit. The group met for approximately one hour and the agenda included participant introductions, discussion of issues related to the conditional use permit, and identification of next steps.

Lucas Guttentag and Amy Tick introduced themselves as representatives of the Peralta Park Neighborhood Association (PPNA). Joan Chaplick and Sharon McNamee from MIG briefly explained their role in the process. Joan and Sharon will be working as a team to ensure MIG availability and responsiveness given the relatively short time period between now and the September 6th City Council meeting. Joan will be the main point of contact for MIG and Rich Brown (or his designee) will be the main point of contact for PPNA to ensure consistent communication.

To provide an overview, Joan explained that the City of Albany had directed Saint Mary's to involve the community in their master plan process. Peter Smith, legal council for Saint Mary's, was aware of MIG's work and suggested that Brother Edmond contact the firm. The conversation between MIG and Saint Mary's focused on developing an approach for involving the community in the proposed master plan. The approach included a series of community meetings that allowed for information sharing and community input. MIG was made aware of the issues around the conditional use permit, but it was considered separate from the master plan. The recent direction from Albany City Council for Saint Mary's to host a facilitated meeting with PPNA regarding the conditional use permit led to MIG's current involvement in this meeting. MIG originally suggested a process that included a discussion of broader issues and a longer time frame. However, MIG was encouraged by city representatives to focus the conversation on the conditional use permit.

Lucas provided a brief history of the issues related to PPNA's appeal of the conditional use permit which was filed in April 2005. He reviewed some historical context about activities happening since the 1994 expansion that was approved. Lucas described that the school's

impact on the neighborhood increased at that time. Visual, traffic, parking and noise impacts were mentioned.

Lucas also provided some background on the design review process for Freitas Hall. The hall exceeded the allowed square footage by about 3,000 square feet. To address this, the school offered to remove 3,000 sq ft of space in the form of the band pavilion, snack shack and approximately 600 sq. ft of classroom space.

PPNA believes the school should honor this commitment through a “virtual tear-down” whereby the square footage is completely taken out of use. The PPNA states the facilities would not have to be torn down and they believe this is a concession on the part of the PNAA to work with the school to find a solution. Should future approvals related to the master plan allow the usage of these facilities to be reinstated, the school would not have gone to the expense of tearing them down.

Joan and Sharon requested some clarification regarding the school’s impact on the neighborhood related to noise, traffic and visual impacts. There was some explanation given about the source of noise being related to the athletic fields and amplified noise and some description related to the scale of the gymnasium. However, Lucas and Amy requested that the discussion stay focused on the conditional use permit and related square footage.

Sharon suggested the group brainstorm some alternative strategies to assist with resolution of the issue. Lucas and Amy responded that they felt that the identification of alternatives should be left to the school.

The group discussed the next steps to be taken. Lucas and Amy requested a proposal from St Mary’s that presents some options for taking 3,000 square feet out of usage in the form of a “virtual tear-down”. They are flexible on the facilities and location of the square footage involved. The solution should be a tangible result and they are not open to a proposal that requires monitoring to ensure it is being implemented satisfactorily. They are looking for a response that shows the school will honor its commitments. They believe this will go a long way toward rebuilding trust and good communications with the neighborhood.

The group discussed the next steps. Lucas and Amy requested that Saint Mary’s provide their proposal to PPNA in advance of the scheduled meeting so they would have time to consult with the neighbors. They requested that the proposal not be highly detailed or formally documented and that it could be shared by e-mail. Joan requested that they give the school a few days to respond. Potential dates were identified for a follow-up meeting with Saint Mary’s and PPNA and MIG would facilitate the discussion. Suggested dates include: 8/26 (am), 8/29 and 8/30.

MIG will share the above feedback with Saint Mary’s and schedule the follow-up meeting.