

DSA PTSA FACILITIES SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
Media Center, DSA
Tuesday, January 27, 2009

Ms. Lyleen Collins, DSA PTSA President, called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. She welcomed attendees and provided an overview of the efforts of the PTSA Facilities Safety Initiative to call attention to the poor conditions of the Carr Building on the DSA campus. This meeting was called to discuss with Durham Public Schools officials the plans for addressing the problems with the Carr Building.

Mr. Hugh Osteen, DPS Assistant Superintendent for Operational Services, introduced members of the DPS staff also in attendance: from Construction and Capital Planning, Tim Carr, Program Manager, and John Dobbs, Project Manager; and Director of Risk Management Services, Ron Allen.

Mr. Osteen provided a summary of repairs, renovations and construction on the DSA campus since the magnet school began over ten years ago. The following information was included in his report:

- In response to feedback from the DSA community, the decision was made to build a new building with \$6 million from a 2003 bond referendum originally intended for repairs to the Carr Building. There were concerns at the time that \$6 million would allow for some improvements but would not be enough to fully repair the building. In 2006, a DPS Long Range Facilities Plan identified \$550 million in construction/renovation needs for the subsequent ten years, \$43 million of which were for DSA; of the \$550 million, only \$190+ was awarded. In 2007 a bond referendum was passed which included roughly \$43 million for construction projects at DSA, including \$15+ million for renovations to the Carr Building. (Other projects include renovations to the cafeteria and gym, installation of sprinklers, restroom renovations, and addressing security issues.)
- Plans called for initiation of design work for the Carr renovations in September 2009 with construction to be done in 2011. However, due to concerns about the rapid deterioration of the building, the decision has been made by DPS administration to expedite the work on the Carr building. An engineering firm is being hired to conduct a feasibility study by February 27, 2009. The firm will conduct scientific analysis to determine the lifecycle expectation of building components, assess feasibility of construction options within the budget (e.g., renovation vs. removal and replacement), and assess options for moving students and teachers into other space before and/or during construction. An architect will be hired and design work can be completed in about six months, after which time bidding/contracting will be completed in approximately 30 days. Approval from the city/county planning committee can take a long time, but DPS will do what is possible to expedite the process. Renovations could start by the winter/spring of 2010.

- Input on priorities for the Carr renovation will be solicited from the DSA community, coordinated by Mr. Hawks.
- There are rumors that a creek runs under the Carr Building; it is actually a sealed storm water culvert. It was analyzed by professionals several years ago, and that assessment will be updated.
- Former skylights over the common area in Carr are leaking and there is a continual fight to stop leaks. DPS would like to restore the skylights in the renovation.
- The DPS construction website priority list is not up to date; Carr is now of the highest priority.

The following questions were asked by parents, students and teachers in attendance:

- Question: Is the health of the building in question?
Mr. Osteen: Asbestos inspections by DPS and a third party are conducted on a regular basis and have indicated no dangers. Asbestos is monitored and contained by a third party contractor. Inspections for mold are conducted upon request.
Follow-up comment: An assessment of air quality and mold are requested, given reported incidents of illness, aggravation of asthma, etc., reported by some who spend a great deal of time in Carr.
Mr. Osteen: Assessment will be conducted.
- Question: Where will the students go during the renovation?
Mr. Osteen: This has yet to be determined. The project budget includes soft costs to cover relocation of classes. Purchase of trailers, relocation of trailers from other sites, and renting a city building (corner of Duke and Trinity) will all be considered.
- Comment: Given that there are ongoing concerns about the health of the building, it is requested that students and teachers be moved out of the building as soon as possible, regardless of when work actually begins.
Mr. Osteen: This will be given serious consideration.
- Question: Are there concerns that the present state of the economy will result in getting less for the same money, therefore calling into question the adequacy of the amount of money in the budget for the project to renovate the Carr Building?
Mr. Osteen: Last year costs were at their peak; this year, costs have declined. When the bond was passed \$15 million was adequate, and the feasibility study will determine if it continues to be. If not, other paths will be considered.
- Question: Would replacement of the Carr Building be more affordable and better meet the needs of the DSA community?

Mr. Osteen: As of the last evaluation, the core structure of the Carr Building is sound, and therefore it is likely that we could get much more for the money with a renovation than replacement. The costs of demolishing such a large building with special asbestos abatement costs are quite high, reducing the amount available for a new building. In a renovation, efforts will be made to preserve architectural details. Although some features will be lost – for example, transoms over the doors, which are no longer allowed by fire codes – other aspects will be preserved as much as possible, including the cupola, window shapes and the slate roof.

- Question: Who makes the final decision if the feasibility study indicates that the original plans are not possible within the budget?
Mr. Osteen: The Board of Education and the County Commission are responsible for the decision if there is a change of scope from the original plans.
- Question: How will information be communicated to the DSA community?
Mr. Osteen: Mr. Hawks will coordinate a mechanism for communication. A meeting to review the results of the upcoming feasibility study will be scheduled with the DSA PTSA during the second week of March.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 by President Collins. The date of the next meeting will be announced by email.

Respectfully submitted by Jill Lowery, DSA PTSA Secretary