

Statement for consideration from Denise M. Joseph for the 4.25.23 Public Hearing

I lived in Gleneagles North since 2018. I recently heard about Docket 90 and the change in location for the proposed Middle School. I would like to know a few things and make a few statements about this multi-tiered change of location involving CCPS, the developer, the State of Maryland, and SHA. I believe that this is an interconnected issue that should be addressed holistically and not just to satisfy a developers plan to build homes and make a massive amount of money. This is a community issue with implications on student achievement, voting implications, land use, and the fitness of the Board of Commissioners on an issue that could negatively affect the residents of at least seven or so communities in Charles County approximately 10,000 residents and voters.

1. **CCPS Perspective:** Ease of transition to Middle School when elementary schools are next to the middle school. In the original location, the schools were next to each other which would encourage a partnership with the schools and a better likelihood that the schools will have a greater connection because of their proximity. Please take a look at this article for other reasons [Successful Transition from Elementary to Middle School - Confident Counselors](#). In addition, there wouldn't be many changes in routine if the schools are next to each other which could help students do better in school and be more likely to excel at middle school. This article implies some of the positive effects that I speak about [What science tells us about improving middle school | PBS NewsHour](#). Lastly, in other communities, parents and students have raved about the proximity of their elementary and middle school speaking of the convenience and ease especially if the have children and siblings going to both schools. It is really a parenting perfect scenario.
2. **SHA Perspective:** A few of our neighbors contacted at the time Commissioner Vice President Rucci's office via Julie Bryson, Chief of Staff and PFC Andrew Felton in late 2022 about the back up of traffic and safety concerns on Piney Church Road and Fenton tried to get our community a crossing guard but he stated they did not have enough manpower to assist. I know this issue is near and dear to Commissioner Amanda Stewart and I ask that the traffic issue is examined regardless of where the school goes and especially if it is built off of 488 close to a stadium, a 2 lane 2 way road, a high school and a proposed commercial area.
3. **State of Maryland Perspective:** Out of the 50 acres lot, you have 35 acres to build two schools and if each school has about 1000-1500 students, according Global Services in Education <https://www.gsineducation.com/blog/area-required-to-set-up-a-school>. There is also a nifty calculator to project the amount of space needed bases on the population and other factors <https://www.unitconverters.net/area/square-meter-to-acre.htm>. The estimation for space needed for each school is about 2 acres.
4. **Commissioner Perspective:** Currently some of the homeowners in Gleneagles South and North are not zoned to the closet elementary or middle schools. Some neighbors brought up issues of [gerrymandering](#) and redistricting. There is also a fear again that Gleneagles South residents would not be districted to this school and the student residents on the other side of 488 would be the main population of a school built in the new area.

I propose that wherever the school is located that a certain percentage of seats be reserved for Gleneagle North, Gleneagle South residents along with Fieldside residents similar to what other schools are doing like [CMIT Academy](#) in College Park part of Prince George's County Public Schools.

5. **Holistic Resolutions:** This multi-layered has a tremendous impact on our community and could be resolved by:
- a. Relaxing the county required buffer to allow for more space at the original location
 - b. Building less houses in the original location to allow both the Elementary School and Middle School to be next to each other as originally planned.
 - c. Have the builder donate more land to allow for both schools to be built on the original location.
 - d. Capping the capacity of both planned schools to allow for a smaller school needing less land to fit in the smaller location but allowing for the need of the Gleneagles community and possibly realigning the surrounding districts so the appropriate students go to the appropriate schools allowing for the right size capacity and reducing the chance of overcrowding.

Thank you so much for reading my comments, concerns and issues to help my community, residents, and policies to be aligned with the needs and desires of the community with the support of you the Board of Commissioners.

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