

Second Re-Zoning Meeting

Location: Gibbs Elementary School

Date: 12-06-2016

Attendance: 94

Comments from Community:

- Lisa Starbuck- requested the presentation be available on line. She also asked that we protect “feeder schools” and keep kids in the community that they live in. Also asked if we will use previous study submitted as a guide to re-zoning? Russ Oaks commented that we would be “foolish” not to consider their work, but that no lines had been drawn by Knox County Schools. “We are here to listen.”
- East Knox area has afterschool care programs that will be greatly affected. The kids are being sectioned and moved. Several areas have built schools, but not in the East Knox area.
- East Knox has been looked over, pushed to the side and students are being sent away to other areas of the community.
- Ms. Cornell stated that the School Board has harmed one community to benefit another one. Arbitrarily building a school, favoring one group over another. She asked that the School Board admit their mistake and make it right.
- Reverend John Butler’s wife stated that new schools had not been built in her area. She asked that we keep kids in their own communities!
- Cynthia Finch was concerned about the next generation of leaders getting good training by having good schools and being able to participate in activities after school. She wanted the School Board to take into account students should be well rounded. It would be difficult for students to get rides after school to attend those after school activities if they were not close by.
- Nicole Channing asked that we make the demographic data available. The state report card is difficult to read in its entirety. She wanted the

demographics made into a more user friendly format that the community could read and understand.

- Carley Ray works with the youth on the east side. She stated that students were having to be at bus stops by 6am and were not dropped off until 6pm. They had at least 2 hours of travel time on a bus each day. She also stated that schools in her area needed updating. Students should be able to walk to school. And before re-zoning, she wanted travel time for students to be taken into consideration.
- Deborah Porter lives in the Gibbs community. She stated that she did not have children in school and was with the NAACP. She brought up the Chattanooga bus wreck and mentioned that students were killed traveling out of their community while being bused to another community. She stated that community schools are very important.
- Reverend John Butler stated that he was the originator of the OCR complaint. He was not against Gibbs- he just would like a state of the art facility in his neighborhood. He also stated that kids in his community were divided. Neighbors across the street were forced to go to multiple middle and high schools outside of their area. His community was divided in order to meet the ethnic diversity demands placed on Knox County.
- Another attendee stated that she was not against other communities- but she wanted to see the following: Transfer system put in place that would better allow for students to go to schools they preferred, specific zones to be enforced once the re-zoning took place, so that if people bought homes in a community they could be assured that their student's would not be re-zoned later. And asked that we not "wrong" another community to "right" the Gibbs community.
- Mother of an autistic student stated that her child had been to 8 different schools because of his special needs. Depression and withdrawal are part of the symptoms that occur when students have to change schools and make new social circles.
- Marshall Vineyard a lifetime community member and former bus driver stated that he had to "speed" in order to bus kids from one community to the next. That was the only way to get them to school on time.

- Cynthia Lynch asked Interim Superintendent Buzz Thomas if it was possible to do away with zoning for the Knox County School system altogether. Interim Superintendent thought that was not likely.
- Interim Superintendent Buzz Thomas made a statement that he heard the following similar comments from both re-zoning meetings so far:
 1. Parents want “Great Schools” in every community
 2. Try not to rip families apart
 3. Zones need to line up between middle and high schools as closely as possible

Interim Superintendent also stated that a new position was being created to represent families for students with disabilities. He confirmed the person hired for the position was Sue Owenby.

- Question was asked of Mr. Thomas if there were any plans to close multiple schools in the East Knox area and combine them with one large new facility. He said that no plans currently existed for that option.
- Ms. Brown asked if there were currently any plans to build new schools in East Knox County. She also stated that the new middle school in the north end of town meant that somewhere a school would have to close in order to fill it-
- James Spears a 1991 graduate of Gibbs said their community was still trying to heal from wounds over 25 years old when they originally closed the first Gibbs Middle School. He was glad to see the new school and thought the community would be able to fill it without pulling from other communities because of the growth in the area being projected.
- Kelly Johnson works at Ritta. She lives in Summer Rose and stated that as “we look at re-zoning” try to make sure that the zone people reside in- should also be the zone in which they can vote for their School Board Representative in.
- The “Grandfather clause” should be made available through the entire feeder pattern.
- County Commissioner Evelyn Gill stated there are 14 Schools in (her) District 1. She wanted to see a comprehensive plan for those schools and

to meet with School Officials and come up with a specific approach to this community's needs. She was unhappy with the current "piece-mill" approach.

- Question was asked how often we re-zone. Answer (Russ Oaks) "As often as needed."
- Sandra Clark, of the Shopper News commented on the fact that Gibbs Middle may not hold all of the students that would be attending- based on the numbers that are currently enrolled at Gibbs High. It was pointed out that Gibbs High holds 4 grade levels, whereas Gibbs Middle only has 3.