

MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF ROCKVILLE

ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

MEETING NO. 28-10

AGENDA ITEM 9

PUBLIC HEARING ON MUNICIPAL GROWTH ELEMENT (MGE)

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5 PIOTR GAJEWSKI, Council Member

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14 and Redevelopment

15 **Public Speakers:**

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17 ANDREA HALL

18 CHRISTOPHER KELLY

19 CRYSTAL OLER

20 SUSAN CASTER

21 LAURA BERTHIAUME

22 LYNN PERRY

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MAYOR MARCUCCIO: All right, shall we move on to the Public Hearing. There is to be a public hearing on the Municipal Growth Element. And that's item number nine here. And this public hearing, has it been properly advertised, Madam Clerk?

MS. EVANS: Yes, it has.

MAYOR MARCUCCIO: All right. I want to remind you that if you're speaking for an individual at this public hearing you have three minutes. If you're speaking as a member of a group representing an entity, you have five minutes. And we have two people -- three people signed up so far: David Levy who is our staff member, Cindy Bar, and Andrea Hall.

So, first we will hear from David Levy. And I might mention that it's this document that we are talking about. All right.

MR. LEVY: Good evening, Mayor and Council. I am David Levy, chief of long range planning in our Department of Community Planning

1 and Development Services. Just as a little bit of  
2 background on the Municipal Growth Element for the  
3 public, both documents -- Municipal Growth and the  
4 Water Resources Elements -- are Planning  
5 Commission drafts. What that means is that  
6 they're products of the Planning Commission and  
7 are forwarded to the mayor and council for review  
8 consistent with how Article 66-B of the State Code  
9 directs local governments to amend their master  
10 plans. As I'm sure you know when you ultimately  
11 approve and adopt these elements with whatever  
12 changes you make; the documents will become part  
13 of the city's Master Plan, which we have and has  
14 been approved in 2002 and has been updated through  
15 amendments over the past few years.

16 This past spring and summer staff  
17 presented drafts of both items to the Planning  
18 Commission, testimony was received from the public  
19 and from public agencies, and revisions were made  
20 and as directed by the Planning Commission. As  
21 usual, at public hearings there's no plan to  
22 address the testimony this evening. That will

1       come on October 11th, which is when the work  
2       session is scheduled to work on these items.

3               One item that we should do is decide  
4       when the public record would be closed so there  
5       are three ways that people can get public  
6       testimony. One, would be in person tonight, the  
7       other would be by e-mail to mayor and council at  
8       rockvillemd.gov, or by mail to the city clerk here  
9       at City Hall, 111 Maryland Avenue in Rockville.  
10       As the clerk mentioned, plenty of notice has been  
11       given. We recommend in the Staff Report that the  
12       public record be held open until two Wednesdays  
13       from now September 22nd, so that's something that  
14       you can decide now or at the end of the public  
15       hearings. But that's our recommendation that  
16       gives enough time for the public to hear this and  
17       then give more comments, and for staff to prepare  
18       the report in time for the work session.

19               With that I would recommend that we --  
20       that the mayor and council open -- just for the  
21       public -- a longer presentation on these documents  
22       were provided on -- at the August 2nd Mayor and

1 Council Meeting. And if anybody would like to go  
2 see that longer presentation you can find it on  
3 the city's website under the Video on Demand for  
4 August 2nd, and you can find items 17 and 18 for  
5 that meeting. And you can watch the entire  
6 presentations that can help supplement your  
7 reading the documents. Both documents have  
8 executive summaries as well, so in case reading  
9 the 60 and 70 pages is onerous. So, there are  
10 multiple ways of getting information about them.

11 And with that I would recommend that the  
12 Municipal Growth Element public hearing be opened.

13 MAYOR MARCUCCIO: All right. It is now  
14 open. And our first speaker, yes, she's here.

15 MS. BAR: Good evening, Mayor Marcuccio  
16 and members of the council. Cindy Bar with  
17 Holland & Knight. I'm here with Bill Kominers and  
18 Arnold Kohn on behalf of Tower Dawson, LLC.  
19 They're the developers of the Tower Oaks project,  
20 which I know you're all familiar with.

21 Tower has a long history with the City  
22 of Rockville. It has worked closely with

1 successive mayors and council members on the  
2 development of the Tower Oakes Project. It has  
3 constructed two office buildings, including the  
4 recently completed 2000 Tower Oaks Boulevard, a  
5 LEED Platinum building. It is a longstanding  
6 citizen of the city and has demonstrated over many  
7 years its support and commitment to the progress  
8 of the city.

9 Because of its interest in the city,  
10 Tower asked us to review the Municipal Growth  
11 Element of the Comprehensive Master Plan, which  
12 you're considering tonight. We applaud the effort  
13 that went into the drafting of the document, but  
14 there are not any specific recommendations which  
15 directly affect Tower Oaks. We have a few general  
16 comments, which we would like to share.

17 Infrastructure. The statement appears  
18 on page 9 that Rockville will continue to invest  
19 in service and infrastructure in areas for which  
20 it has authority, but Montgomery County must do  
21 the same in their areas of authority and service.  
22 While we recognize that this is true, particularly

1 in the area of roads and schools, we implore the  
2 city to work diligently with the county to ensure  
3 that these and other infrastructure needs are  
4 addressed. We note that the report projects that  
5 Rockville will experience a 34 percent increase in  
6 population, a 42 percent increase in households,  
7 and a 41 percent increase in the employment for  
8 the years for 2010 to 2040.

9 The Tower Oaks site is recognized as one  
10 of the areas for potential growth. We too have  
11 this expectation and hope the city recognizes that  
12 this will benefit the city and its citizens over  
13 the long-term. Projects such as Tower Oaks  
14 provide infrastructure improvements, create jobs,  
15 generate tax revenues, and generally enhance the  
16 economic conditions in the city.

17 Mixed-use development. We agree with  
18 the reports conclusion that most of the expected  
19 growth will be multifamily and commercial, and  
20 much of it in the mixed-use arena. We think that  
21 it is critical for the city to continue to  
22 recognize this as a major direction for the

1 development of the city, and to work with the  
2 developers to serve the expected population  
3 growth. We hope that the city will use the APFO  
4 ordinance adopted in 2005 as a helpful tool for  
5 guiding growth and public investment in  
6 facilities, rather than an impediment.

7 In analyzing future growth, the city  
8 seeks to balance growth in housing and jobs. The  
9 increase in jobs will necessitate an increase in  
10 housing stock, which will increase the demand on  
11 the city infrastructure, including schools.  
12 Perhaps the most critical element that needs to be  
13 addressed in the growth of the city is the  
14 schools. With two out of -- with two clusters  
15 already in moratorium, it is imperative that the  
16 city work on this, including at potentially  
17 looking at adjustments to the APFO ordinance,  
18 because these may be warranted.

19 Finally, our final observation regarding  
20 the report is a paragraph on page 21, which  
21 states, "Perhaps the most important factors  
22 affecting growth are those that have impacts on

1 the broader regional and national economy, and the  
2 resulting market for real estate. Those factors  
3 include interest rates, demographic trends,  
4 immigration, consumer taste, and many other  
5 factors over which the City of Rockville has  
6 virtually no power." Never has a truer statement  
7 been included in a regulatory document.

8 The economics of this region and the  
9 nation have been in turmoil for the last two  
10 years. We expect that it will be some years  
11 before the economy rebounds to anywhere near the  
12 level of 2006 when the state mandated that these  
13 growth elements be adopted. While it is important  
14 to have such documents to assist in projecting  
15 growth, and anticipating to serve it, it is  
16 equally important for the city to work on measures  
17 to attract growth and private incentives for  
18 projects to come to Rockville and to move forward.

19 Certainly adopting more restrictive  
20 growth controls is the wrong message when they are  
21 not coupled with measures to alleviate  
22 deficiencies. We hope the city leadership will

1 continue to work for the economic vitality of the  
2 city and its residents, by fostering and embracing  
3 necessary growth, not hampering it.

4 Thank you.

5 MAYOR MARCUCCIO: Thank you.

6 MR. BRITTON: Madam Mayor, if I may?

7 MAYOR MARCUCCIO: Oh, yes, by all means.

8 MR. BRITTON: I'm going to ask a  
9 question, please.

10 MAYOR MARCUCCIO: You can indeed  
11 question.

12 MR. BRITTON: It's a hearing, so we can  
13 grill you. We've --

14 MS. BAR: Yes, okay.

15 MAYOR MARCUCCIO: Yes.

16 MR. BRITTON: I'm not sure of all of the  
17 projects that Tower's into. I'm not sure if you  
18 do residential, but you did set out an equation  
19 that if you have commercial, you build offices,  
20 you're going to need places to live. And, of  
21 course, those places cause problems in our  
22 infrastructure: Roadways, water and sewer

1 systems, and most infamously the schools.

2 You suggest that we take upon ourselves  
3 to work with the county more closely to solve some  
4 of these problems, and I agree. I couldn't agree  
5 even more, you know, in light of recent events  
6 related to school crowding here. But that's  
7 easier said than done. So, what I would suggest  
8 to you and others in the development world is  
9 maybe come up with other suggestions as well where  
10 the public sectors, city and county, work with the  
11 private sector in figuring out ways to develop  
12 this infrastructure more rather than just having  
13 us hear from you that we're hampering development.  
14 We really have serious problems and we need to  
15 address them, and it is always better when the  
16 private and public sectors work together to come  
17 up with some, you know, conclusions, some remedies  
18 for this kind of thing.

19 MS. BAR: I couldn't agree with you  
20 more, it's a collaborative effort.

21 MR. BRITTON: You also -- I know those  
22 are superlative statements. Nobody can disagree

1 with them.

2 MS. BAR: Right, but --

3 MR. BRITTON: They --

4 MS. BAR: -- the devil's in the details.

5 MR. BRITTON: Exactly. They do

6 absolutely nothing for us unless we actually work

7 on them.

8 The other comment you mentioned is look  
9 at the APFO and figure out ways to help guide and  
10 frame the growth rather than just use it as a  
11 hammer to stop growth. I would also like -- I  
12 request from you and others, anyone out there  
13 listening, to make suggestions in that regard.  
14 That's, again, a nice statement. I'd like to  
15 explore that. We may explore APFO provisions, I  
16 do not know. But, again, the details;  
17 private-public working together, comes up with  
18 some solutions that we can tweak or reject or  
19 whatever. But at least give us something that is  
20 more -- has more meat to it than just the  
21 statements that we're hearing.

22 MS. BAR: I think in that forum, in the

1 APFO forum, definitely more specifics. We didn't  
2 put in more specifics tonight because it wasn't on  
3 the APFO ordinance itself.

4 MR. BRITTON: I understand.

5 MS. BAR: But --

6 MR. BRITTON: I understand, but you have  
7 to start somewhere. So -- but I appreciate all of  
8 the comments. I appreciate the sentiment to it.  
9 And I hope we can all start looking at this and  
10 saying we really need to work on this if we're  
11 going to accommodate, in part at least, that  
12 projected growth that everybody keeps talking  
13 about.

14 Thank you.

15 MS. BAR: You're welcome.

16 MAYOR MARCUCCIO: All right, our next  
17 speaker. Beg your pardon? Is Andrea Hall.

18 MS. HALL: Thank you for the opportunity  
19 to speak to you this evening. My name is Andrea  
20 Hall. Along with my husband and two children, I  
21 live in the College Gardens neighborhood and my  
22 children attend College Gardens Elementary.

1           Tonight I am speaking on behalf of a  
2           group of residents of the College Gardens and  
3           Woodley Gardens neighborhoods who are concerned  
4           about the rapid growth in our school.. As of today  
5           there are 787 students enrolled in College  
6           Gardens.. The building was built 2 years ago to  
7           hold 693, so we're brushing up against 15 percent  
8           over capacity, and this growth has happened in  
9           just 2 years..

10           While growth is a problem across the  
11           county schools, the data shows that Rockville  
12           elementary schools are baring an disproportionate  
13           share of this growth. While 8 school clusters and  
14           MCPS exceed 105 percent of capacity, only the  
15           Richard Montgomery cluster exceeds 120 percent of  
16           capacity. This impacts our streets, our parks,  
17           and our children's educational experience.. Right  
18           now, at College Gardens, third graders do not eat  
19           lunch until 1:30 p.m. This means they finish  
20           eating 1-1/2 hours before school is out..

21           Excess traffic and parking is a problem..  
22           People park illegally in both the front and back

1 of the school. Due to the excessive growth in  
2 schools within the RM cluster, as you know, a  
3 residential developmental moratorium will be in  
4 place beginning next year pursuant to the  
5 Montgomery County School test; part of the  
6 county's growth policy. It should also trigger a  
7 moratorium under the City of Rockville's APFO.

8 While both the moratorium and an  
9 adequate prediction of future growth are  
10 essential, they will not address aspects of school  
11 growth that are happening now. For example, many  
12 families are moving from the north side of Redland  
13 Road in King Farm to the south side so that their  
14 children can go to College Gardens. In general,  
15 generational changes in many neighborhoods will be  
16 significant in the next few years.

17 College Gardens has the only IBP/YP  
18 program in the county, so it has become a magnet  
19 for families seeking the very best our county  
20 schools have to offer. This has led to an  
21 increase in the number of young families in rental  
22 units within our schools boundaries, and in some

1 cases there's overcrowding, like two or more  
2 families living in a residence designed for a  
3 single family.

4 We would like the City of Rockville to  
5 enforce its own zoning ordinances and building  
6 occupancy codes by ensuring that only one family  
7 resides in each single-family unit at Yale Village  
8 and other rental properties in the area. In  
9 addition, many teachers, parents, and staff  
10 believe that there are students at College Gardens  
11 who do not actually live within the schools  
12 boundaries, but are instead using a relative's or  
13 friend's address to enroll in our school.

14 We would like our city's elected leaders  
15 to use their powers to advocate on our behalf for  
16 public schools that can adequately serve our  
17 children, while preserving our quality of life.  
18 We ask you to help the county realize that this  
19 school in our city cannot bear the current growth  
20 without both short and long-term solutions. The  
21 mayor and City Council should ask the Board of  
22 Education to: Number one, immediately require

1 College Gardens or a neutral third party to verify  
2 the residency of College Gardens students. Two,  
3 undertake a boundary study to determine whether  
4 the boundaries for College Gardens need to be  
5 redrawn. Three, revise and accelerate the Capital  
6 Improvement Plan for classroom additions at  
7 College Gardens and/or building on property set  
8 aside at King Farm. And four, consider other  
9 options within MCPS control, including but not  
10 limited to transferring special programs, such as  
11 Chinese emersion, to another less-crowded school.

12 The goal of these requests is to work  
13 towards fulfilling the spirit of the city's APFO  
14 to mitigate the negative impact of overcrowding on  
15 the neighborhood and our student's educational  
16 experience.

17 Thank you for your time.

18 MAYOR MARCUCCIO: Thank you very much.  
19 Is there anyone else who would like to speak at  
20 this hearing?

21 Yes, sir. Please state your name and  
22 address.

1 MR. KELLY: Sure, good evening. My name  
2 is Christopher Kelly, and I'm speaking tonight on  
3 behalf of the Richard Montgomery Cluster with  
4 Montgomery County Council PTA's, and I request  
5 five minutes.

6 Good evening,, my name's Chris Kelly,, as  
7 I just said. I'm a West End resident, a Richard  
8 Montgomery parent,, and an RMPTSA officer. I also  
9 serve as an RM cluster coordinator for the  
10 Montgomery County Council of PTAs, and I'm  
11 commenting today on behalf of that cluster, which  
12 includes Julius West, Beall, College Gardens,  
13 Ritchie Park, and Twinbrook Elementary Schools, in  
14 addition to RHMS.

15 The RM Cluster is the only cluster  
16 within the county with all six schools within  
17 Rockville City limits offering a tri-level IB  
18 program that attracts families to our cluster and  
19 to our city for opportunity. While we welcome  
20 these students,, we also know they are contributing  
21 to an expanding student population that must be  
22 accommodated within our schools and our community.

1           On June 9, 2010, our cluster provided  
2 testimony to the Rockville Planning Commission on  
3 its April 2010 draft of the "Municipal Growth  
4 Element," or MGE. At that time we noted that  
5 according to the Montgomery County Public Schools,  
6 FY 2011-2016 Capital Improvement Program -- CIP --  
7 Cluster Planning Statement, "Student enrollment at  
8 elementary schools in the RM cluster has increased  
9 dramatically over the past two school years and  
10 will cause the cluster to be placed in the housing  
11 moratorium in FY11, according to the MCGP; most of  
12 the RM clusters within the City of Rockville. The  
13 city's adequate public facilities school test also  
14 will result in all of the RM cluster elementary  
15 schools within the city being placed in a  
16 residential moratorium in FY11."

17           Our June testimony noted that the school  
18 growth projections in the April 2010 draft of the  
19 MGE did not reflect the reality at our schools and  
20 were not adequately taking into account the  
21 following: One, older citizens turning over their  
22 property to young families; two, extended families

1 and multiple families crowding into single-family  
2 houses; and three, the number of children living  
3 in apartments and condominiums. We suggested that  
4 the city reexamine how to better determine  
5 neighborhood turnover rates, and a number of  
6 multiple families living in single-family  
7 dwellings. We noted that housing moratoriums do  
8 not impact these sources of additional students.

9 In addition, we stated that Rockville  
10 needs better predictions for numbers of students  
11 living in apartments and condominiums that feed to  
12 its schools. In the past, we've been told that  
13 apartments and condominiums usually don't house  
14 that many students, that that was before the  
15 housing downturn and the mortgage crisis. We  
16 believe the assumptions behind enrollment of  
17 students from these housing types need to be  
18 revisited.

19 Our June testimony highlighted the  
20 significant growth at all four elementary schools  
21 within our cluster, all of which are in an  
22 overcapacity situation and are projected to remain

1 that way until permanent classroom capacity can be  
2 added. We also worry about the future of Julius  
3 West Middle School.

4 We are pleased to see that the Planning  
5 Commission Draft of the MGE includes a more  
6 thorough discussion of the earlier school  
7 enrollment situation and the expected growth in  
8 our cluster than the earlier draft. We commend  
9 the City Planning Staff and the Planning  
10 Commission for revising significantly a public  
11 schools discussion in the draft MGE to reflect the  
12 serious overcapacity situation at our schools, and  
13 for suggesting that planning and investment  
14 reflect both current and future needs.

15 Moreover we agree with the statement in  
16 the draft MGE that "MCPS must make addressing  
17 capacity issues in Rockville a very high  
18 priority." We concluded and we are glad to see  
19 that the August draft now reflects that the  
20 Montgomery County Capital Improvements Program for  
21 schools is not keeping up with the county or the  
22 city's needs. We support the request in the

1 Planning Commission Draft MGE that MCPS develop a  
2 methodology that will more accurately predict  
3 future MCPS enrollment, so that schools will not  
4 continue to be over their program capacities.

5 We agree that not doing so will result  
6 in situations like that which has occurred at  
7 College Gardens, where newly modernized schools  
8 are soon over their capacity. As we testified  
9 before the Planning Commission in June, we asked  
10 you the mayor and council to use this MGE effort  
11 as a catalyst to begin a formal dialogue with the  
12 county, other governing bodies within the county,  
13 and its citizens on long-range growth and the  
14 impact on schools.

15 We urge the mayor and council to  
16 maintain school enrollment issues as a priority  
17 and to take proactive steps, including  
18 communication in the near term with the Board of  
19 Education and the County Council, to ensure that  
20 needed school construction within the RM cluster  
21 will be undertaken as soon as possible.

22 For the longer term, we note that staff

1 has suggested that the mayor and council engage  
2 with the school board to discuss their capital  
3 programs and planning can be better coordinated  
4 with "the city's policies, future population  
5 projections, and desired growth patterns." We ask  
6 for RMPTA cluster representatives to be included  
7 in those discussions.

8 We must take action now to ensure our  
9 city and our schools retain the high standards of  
10 excellence they currently enjoy. The proposed MGE  
11 concludes, "Rockville children should not be  
12 forced to continually attend schools whose  
13 enrollment exceeds capacity," we agree. Two of  
14 our elementary schools' PTAs -- the Ritchie Park  
15 ES Elementary School PTA and the Twinbrook  
16 Elementary School PTA -- approve resolutions  
17 regarding the MGE that we would like, with your  
18 permission, to append to our testimony for the  
19 record.

20 Thank you.

21 MAYOR MARCUCCIO: Thank you.

22 MR. BRITTON: Madam Mayor, could I ask a

1 question?

2 MAYOR MARCUCCIO: Certainly.

3 MR. BRITTON: Excuse me?

4 MAYOR MARCUCCIO: Sir, would you come  
5 back to the podium?

6 MR. BRITTON: Could I ask a question?  
7 Come back. Thanks, Mr. Kelly.

8 MR. KELLY: You're welcome.

9 MR. BRITTON: I first want to state that  
10 I totally agree, and it sort of piggybacks on the  
11 comment that I made to the private sector in an  
12 earlier talk that we should act as a coalition --  
13 the private sector who want to build more, the  
14 local government, and the citizens -- primarily in  
15 an organized group such as the PTAs. I will also  
16 say, you know, as a caveat to some of my  
17 statements, I plead guilty to your comments that  
18 people move here for the special programs that our  
19 cluster has. I still have a child working through  
20 the RM cluster; we came here because of the  
21 programs at Julius West and Richard Montgomery.  
22 My two older children enjoyed them completely. So

1 I understand that it's -- that people come for  
2 those reasons and it's hard to count, you know,  
3 the number of families moving in every year for  
4 that purpose..

5 And I'm going to ask you a question, and  
6 I'm just asking because I think we have to start a  
7 dialogue on all kinds of remedies for this  
8 problem. And so I'm not putting you on the spot  
9 and you don't have to answer. I just want to  
10 throw that out there. Is one solution talking to  
11 the Board -- the Board of Education and  
12 eliminating all special programs that we have in  
13 Rockville and just keeping our schools for  
14 Rockville citizens? Because, I mean, even in the  
15 elementary schools, it may not be an ID wing, but  
16 Julius West has the MYP. You mentioned College  
17 Garden programs, the Twinbrook and Beall also have  
18 special programs that I think bring in  
19 non-Rockville students because of that. Is that a  
20 possibility? Should we even consider it?

21 MR.. KELLY: I think it would be  
22 inappropriate for me to speculate about that at

1 this point.

2 MR. BRITTON: Okay. I --

3 MR. KELLY: I might --

4 MR. BRITTON: That's something to throw  
5 out there.

6 MR. KELLY: I think you raise a very  
7 good point that should be brought up by the mayor  
8 and council at another time.

9 MR. BRITTON: Yes, and I like the idea  
10 of getting together with the board, because I  
11 think we do need a work session --

12 MR. KELLY: I strongly support that.

13 MR. BRITTON: -- with the board. I also  
14 lived through the remodeling or the rebuilding of  
15 Richard Montgomery. My oldest was in the old  
16 building. Remember how long that took, you know,  
17 to get that going in the Capital Improvement  
18 Program and to keep it going? It's a lot of hard  
19 work, and there were other dedicated people that  
20 pushed that along. And it was also controversial  
21 because it broke the mode of suburban school  
22 building. It's actually a multi-level facility

1 that is different from other facilities we have  
2 here.

3 Another question just to throw out  
4 there, is it better to create mega schools to help  
5 accommodate our students or -- and, therefore,  
6 have multi-level building schools that go away  
7 from the suburban paradigm or find more space?  
8 And I'm thinking particularly like Beall cannot  
9 expand very much unless it goes up. Or find more  
10 space where we build additional schools and have  
11 additional infrastructure like that? Again, I  
12 don't know --

13 MR. KELLY: I think that's a good  
14 question, but I don't think that I'm in a position  
15 to answer that tonight.

16 MR. BRITTON: Mm-hmm, okay. Just  
17 something to --

18 MR. KELLY: I think they are -- they're  
19 all very valuable questions --

20 MR. BRITTON: We need to take back to  
21 our different groupings --

22 MR. KELLY: Please do.

1 MR. BRITTON: -- for public discourse  
2 and other things.

3 MR. KELLY: Thank you for all you do.

4 MR. PIERZCHALA: Madam Mayor, I just  
5 want to comment on John Britton's thing. The  
6 College Gardens Elementary School also went  
7 higher.

8 MR. BRITTON: Which --

9 MR. PIERZCHALA: It's two stories, yes,  
10 and --

11 MR. BRITTON: Did you say two stories?

12 MR. PIERZCHALA: Yes.

13 MR. BRITTON: Well, that is the norm.

14 MR. PIERZCHALA: Okay.

15 MR. BRITTON: The Richard Montgomery was  
16 three.

17 MR. PIERZCHALA: And there used to be a  
18 one story. Okay. But it's about twice as big as  
19 it used to be.

20 MR. BRITTON: Oh, I'm sorry. Okay.

21 MAYOR MARCUCCIO: Yes, Mr. Gajewski.

22 MR. GAJEWSKI: I also want to comment

1 about strategies that we can employ here because I  
2 think one way to go about this is to get behind  
3 the strategy. I can preface this by saying one of  
4 the very first meetings I had shortly after I was  
5 elected in 2007 was with Jerry Weis to plead for a  
6 King Farm Elementary School because one of the  
7 Mayor and Councils -- part of our vision statement  
8 postulated that all Rockville kids should attend  
9 Rockville schools, which is not the case  
10 presently. As Ms. Hall was implying, north of  
11 King Farm actually feeds into the Gaithersburg  
12 cluster.

13 So, to some extent, in terms of the  
14 media problem of College Park Elementary and the  
15 problem that we're dealing with in King Farm where  
16 I live, is, in fact, moving forward with a King  
17 Farm Elementary, which would pull the kids north  
18 of King Farm into that school and pull some kids  
19 out of the College Gardens Elementary, and that  
20 would solve the problems. So if we could perhaps  
21 find unity behind some such idea so that we're all  
22 advocating for one idea that would be fabulous.

1           MAYOR MARCUCCIO: I have to say, you  
2 know, every time I hear this kind of discussion I  
3 keep going back to where are we going to put all  
4 these folks? Now, certainly our developer  
5 community would like to make high rises and that  
6 isn't a bad thing, it's just that they very rarely  
7 make the accommodations big enough for any kind of  
8 large family. So, what is happening is that  
9 people who want affordable housing are having to  
10 double-up in single-family homes, and it's because  
11 we're not making the development community provide  
12 sufficient housing for families with children. I  
13 think we must think about that seriously.

14           Anyway, that's just my two cents in  
15 this, but that's enough. Anything further?

16           Oh, yes, is there another one who wants  
17 to speak?

18           SPEAKER: (inaudible)

19           MAYOR MARCUCCIO: Excuse me?

20           MR. BRITTON: Yes.

21           MAYOR MARCUCCIO: Come right up to the  
22 microphone..

1 MS. OLER: Hi, I'm Crystal Oler, and I  
2 live at 2 Duke Court. And I have two sons who  
3 currently go to College Gardens Elementary school,  
4 and I have one who will be there in about four  
5 years. So, I will be there for the next 11 years,  
6 and my third grader doesn't eat until 1:30. So,  
7 to answer your question about suggestions about  
8 what we should do to move forward and you had said  
9 possibly getting rid of extra programs.

10 Personally, I think that's a great idea,  
11 to build costs money, takes a lot of time. My  
12 child will be in high school by then. So, my  
13 thoughts are Chinese emersion is a county-wide  
14 program if we can move it to a less populated  
15 school within the county. We're already paying  
16 for the bus system, so that money would just go to  
17 bus those children to a different school. So, we  
18 would still have the program, it would just be  
19 transferred. I think that's something we can  
20 definitely look into.

21 I think we should also look into how  
22 many hardship transfer cases we have accepted. If

1 our school's overpopulated and people are trying  
2 to get into our schools, why don't we say no? I'm  
3 sorry, right now we're full, why don't you go to  
4 your home school, check back with us later?

5 So, I think that moving forward with  
6 those possibilities is definitely a proposal that  
7 we should think about.

8 So, thank you.

9 MAYOR MARCUCCIO: Thank you. Anyone  
10 else who wishes to address this?

11 MS. CASTER: Thank you for the  
12 opportunity to speak in response to the updated  
13 Municipal Growth Element. My name is Susan  
14 Caster. My family and I live on Bartonshire Way  
15 in the Potomac Woods neighborhood of Rockville. I  
16 want to tell you a little bit about my experience.  
17 I grew up here in Rockville; I'm a product of  
18 Montgomery County Public Schools. As an  
19 elementary school student I attended Hungerford  
20 Elementary School, some of you may remember, in  
21 now what is the Children's Learning Center, part  
22 of the Rich Montgomery Cluster.

1           When my husband and I were fortunate  
2 enough to find two professional positions here in  
3 Montgomery County 13 years ago, we chose very  
4 carefully to move back to Rockville. We  
5 appreciated the superb Rockville City services,  
6 and the excellence of Montgomery County Public  
7 Schools, and we're delighted to find a home in  
8 Potomac Woods in the RM Cluster. We've been very  
9 happy with that decision, and have appreciated all  
10 that the city and the council have done to make  
11 this a wonderful place to live.

12           I want to talk about the Municipal  
13 Growth Element, and I want to start by thanking  
14 the council and the Planning Board for their  
15 recognition of the critical relationship between  
16 growth in the city and public school capacity. As  
17 you know, and is so eloquently described in the  
18 revised Municipal Growth Element, all of the  
19 elementary schools within the Montgomery County --  
20 within the Richard Montgomery Cluster are well  
21 over capacity. My children who are sitting in the  
22 back very quietly are second and fifth grade

1 students in the Ritchie Park Elementary School.  
2 This is a school that's currently at least 127  
3 percent capacity. We have five portable  
4 classrooms and minimal blacktop playground space.

5 Let me tell you how that looks from the  
6 ground level. My daughter's in fifth grade and  
7 spends half her day in a portable classroom. My  
8 son is in second grade and is looking at spending  
9 half of elementary school in a portable classroom.  
10 But we're ahead of the game in that Ritchie Park  
11 has a feasibility study complete for an addition  
12 to the school. We have a project that's truly  
13 shovel ready and as a federal employee with direct  
14 experience in Recovery Act funding, I know shovel  
15 ready. We would respectfully ask that the City  
16 Council appear on our behalf to help MCPS  
17 understand the importance to Rockville City  
18 residents of solving this problem as rapidly as  
19 possible by approving construction for the  
20 addition in the 2012 Capital Improvement Plan.

21 We would further appreciate your support  
22 in suggesting to MCPS that their policy of waiting

1 until overcrowding is not simply projected but an  
2 undeniable reality before they act is not really  
3 in the best interest of Montgomery -- of Rockville  
4 residents or their children. We need your help to  
5 present this story to the county, to help us ask  
6 MCPS to plan ahead the way we as families plan  
7 ahead for our children.

8 Thank you.

9 MR. BRITTON: Madam Mayor, I have a  
10 question. Excuse me, can I ask --

11 MAYOR MARCUCCIO: Come back, he's got  
12 some questions for you.

13 MR. BRITTON: I agree with your  
14 statement that it would be great to get MCPS to  
15 build on spec rather than wait until we're all  
16 overcapacity, or at least maybe half spec, I don't  
17 know. Just a quick question. Did you see a  
18 significant increase in student population with  
19 the opening of is that Park Plaza? Park Potomac  
20 --

21 MS. OLER: Park Potomac.

22 MR. BRITTON: -- which is right outside

1 the city and -- but I think part of or feed into  
2 Ritchie Park.

3 MS. OLER: From my memory, and other  
4 people here know the numbers better than I do, we  
5 were projected to have 0 students from Park  
6 Potomac and we have 25.

7 MR. BRITTON: Thank you.

8 MAYOR MARCUCCIO: The lady in the red  
9 shirt, I saw her first. Oh, that's Laura. Sorry.

10 MR. BRITTON: She's not a lady in a red  
11 shirt. She's Laura.

12 MAYOR MARCUCCIO: She's Laura.

13 MS. BERTHIAUME: Laura Berthiaume, Board  
14 of Education.

15 MAYOR MARCUCCIO: You can tell us the  
16 answers.

17 MS. BERTHIAUME: I probably could, but  
18 it would take all night. I just want to say that  
19 more than happy to facilitate any fact-finding,  
20 any discussions that the City Council wants to  
21 undertake with the Board of Education. The  
22 overcrowding problem is complex, there are many

1 contributing factors, and the answers are not  
2 simple. And so I think that it would benefit  
3 everybody to start with where we are and what are  
4 actually the situation on the ground and what are  
5 the facts.

6 And I hear discussions of relocating  
7 children to other parts of the county. The fact  
8 is that although this cluster is very, very  
9 overcrowded, so is almost every other cluster in  
10 the county. And so, for example, we had to move a  
11 kindergarten class, an entire kindergarten class,  
12 out of an elementary school and into the bottom  
13 level of a middle school this year at Oakland  
14 Terrace because we were simply out of space.

15 And that's particularly bad in the  
16 Silver Spring area. So understand that MCPS has  
17 to look at the entire county-wide picture, and be  
18 happy if the council decides that it really wants  
19 to delve into facts, figures, projections, how we  
20 get there, and where we're going. I'd be happy to  
21 be whatever assistance you need in that.

22 MAYOR MARCUCCIO: Thank you for that

1 wonderful offer. This is one of your Board of  
2 Education members. This lady can make something  
3 happen. Maybe we can't, but she can.

4 MS. NEWTON: You had recently put out a  
5 suggestion to the council, the mayor and council,  
6 that you would be willing to facilitate. I think  
7 we should do it, and I would like to do it all of  
8 us together. I think it's important that it be a  
9 fact-finding that everyone participates in. So,  
10 if this is an opportunity, Mayor, to discuss that,  
11 I think that's a --

12 MS. BERTHIAUME: Happy to help, and if  
13 you need a formal letter from me, just let me  
14 know.

15 MS. NEWTON: I think you're --

16 MAYOR MARCUCCIO: You're endorsement  
17 right now is tremendous.

18 MS. NEWTON: Yes.

19 MS. BERTHIAUME: Okay. All right --

20 MAYOR MARCUCCIO: Because we have been  
21 sort of step children in this, you know. The City  
22 of Rockville is a funny entity when it comes to

1 the county schools.

2 MS. BERTHIAUME: Understood.

3 MAYOR MARCUCCIO: All right.

4 MS. BERTHIAUME: And closer relations  
5 are always better.

6 MAYOR MARCUCCIO: Yes, indeed.

7 MS. NEWTON: Thank you.

8 MAYOR MARCUCCIO: Thank you so much,  
9 Laura. Anyone else who wishes to speak? Yes,  
10 ma'am.

11 MS. PERRY: Hi, I'm Lynn Perry-Parker.  
12 I'm at 7 East Argyle. Some of you may know that  
13 I'm actually new to the public schools because I  
14 was a private school-goer for many, many years.  
15 Just like I was there, I'm very active in learning  
16 about the ins and outs of public schools as well.

17 And I just want to comment on something  
18 that Mr. Britton brought up in terms of should we  
19 be moving the special programs. And I would  
20 disagree with that. One of the reasons I left the  
21 private school, believe it or not, is because of  
22 the excellent education that Montgomery County

1 .schools have. And that is why a lot of us are  
2 here. And I'll say in terms of it being very  
3 complicated and all the interacting and the  
4 figures that go together, Montgomery County has  
5 been immune from a lot of the hit of this  
6 recession, primarily because we have such a highly  
7 educated population, because of the schools that  
8 draw people here. We still have really good jobs  
9 here. Even our International Baccalaureate  
10 Program is responsible for bringing the  
11 International Baccalaureate Program -- putting  
12 their headquarters into Montgomery County. That  
13 was a big hit. That's tax revenue, that's new  
14 jobs. So, we can't underestimate how important  
15 the fact that our special programs are to our  
16 quality of life.

17 Yes, the overcrowding is a huge problem,  
18 but getting rid of what brought people here I  
19 don't think is the appropriate answer.

20 With that note, it's been mentioned  
21 about private schools part of the reason we are  
22 where we are is because of just the methodology

1 that was used in terms of projecting growth. Like  
2 a lot has already been said in terms of the  
3 recession, multi-families, a lot more children in  
4 apartments, we have -- I'm in Ritchie Park. I  
5 live right on Argyle Street, which is Monroe  
6 Street the whole complex of apartments there.  
7 We're actually gerrymandered to go into Ritchie  
8 Park because of these social economic diversion  
9 there. There's now one bus. One bus. They've  
10 had to have two there. One bus just for the  
11 apartment complex. They've had to add two for  
12 that whole little corner of Monroe and Argyle,  
13 this gerrymandered section that was brought into  
14 Ritchie Park originally to even things out.

15 There's been a huge demographic shift  
16 and those are the types of things you have to work  
17 at. And with respect to the private schools with  
18 the recessions, people decide I've got a great  
19 public education in Montgomery County, why would I  
20 pay for private schools? I am a lawyer. I do a  
21 lot with private schools. Private schools are  
22 having a lot of trouble. That's another thing

1 that wasn't just anticipated. So, really it's  
2 more of a methodology of how we approach it.

3 Another elementary school that would  
4 help the elementary overcrowding, but it's not  
5 going to help Julius West. They're all feeders  
6 into Julius West. And by 2014, there -- Julius  
7 West is also projected to be, I believe, it's not  
8 a hundred, close to 120 percent over capacity as  
9 well within just a couple of years. So, it is  
10 complex, and I, too, would volunteer to do  
11 whatever I can in terms of working with Laura and  
12 the community to put all of these -- normally  
13 Rockville wouldn't have a jurisdiction over public  
14 schools, but we can't get around having to work  
15 with the developers, the communities, the  
16 families, and all the parts that fit in there.

17 Thank you.

18 MAYOR MARCUCCIO: Anyone else who would  
19 like to address this public hearing on Rockville's  
20 Municipal Growth Element?

21 Seeing no other takers, we will close  
22 this public hearing and keep the public record

1 open until September 22. Is that what I heard you  
2 say?

3 MR. LEVY: That's what our staff  
4 recommendation would be for both Municipal Growth  
5 and Water Resources Element, which would come  
6 next.

7 MAYOR MARCUCCIO: Does anybody have any  
8 comments about it?

9 MR. BRITTON: I do. I would suggest we  
10 keep the public record -- and I know this is a  
11 burden on staff, and so maybe not everything would  
12 be included in the Staff Report. We talk about  
13 this; we have a work session on Monday, October  
14 11th? I suggest we keep it open until that  
15 previous Friday.

16 It's been my experience that people  
17 click on -- people have come here tonight, and  
18 that's good. But sometimes people click on when  
19 they see the agenda go up and say why wasn't I  
20 given an opportunity to speak on that, or, oh, I  
21 forgot about that, but I'd like to say something.  
22 So, the agenda, people will hear about it, you

1 know, a week before we have our work session, and  
2 that would give them to the very last minute to  
3 submit something in the record. It's a work  
4 session, so we can take it and digest it on Monday  
5 if it's submitted on Friday evening, I don't think  
6 that's a problem, and then work through any  
7 comments that might come in and put it in its  
8 final form.

9 MAYOR MARCUCCIO: Yes, you have  
10 something?

11 MS. NEWTON: I would second John's  
12 suggestion. Interesting, I have the exact same  
13 date in mind, but I would do it for two additional  
14 reasons. One, I think hopefully by then we could  
15 have our fact-finding trip with Laura and do some  
16 due diligence on the part of the mayor and  
17 council, which may be hard to schedule in the next  
18 two-week timeframe. And two, I would suggest  
19 that you not do another -- I didn't bring mine  
20 tonight, but another iteration of this and that we  
21 just get additional comments that are sent in by  
22 the community and whatnot. And then at that work

1 session we can come up with the final ones that  
2 the mayor and council decide need to be  
3 implemented or whatever. It cuts work out for you  
4 that weekend, and it doesn't waste paper.

5 MR. LEVY: Councilman Newton, that's  
6 precisely what our plan would be, would be to take  
7 in all the commentary. We don't regard ourselves  
8 as having any authority to make edits other than  
9 the direction from the mayor and council. So,  
10 this is the Planning Commission draft, meaning  
11 this is the document that came from the Planning  
12 Commission referred to you, and so we're  
13 facilitating comments from the public and bringing  
14 whatever information that would help you to  
15 provide direction for us. So, we won't be making  
16 any edits to the document until you give us  
17 direction to do so.

18 MAYOR MARCUCCIO: And this document?

19 MR. LEVY: That's the next one for the  
20 public hearing as well. And so under the  
21 suggestion for Councilman Britton, we would  
22 provide our Staff Report based on whatever

1 comments have been submitted up to the time of the  
2 schedule for submitting the Staff Report.

3 Whatever comes afterwards will be in the record  
4 and we'll bring it forward. We may not have made  
5 comments as staff on it, though.

6 MR. BRITTON: Right, I think that could  
7 work.

8 MS. NEWTON: Yes.

9 MAYOR MARCUCCIO: I'd like to -- when  
10 you're going to extend the date for the one  
11 document that it be extended for the other one as  
12 well.

13 MR. LEVY: That's entirely at your  
14 discretion.

15 MR. BRITTON: My comments go for both.

16 MAYOR MARCUCCIO: Any other comments?  
17 Anyone else wish to speak to this?

18 We will close the public hearing.

19 (Whereupon, the HEARING was  
20 adjourned.)

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CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby  
certify that the witness whose testimony appears  
in the foregoing hearing was duly sworn by me;  
that the testimony of said witness was taken by me  
and thereafter reduced to print under my  
direction; that said deposition is a true record  
of the testimony given by said witness; that I am  
neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by  
any of the parties to the action in which these  
proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I  
am neither a relative or employee of any attorney  
or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor  
financially or otherwise interested in the outcome  
of this action.

/s/Carleton J. Anderson, III

Notary Public in and for the  
Commonwealth of Virginia  
Commission No. 351998  
Expires: November 30, 2012