



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of March 12, 2011**

DATE: March 11, 2011

SUBJECT: U-1159-55-1 & U-2110-77-2 USE PERMIT AMENDMENT for expanding the use of the site by lighting the athletic fields located at 6600 Little Falls Road (Bishop Denis J. O'Connell High School) (RPC# 01-037-001).

Applicant:

Bishop Denis J. O'Connell High School
6600 Little Falls Road
Arlington, Virginia 22213

By:

Martin D. Walsh, Agent/Attorney
Walsh, Colucci, Lubeley, Emrich & Walsh, P.C.
2200 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 1300
Arlington, Virginia 22201

C.M. RECOMMENDATION:

Defer the use permit amendment request for expanding the use of the site by lighting the athletic fields to the June 11, 2011 County Board meeting.

ISSUES: This is a request to expand the use of the athletic fields at Bishop O'Connell High School by installing lighting. Staff requested to the applicant additional information, including lighting analysis, a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA), information on parking, and analysis on additional activity and capacity that will be generated from the expanded athletic facilities. The applicant has not submitted the information to this date. An effective analysis of the issues can be conducted only with this information.

SUMMARY: This is a use permit amendment request for expanding the use of Bishop O'Connell High School's athletic fields by installing lights to expand the hours of potential use. The school is proposing to install eleven (11) 58-foot tall athletic field lights on the property,

County Manager: *BMD/GA*

County Attorney: *CWM* *GA*

Staff: Marco Antonio Rivero, DCPHD, Planning Division
Peter Schulz, DCPHD, Planning Division
Dolores Kinney, DES, Transportation Division

32.

four (4) on the rectangular field and seven (7) on the baseball field. The school proposes to use the lights only six (6) days a week. The lights will be used on the rectangular field until 9:30 p.m. on Mondays through Thursdays and until 10:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, all year round. From September 21 through March 20, the lights will be used on the baseball field until 9:00 p.m. on Mondays through Thursdays and until 10:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday nights. From March 21 through September 20, the lights will be used on the baseball field until 10:00 p.m. on Mondays through Thursdays and until 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday nights. The lights would not be used on Sundays.

In addition to the lights the applicant plans other improvements including: New synthetic turf fields on both their rectangular and baseball fields; reorienting the baseball field currently facing south on 26th Street North to face east on North Trinidad Street; and erecting new accessory structures which include storage facilities and a new ticket booth. There will be changes associated with parking, including a possible reduction in the number of parking spaces (the school currently exceeds the number of parking spaces required by the Zoning Ordinance), as well as new landscaping and a new fence. These other improvements have been included as part of application for this amendment; however, these improvements do not require a use permit amendment and action by the County Board is not being requested.

The school attended various community meetings, and partnered in a working group with members of the Arlington East Falls Church Civic Association and Williamsburg Civic Association. However, the civic associations do not support the school's use permit amendment request.

In order to assess the potential impacts of the proposed use, staff requested additional information regarding the impacts of the field lighting (especially the potential for lighting spillover onto neighboring properties), increased traffic through a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA), parking, and analysis of additional activity and capacity generated from the expanded use of the facilities. This information was requested to be supplied to County staff by February 2, 2011. The school has not yet provided these materials for review. A thorough analysis of the impacts produced by this expanded use cannot be conducted without these materials. Therefore, staff recommends that the use permit amendment request be deferred to the June 11, 2011 County Board meeting.

BACKGROUND: The use permit was originally approved by the County Board in 1955 to permit the erection and operation of a high school, residence for Brothers, and residence for Sisters under Catholic auspices. The high school received approval for a maximum capacity of 1,500 students. In 1977, a use permit was approved allowing an increase in the authorized enrollment at the high school from 1,500 to 1,600 students.

The following provides additional information about the subject site and location:

Site: The school is bound by four streets: Little Falls Road to the north, 26th Street North to the south, North Trinidad Street to the east, and North Underwood Street to the west. The site is generally surrounded by single-family residential houses.

Zoning: The site is zoned "R-6" and "R-8" both classified as One-Family Dwelling Districts.

Land Use: The site is designated on the General Land Use Plan as "Semi Public" (Country clubs and semi-public recreational facilities; Churches, private schools and private cemeteries).

Neighborhood: The site is located within the Arlington-East Falls Church Civic Association and is adjacent to the Williamsburg Civic Association. Various community meetings were held concerning this use permit amendment in October 2010 and January 2011, as well as a series of working group meetings from November 2010 to January 2011. As of the date of this report, neither the Arlington East Falls Church nor the Williamsburg Civic Association supports the use permit amendment request.

DISCUSSION: This is a use permit amendment request for expansion of the use of the athletic fields of the Bishop Denis J. O'Connell High School by the installation of lighting. The applicant is also planning field renovations including the installation of synthetic turf, new accessory buildings, and reorienting the baseball field which, although included in the application, can proceed without a use permit amendment. The fields would be used by Bishop O'Connell High School's athletic programs. As a part of the field renovation program, the applicant has stated that they wish to offer field time to Marymount University for some of their existing and proposed college-level athletic programs which include baseball, track and field, and field hockey.

This application was originally filed in July 2010 and has been deferred several times. After the original application was filed, due to community concern about the proposed increase of use, the school met with the Arlington East-Falls Church Civic Association and the Williamsburg Civic Association. These community meetings prompted the creation of a working group consisting of Bishop Denis J. O'Connell High School representatives, members of the Arlington East Falls Church and Williamsburg Civic Associations, and County staff (see attachment for complete list of working group members). The working group has met five (5) times: November 1, 9, and 16, 2010, December 13, 2010, and January 3, 2011 to discuss various issues related to the use permit amendment request. The working group discussed issues that included but were not limited to hours of use for the athletic field lights, field supervision, event scheduling, maintenance, monitoring and evaluation, and community use. Through that process the school proposed a set of draft conditions as the basis for use permit conditions if the use permit amendment were approved.

The original application showed the light poles taller than the Zoning Ordinance allows for in "R" zoning districts. The school subsequently submitted updated site plans and supplemental materials on December 17, 2010. The plans show that the proposed new lighting conforms to the zoning requirement regarding heights and setbacks. The applicant proposes to install eleven (11) athletic field lights at 58' tall, four (4) located on the rectangular field and seven (7) located on the baseball field. All proposed accessory structures and athletic lights will conform to the 25' setback requirement (from the street right-of-way) as determined by the Arlington County Zoning Administrator. An informational webpage describing the process for this use permit

amendment, with associated attachments to documents submitted by the school for staff's review was created by the County on December 20, 2010.

Staff has requested additional information regarding the potential impacts of the site, which included more information and clarifications regarding the athletic field lighting, a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA), more information on parking in and around the site, and analysis on additional activity and capacity generated from the expanded use of the facilities. All supplemental materials and updated information needed to be submitted for staff's review by February 2, 2011. As of the date of this report, this information has not been submitted.

Staff has requested this additional information for several reasons: As has been observed in County-owned facilities, the installation of synthetic athletic fields alone (with or without lights) can lead to an increase in activity, and resultant demands on the transportation system. Finally, the neighborhood surrounding the school sees a great amount of commuter cut-through traffic, as well as traffic generated by activity at the adjacent Tuckahoe Park. A Traffic Impact Analysis, as well as more information about the potential new uses of the site which are currently not known, will assist staff greatly in assessing the impact of the expanded use of the fields in order to make a professional recommendation.

CONCLUSION: The school has not been able to submit additional requested information to staff in time for an adequate analysis for the March County Board Hearing. In order to obtain this additional information and for staff to perform a complete analysis, staff recommends a deferral to the June 11, 2011, County Board meeting.

Complete List of Working Group Members for the Use Permit Amendment Request: \ U-1159-55-1 & U-2110-77-2

- Bishop Denis J. O’Connell High School conducted a series of community meetings with the Arlington East Falls Church Civic Association and the Williamsburg Civic Association, to inform the surrounding neighborhoods about the proposed use permit amendment request and to understand community concerns.
- These community meetings prompted the creation of a working group consisting of Bishop Denis J. O’Connell High School representatives, members of the Arlington East Falls Church and Williamsburg Civic Associations, and County staff.
- The working group has met five (5) times: November 1, 9, and 16, 2010, December 13, 2010, and January 3, 2011 to discuss various issues related to the use permit amendment request.
- The working group consists of the following people:

Evan Pritchard	(Walsh, Colucci, Lubeley, Emrich & Walsh, P.C.)
Mark Goetzman	(Walsh, Colucci, Lubeley, Emrich & Walsh, P.C.)
Kevin Fay	(Bishop Denis J. O’Connell)
Kathleen Prebble	(Bishop Denis J. O’Connell)
Joe Vorbach	(Bishop Denis J. O’Connell)
Chris Hulett	(Parks and Recreation Commission)
Chris Collins	(Arlington East Falls Church Civic Association)
David Swiger	(Arlington East Falls Church Civic Association)
Jayne Bultena	(Arlington East Falls Church Civic Association)
Anne Collins	(Arlington East Falls Church Civic Association)
Dennis Price	(Arlington East Falls Church Civic Association)
Liz Altobell	(Arlington East Falls Church Civic Association)
John Seymour	(Williamsburg Civic Association)
Ruth Scher	(Williamsburg Civic Association)
Marco Rivero	(Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development)
Peter Schulz	(Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development)
Dolores Kinney	(Department of Environmental Services)
John Blevins	(Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources)

Marco Rivero

From: WilsonJohnF@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, January 25, 2011 7:17 PM
To: CountyBoard; Gabriela Acurio; Marco Rivero
Cc: parker.alan@verizon.net; zzzkva@gmail.com; pschirmer@usa.net; jamesboyd1@aol.com; chris@wafc.org; mark.crowley@verizon.net; djasongood@hotmail.com; jdale@gmu.edu; altobell@aol.com; bprosenberg@yahoo.com; imagin38@aol.com; Pavonia4@aol.com; harps4@verizon.net; wilsonjohnf@aol.com; ramjt10591@verizon.net; paul.merrion@verizon.net; eric.mollen@gmail.com
Subject: Denis J. O'Connell Lighting Proposal Update
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Red

Dear Chairman and Members of the Board:

I am writing to let you know that the Arlington East Falls Church Civic Association (AEFCCA) has not been able to endorse O'Connell High School's request to amend their Use Permit and light their sports fields. Our civic association has been in regular contact with county staff, the school and interested neighbors since August of 2010 about the proposed lighting of the sports fields. It is clear that the negative impact on quality of life in the neighborhood will be significant no matter how many mitigating measures are established to deal with neighbor complaints after the fact. Furthermore, assessing the future impact is essentially impossible since we cannot say exactly who will be using the fields : DJO, Marymount, Arlington County, and perhaps others, nor can we know how much use the fields will get in years to come. Many important issues and concerns have been raised by the residents of the surrounding neighborhood and I have encouraged them to write directly to you.

In October 2010 the AEFCCA General Membership voted 4 to 1 to reject the DJO proposal. At the same time, the membership asked DJO to discuss the proposal with their neighbors to see if compromises might be reached to which the neighbors could agree. A work group was set up and met several times, but was unable to reach a workable compromise that would lead to significant neighborhood support for the project.

As you are probably already aware, a large neighborhood petition with several hundred signatures against the proposal has already been produced. In addition, over ninety percent of the thirty three nearest homeowners have registered their opposition to the proposal. At this point, there is no basis on which the AEFCCA could offer an endorsement of the Use Permit Amendment and significant basis for the AEFCCA to request that you deny it.

The AEFCCA General Membership will be meeting again on February 3 and will review what has happened since it voted to reject the proposal in October and we will discuss any further action regarding this Use Permit Amendment request. Members of the County Board are always welcome at our meetings, please feel free to stop by and say hello.

Thank you for your kind attention,

John Wilson
President
Arlington East Falls Church Civic Association

Williamsburg C.A.
Opposition

Marco Rivero

From: Sonia McCormick [sonia.b.mccormick@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 12, 2011 11:10 PM
To: CountyManager
Cc: CPHD; Susan Bell; Robert Brosnan; Tom Miller; Marco Rivero; Peter Schulz; William O'Connor III; DES; Richard Best; Dolores Kinney; Tony Burnette
Subject: Williamsburg Civic Association Opposition to O'Connell High School's Use Permit Amendment Application to Install Lights on its Athletic Fields
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Green

January 12, 2011

Ms. Barbara Donnellan
 Arlington County Manager
 2100 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 302
 Arlington, VA 22201

SUBJECT: Williamsburg Civic Association Opposition to O'Connell High School's Use Permit Amendment Application to Install Lights on its Athletic Fields

Dear Ms. Donnellan:

The Williamsburg Civic Association held its general membership meeting on January 11, 2011. Representatives from Bishop Denis J. O'Connell updated meeting participants on the School's plans to renovate and light its athletic fields.

At the conclusion of the meeting, a motion was made that the Williamsburg Civic Association adopt a resolution opposing the lights. That resolution, which follows, was adopted by the membership by a vote of 57 to 2:

Whereas, Bishop Denis O'Connell High School has applied to Arlington County for a special use permit to install field lights for renovated and enlarged athletic fields;

Whereas, the installation of field lights will have a substantial adverse impact on the quality of life of many members of the Civic Association, create noise and light pollution, aggravate parking and traffic problems, and diminish the value of neighboring homes;

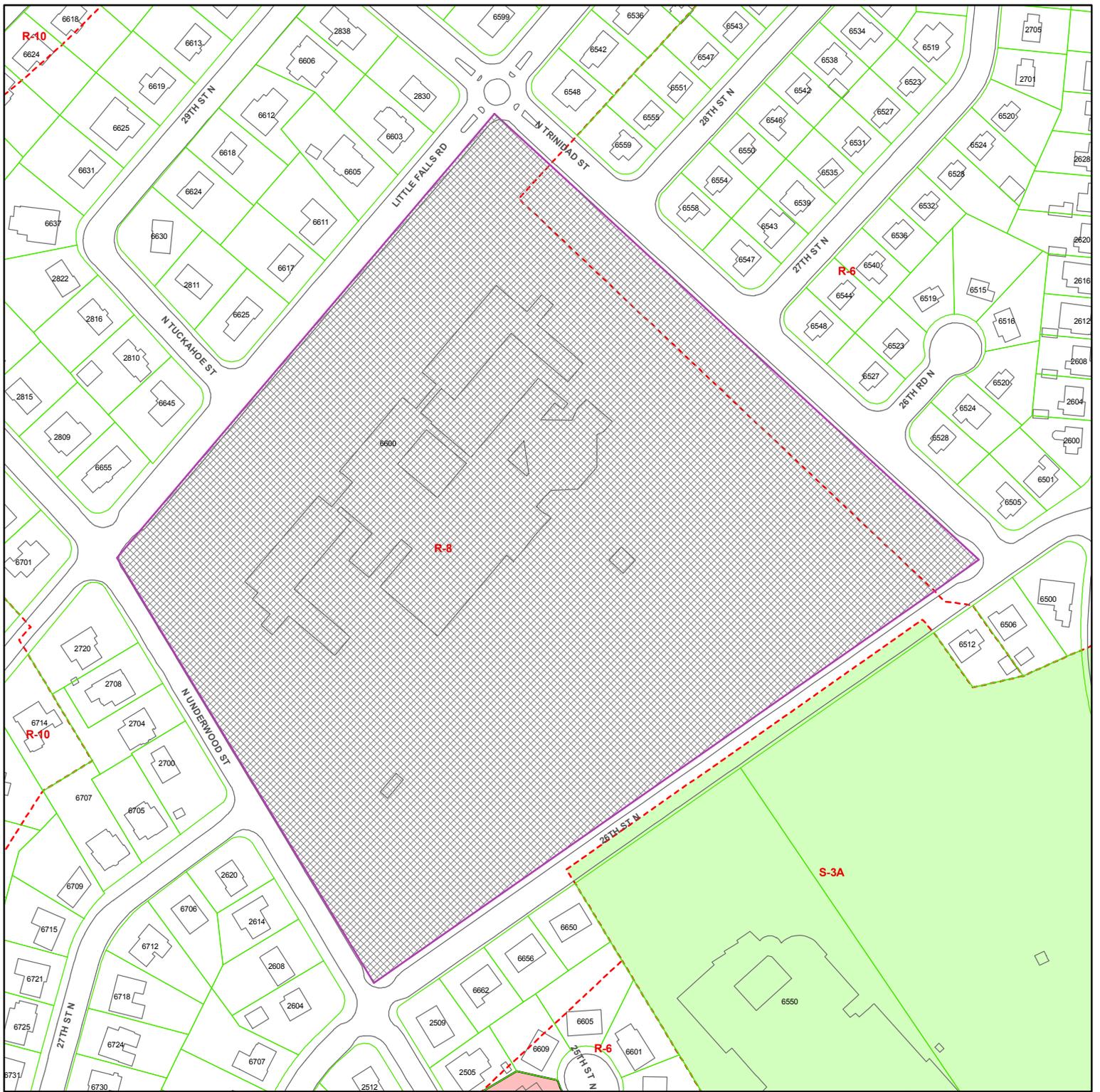
Therefore be it resolved that the Williamsburg Civic Association opposes Use Permit Amendment Application U-1159-55-1 and U-2110-77-2.

This letter is to express the Civic Association's opposition to the Use Permit Amendment Application. We join the more than 400 Arlington County residents who have signed a petition opposing the lights, as well as the Arlington-East Falls Church Civic Association, whose members voted against the proposal last fall.

Sincerely,

Sonia B. McCormick (sonia.b.mccormick@gmail.com)
 President
 6592 Williamsburg Blvd
 Arlington, VA 22213
 703-237-2611

01/13/2011



U-1159-55-1& U-2110-77- 2

6600 Little Falls Rd

RPC: 01-037-001


 Case
 Location(s)
 Scale: 1:2,400

Note: These maps are for property location assistance only.
 They may not represent the latest survey and other information.