
Central Bucks considers Plumstead properties

By: **JOHN ANASTASI** (Thu, Feb/15/2007)

Elected officials representing Plumstead and the Central Bucks School District recently met behind closed doors to discuss potential sites for Central Bucks' 16th elementary school.

School board president Geryl McMullin said the district is not yet targeting a specific location, but board members reviewed several spots during a Feb. 6 executive session in Plumstead.

"There were no definitive conclusions," she said. "We gave them some possibilities, and they gave us some possibilities."

The district wants to build a new elementary school in Plumstead, where C&M Home Builders is constructing 263 condominiums, 114 townhouse units and 86 single family homes. Central Bucks' two Plumstead elementary schools — Gayman and Groveland — are already at or near capacity, and officials say they will not be able to handle the hundreds of children the development could generate.

"Everyone senses the need for (another school)," McMullin said. "We're not going to be able to get away without building a new school up there, and we're trying to do it without costing the taxpayers more than necessary."

Central Bucks already owns 35 acres at Silo Hill and Stump roads, but the zoning does not allow a school. If Plumstead can obtain a piece of ground near the Carriage Hill development, the township could trade that parcel for the Silo Hill property.

Plumstead supervisor Stacey Mulholland said she and her colleagues on the board are willing to look at a land swap. In fact, that was how Central Bucks got Tohickon Middle School built in 2002. The district obtained the Tohickon property on Old Easton Road in exchange for land it owned at Landisville and Bergstrom roads. The township established the 33-acre Allohaken Park at the site.

Mulholland said the township could opt to preserve the Silo Hill property in its natural state or use it to create another park.

"We have several options to consider," she said. "We can't commit right now. There are a number of items in discussion, and nothing has been firmed up yet."

Central Bucks business administrator David Matyas characterized the meeting as part of an ongoing process to build a school to handle increased enrollment from the Carriage Hill development.

"It has everybody thinking," Matyas said of the project. "The school board thinks we'd better try to be proactive because this could have a significant impact. Our schools are pretty full. It's not like we have any extra space."

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