

Redwood City Community Participation Program
Redwood Baptist Church School & Day Care Use Permit

Thursday, November 29, 2007
Roosevelt School Multi-purpose room
2223 Vera Ave. in Redwood City.
6:30-9:00 PM

Notes

Purpose of meeting:

Information and background on the Church's application for a Use Permit, as well as an opportunity for Community input on the operation of a school and daycare facility on site.

This community participation meeting was attended by approximately 115 people with the following breakdown:

- a. Approximately 12 neighbors.
- b. 20-30 children.
- c. The majority of the attendees were members of the Redwood Baptist Church and parents of the students attending the school.
- d. 79 people signed-in.
- e. 4 Redwood City Planning Department staff were available to answer questions and assist with the process.

Shauna Wilson Mora of the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center (PCRC) facilitated the meeting. Four additional PCRC volunteers facilitated small group discussion.

Presentations:

Church Presentation, Pastor David Azzarello of Redwood Baptist Church:

Background and History

- How long a church has been at location (1952)
 - Some previous usage
- Redwood Baptist acquired church in 2006
- Services and events at location
- Church, school and daycare operations
- When school and daycare opened
- Buses and parking
- Use permit
- Open House (previous & upcoming)
- Church outreach

Presentation By City, Michelle Tangunan, Associate Planner

- Previous facility operations (*not transferable*)
- Current permitted use for Church/baseline
- City tools for evaluating project application
 - Traffic
 - Noise
 - Intensity
 - Neighborhood compatibility of uses
- Traffic study/data available by beginning of January 2008

The City's presentation outlined the proposed project and the previous uses of the site, followed by an explanation of the City's review process and the factors the City takes into consideration in reviewing an application for a Use Permit. It was explained that the City is following standard City procedure in determining the best use of the site. Interim measures are being considered and the City welcomes input.

Staff and the Pastor answered questions before participants broke into 4 small groups led by neutral facilitators from PCRC. Each group discussed the information shared and addressed the following questions.

1. *How Redwood Baptist church operations benefit the Community?*
 - Church services
 - School
 - daycare
2. *What are your concerns regarding the operations of the church, school and daycare?*
3. *How could your concerns be addressed/solved to best meet the needs of the Community and the Church?*

Small Group Discussion:

Group 1:

Benefits

- Better education
- Meeting place
- Outreach re: church education
- Safe environment
- Respect, values, morals
- Spiritual benefit
- Close proximity
- Additional programs
- Respect for authority
- Value church as opposed to higher density developments

Concerns

- Noise
- Traffic/visibility
- Mitigation measures would not improve existing traffic and circulation issues
- Proper screening along property line
- Site too small for school
- Problems backing out of driveways during peak hours
- Safety crossing streets
- Parked cars and people get hit
- Cannot accommodate parking demand as school expands
- Property values going down because of church and school
- Without school, church operations at risk

Solutions

- On-going communications between church and neighbors
- Plant screening barriers along property line for noise

- Stagger school schedule
- Re-locate school to more suitable location
- Promote carpooling
- Decrease car trips to school/use church buses/park n' ride
- 4 way stop at McGarvey and Euclid
- Specific communications re: traffic, collaborative effort between church and neighborhood

Group 2

Benefits

- School
 - Positive experience
 - Quality of school;
 - Low student/teacher ratio
 - Supportive of school but concerned about its effects on neighborhood
 - Achieving its purpose - manner/respect
 - Community benefit - diversity in education
 - Staggered start time with Roosevelt 8:30 AM instead of 8:00 AM
- Church
 - Should be a honor for Redwood City/proud
 - resource for community beyond religious use
 - church not just a building
 - socially engaged

Concerns

- on-going traffic issue - not just school's traffic
- traffic problems associated with all schools in Redwood City, new school adds to existing traffic concerns in the neighborhood
- school buses parked on property
- traffic/car ownership issue = social issue

Solutions

- Buses/Aesthetics
 - Park buses off-site
 - Park buses at an alternate location on-site in a less visible location
- Noise
 - Why is it such a big issue if many people aren't home during the day?
 - Not all day impact - mostly during recess and other breaks
 - Issue mostly a concern to neighbors in close proximity to the church. Culture-shock - big change in activity level
 - Old site did not report a concern from neighbors next door
- Traffic
 - Sight distance at Euclid and McGarvey - stop sign
 - Traffic marshal and crossing guard every day
 - Car pools and buses
 - Traffic calming
 - Speeding
 - McGarvey/Connecticut speed unsafe
 - Delegated route to school and circulation plan through site
 - Stagger hours
- Hidden Racial Issue
 - Not supported because difference in street system at last site vs. this site
- Property Value

- Homes are already next to church/school/ Property values should already have been settled based on this fact

Group 3

Benefits

- Children are the future
- Make better people and good citizens
- Church services are good for community
- Reach out to people struggling
- Respects property
- School extends message of church
- Builds family and teaches parent to teach family values
- Increases community respect for officers
- Teaches students about caring life at home
- Good noise means children are happy
- No fighting allowed at school
- Safer neighborhood than previous location

Concerns

- school and parents acknowledge that kids get out of control and working toward solutions
- property values decreasing due to school
- traffic on McGarvey and Connecticut
- parking on street
- dangerous with kids playing in parking lot
- heavy traffic 8:00 - 8:30 AM
- church unresponsive to neighbors concerns
- parked buses are an eyesore
- noise from school can be heard inside homes even with the windows shut
- easement was community resource, now is being viewed as church property
- prior location was in a high traffic area and had no complaints

Solutions

- more communication between church and school and have a phone number to call for concerns
- establish secretaries to receive complaints
- buses have been moved to another location that has less impact
- total traffic study
- church/school work with neighborhood for solutions for traffic study
- use buses to shuttle students

Group 4

Benefits

- Christian education offers different curriculum to the community with a focus on values, discipline and moral character
- Teach from the King James Bible
- Alternative to public schools
- Parents sign a parent/student agreement that encourages safety and respect for each other and respect for authority
- School, church and home all on same page
- Kids are safer in a small school
- Streets are more safe because people are watching out for kids on the street

- Property has been improved by the church

Concerns

- More aware of need of neighbors and changes that might be necessary
- Noise
- Concern about complaints continuing
- The hours of school activity
- Capacity for all the students, is the facility big enough
- Traffic/cars/noise
- Safety - no sign indicating school is in operation
- Are there rental agreements with other churches?
- Church tried to get a use permit in April when the church sent the City a letter of inquiry requesting next steps
- Lights and stop signs

Solutions

- Traffic guard
- Bus to pick up kids
- Church work with community member
- Amend hours of operation - end at 5:30 PM
- Monitoring noise on playground
- Sound barrier
- Carpool program for older students
- Neighbors put in double pane windows - City pays
- Earplugs
- Work with neighbors in coordinating recess
- Church has chance to address concerns and problems
- Desire to work together
- Invite neighbors to church services
- More community meetings like this one
- Keep neighbors informed
- Go door again and ask for input from neighbors

Each group briefly reported back to the large group highlights of their discussion.

Next steps:

- PCRC will provide a report on the community workshop by next Friday, December 7th, summarizing the community's input
- . A traffic study is underway and should be completed by early January
- Staff will continue to work with the applicant on interim measures, including:
 - Explore alternative locations for the pick-up/drop-off of students and the storage of buses (including off-site locations).
 - Accessibility of emergency response vehicles to the site.
 - Safety measures for the interior parking lot that is currently used as a temporary playground during recess.
- A Zoning Administrator public hearing is anticipated for mid- to late February.