



City Council Follow-Up Report From the April 20, 2020 Zoning Meeting

2019-115 Northwood Development, LLC – Located on the north side of Ballantyne Commons Parkway, south of I-485 on both sides of Johnston Road. (Council District 7 – Driggs)

Provide the report from Ms. Dashew, Chair of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board. Provide data or a graph illustrating how many CMS schools in this area compare with other CMS schools in the district. What number of schools are over 100% capacity? How far out of the range is an average of 164%?

Staff Response: See below for info from CMS regarding capacity, and context from Dennis LaCaria. Ms. Dashew's comments are also attached and can be found on page 3.

SCHOOL	STAFF UTILIZATION	STUDENT POPULATION	TOP 25 RANK
Ballantyne	123%	966	#22
Elizabeth Lane	157%	1,049	#2
Elon Park	140%	1,073	#8
Endhaven	109%	668	
Hawk Ridge	135%	869	#12
McKee Road	102%	584	
Polo Ridge	136%	1,015	#11
Providence Spring	133%	961	#15
ES AVERAGE	107%		TOTAL 97 ES
Community House	154%	1,930	#2 (#1 MS)
Robinson	114%	1,215	#20 (#17 MS)
South Charlotte	119%	942	#24 (#14 MS)
MS AVERAGE	114%		TOTAL 41 PK8/MS
Ardrey Kell	161%	3,352	#2
Providence	107%	1,992	#14
South Mecklenburg	132%	3,258	#3
HS AVERAGE	111%		TOTAL 24 HS

Please find attached CMBE Chair Dashew's comments to City Council on the matter of the Ballantyne rezoning. Also as part of this email is a table with the utilization and student enrollment of Ballantyne-area elementary, middle, and high schools with attendance boundaries. The info also includes the average utilizations of each grouping of schools, and their ranking by utilization

It should be noted that Ardrey Kell is the second largest high school, by student population, not just in CMS but in the entire state of North Carolina. South Mecklenburg has the same distinction relative to being third. The largest high school not in CMS is Green Hope, in Wake County, with an enrollment of 2,916.

Community House MS is, likewise, the largest middle school (grades 6-8) both in CMS and in the state of NC.

With the exception of McKee Road ES and Providence HS, all schools in or adjacent to the Ballantyne area are above the district average utilization and well above desired student populations and facility utilization levels. Including this detail demonstrates that, contrary to some opinions, private schools are not "relieving" CMS; additionally, there are few opportunities to ease crowding through simple student assignment adjustments.

It should also be noted that a meeting was held on 14 February with the petitioner, wherein CMS expressed a desire to negotiate something other than the 35 acres noted in the initial response to the rezoning. Options such as "air rights" over a parking structure, or even a few floors in one of the buildings to be constructed, were offered. Also posited was the opportunity to receive 4 acres of land, or the cash equivalent. Petitioner foreclosed on any possibility of exploring these, or any other, potential responses to the impacts on school infrastructure as a result of their redevelopment.

Dennis K. LaCaria
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

I wrote these words before the Coronavirus turned our world upside down. Over the weekend I reviewed my comments to make sure they're still relevant. In fact, they are even more relevant today than six weeks ago.

We on the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education are not opposed to growth; nor are we in opposition to any specific petition or petitioner.

We are, however, in strong support of our students, our staff, our families, and our schools.

In general, the Board of Education is asking for all of our public sector partners to consider the impacts upon our existing educational infrastructure in the same way that consideration is given to housing, roads, and even sewer systems.

Housing is undeniably important; everyone needs a safe home. The current situation highlights that. The next step in addressing inequity and economic mobility, however, is education. I suspect that another lesson being learned, or perhaps relearned, at this moment in time is how important teachers are. How important schools are. How precious each and every classroom is, with the space for teaching, learning, and the free flow of ideas and information.

Our children ought to be more important than the fact that something conforms to a small area plan. Our students ought to be more important than utility capacities, or the width of a travel lane. If we believe that our students truly are the future of our community, we must invest in them at least on par with the way we ensure that developers invest in other items for the public good.

I am asking tonight that we all think through the ways that our decisions —the decisions that are in each elected body's purview — have consequences, unintended as they may be, on schools and on students.

And hopefully, together, we can then identify options to drive positive outcomes, with intentionality and alignment, for the betterment of all our shared constituents.

Thank you.