

**Colonial Hills Community Engagement Meeting  
January 10, 2024**

**Meeting Notes**

**Table 1**

**School/Neighborhood Impact**

- Keep Park Overlook quiet.
- I am totally torn with a new building and keeping our current charm. Drop-off is awful!
- What would happen to the outdoor classroom/ravine environment?
- If the school is rebuilt, how many students would it support? Part of the charm of Colonial Hills is the small school environment.
- Are there alternatives to renovation or new build on this site?
- Can we explore renovating the current building?

**Safety**

- Keeping school property safe (general public access to the property via 161).
- Worried about the homeless community by the tracks.
- General safety from 161, railroad, Boundless, etc.
- Accessibility for vehicles/safety.

**New Property/Financial Concerns**

- What does a new building mean for re-districting?
- Cost to purchase the property.
- How does the school interact with the Boundless facilities?
- The Boundless property will sell anyway, and a school sounds lovely.
- Buy it!
- Just buy the property and start planning.
- Greenspace is important.
- Think about what could go on the Boundless property if Worthington doesn't buy it. That is a very neighborhood-based area.
- Just buy it. "Trust the Process."

**Table 2**

**School/Neighborhood Impact**

- What's wrong with a child or adult needing to walk a few blocks? It's part of the charm of the situation.
- What basic education subjects can not be taught with current facilities? Public education is intended to be basic.
- Gated access from Indianola makes sense.

- There is an intrinsic value to the current location that can't be measured in \$. The cost of renovation vs. replacement needs to be considered.
- In the renovation/replace ratio, is the renovation to a basic "safe state" or to a "dream state" of high end unnecessary amenities?
- What about the building is so expensive to renovate? My concern is schools simply wanting to "keep up with the Joneses."

### **Safety**

- Is a school tucked behind other property the best location? Visibility of property for safety reasons?
- Where will the Amtrak to Cleveland line be located? Next to this property?

### **New Property/Financial Concerns**

- Inability or reluctance or political impossibility of selling the old property if this new one is bought.
- How much tax revenue could be gained if this new property were left to a private buyer?
- Taxes on my property, without including school taxes, have not changed from 2020 to 2023, yet school taxes during that period 2020-23 have increased nearly 25%. Is it not generational theft to continue to raise taxes at unsustainable rates for those who have owned property for decades? Forcing residents to sell family property because they can't afford taxes.
- Cost of new property?
- School taxes are 65% of current property taxes. How much is too much?
- Not a total apples to apples, but I'm sure the renovation of the Empire State Building to upgrade HVAC and such was above the 66% threshold.
- It makes sense to have access for bus/delivery traffic from 161.
- Why couldn't the site be used for a new school - leave CHES? Seems like many of the site challenges are crowding related.
- Uncertainty of the surrounding plots. How will it be certain the surrounding area stays conducive of a school site?
- Buy it. Hopefully, what is done later meets our concerns.
- I love the possibility of having CHES as my neighbor!

### **Table 3**

### **School/Neighborhood Impact**

- How long would a Colonial Hills renovation project take?
- Are modulars or parking projected to remain as part of a renovation?
- Teacher's perspective, facilities need to be updated.
- If a decision to renovate, what happens? Kids farmed out for 1-2 years?
- Traditions lost.
- Losing character of building and history of location inside neighborhood.
- Teacher perspective, there are many safety challenges at the current property.

- Lack of space at recess has more potential risks to student safety. Windows, games played, not fully developing activities.
- Please consider advance planning for current school site.

### **Safety**

- Why does neighborhood need a special road access drop off? Why not a pedestrian corridor or a drop off that does not cut through?
- Concern about neighborhood connection to the school. (161 and Colonial Hills)
- No cut thru is key
- No cut through to 161, but rather a u-turn drop off point for neighborhood to use. It would not connect as a road to the school.
- No direct access to Indianola through the property. An access gate for arrival/dismissal is a good idea.
- Indianola open at arrival and dismissal only.
- Concerned about backing up to railroad tracks.

### **New Property/Financial Concerns**

- Buy. 161-access gate only, new land, more space
- How long would it take to build?
- From a teacher, it would be awesome to have better access for switching classes.
- Moving locations would provide larger, closer, and a variety of outdoor spaces.
- Love the hope of more green space!
- Trains really are loud. Soundproof rooms.
- Could this property be out of our price range?
- If we don't move forward now, what happens when our building really is at the end?
- If Worthington doesn't purchase, who will?
- Purchase of the property is best for neighbors to ensure no high density development takes place on the land.
- I like the purchase now and allow time to determine the best course of action.
- Will most kids still be able to walk?
- How much green space would there be at the new site?
- 2 Colonial Hills schools - K-3, 4-6.
- Would a new Colonial Hills school building bring more students in, or would it be serving the approximate 378 students being served now?
- Will school assignments be the same, or will there be more students at the new site?
- Buy the land!
- There is only so much land. Buy it!

### **Table 4**

### **School/Neighborhood Impact**

- Do not want high density housing on current property if moving locations.
- We do not want to see high density residential developments on either site.
- High density, traffic impact, good neighbor - Harding, eminent domain

- Do not want to see Indianola become a thoroughfare.
- Very concerned with possible eminent domain of surrounding houses if rebuilt on current property.
- If rebuilt on current site, South field needs to be better utilized.
- We don't want to see any houses/families forced to move because of eminent domain acquisitions.

### **Safety**

- Traffic flow
- Transient population
- Safety based on location and transient presence.
- Traffic flow - thru flow would drastically change neighborhood.

### **New Property/Financial Concerns**

- How will the school be a good neighbor to the existing culture of the Boundless site? (And History)
- Conflict of NAI realtor being on CIC, too, along with I Am Boundless realtor.

## **Table 5**

### **School/Neighborhood Impact**

- No traffic on Indianola, regardless of parents not wanting to drive around.
- Love the community feel of the current location. If location is moved, I agree access for drop off and pick up from Colonial Hills should be part of the plan.
- If Indianola is opened up for traffic flow, it will lower property value for us in Colonial Hills.
- Traffic on Indianola.
- Colonial Hills neighborhood is landlocked, so a school renovation makes more sense, not a new school.
- Assuming the purchase does not happen, what about maintaining classes in the current building while a new two-story school building is constructed across the ravine? The old building could be renovated, and then the new building and the renovated building would be connected together.
- Who would make sure the current CHES property would not be rezoned to a developer?
- The physical facility definitely needs to be updated or improved.

### **Safety**

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### **New Property/Financial Concerns**

- Obviously, it would be ideal to keep ownership of the current school property even if the school location changes. Buy the property.
- Space for parking for school/events and entrance's speed limit of 15 mph.

- Indianola gate - would there be a barrier at the school parking lot so people would have to turn around when they get to school?
- If school buys the property and does not develop school, and high density housing is targeted...no opening of 161 to Indianola Avenue.
- No developer heavy presence on decision board. Community presence must be represented. Zoning by residence only.
- How many options for who owns the property? School, developer
- Who is controlling zoning?
- How do we make sure this does not get rezoned for apartments if WCS wants to sell the property down the road?
- Cost of the project in today's dollars and the tax liability the property owner would absorb.
- What is going to happen to Colonial Hills property and South field?
- Can the RCJ (?) have a restriction on development?
- Is there a cap on board \$ to be spent?
- What is OFSC matching funds for this project?
- Having a plan to “flip” the property to the district’s financial advantage is both smart and makes any purchase plan tolerable to us fiscal conservatives.
- Is Worthington City buying property, or is it school buying? Make this clear!
- How much is the property? Would it be bought outright?
- Will the purchase be on a public ballot? Or just from WCS & Board?
- Fair & equitable representation of community rather than brokers and developers.
- Right now everybody is investing in property. What is the likelihood of gain or loss - .i.e., is this a good investment even on the downside?
- What is the cost of the property?
- The timeline, which pushes decisions into the future in a realistic manner, is helpful and is compatible with a more conservative levy schedule (e.g., 2028 should the Biden economy continue). I like realism here.

## Table 6

### School/Neighborhood Impact

- Colonial Hills is an “endangered species” that should be protected.
- Colonial Hills is an asset to the city because of the community possible with school at HUB.
- How much “life” does CHES have left?
- No mention of what the pros are to keeping Colonial Hills on the current site.
- Options to renovate?
- On current site, can access be added for bus/emergency?
- Have turn around from neighborhood for student drop off.
- Process of rebuilding on current site, where would we go?
- Being able to renovate at current location, where do kids go?
- The ravine is just what kids need!
- What did 2019 feedback say?

## **Safety**

- How do you address safety in the short term?
- Safety of current set-up at Colonial Hills.
- Safety of student/teacher property etc. with transient community along tracks.
- Safety of park at N. Selby.

## **New Property/Financial Concerns**

- Use site 1 for PK/K - 2 and site 2 for 3-5 OR Reno/Flex space during reno.
- Cost of new vs. renovate, pros/cons of all new vs. renovate.
- If you are unable to purchase the property, what other options are there to rebuild/renovate CHES?
- Full disclosure of who else is on the Boundless property.
- Worthington is landlocked. Buy the property!
- Just buy it!
- Have bike/walk path accessible to community from neighborhood to 161.
- Have outdoor space for extended classroom.
- Have larger group “play” area for all students and accessible equipment.
- Will there be adequate green space for both playground and large group uses in the new school?
- What will be done to lessen impact of seeing big buildings etc. from neighborhood?
- What about tree preservation on Boundless property?
- Where do students come from? More than Colonial Hills? Is this flexible?
- Better schools than some other enterprise.
- No thoroughfare to 161.
- Good point about the need for exercise field space which is convenient.
- Impact on real estate taxes, especially seniors without kids in school. Especially increase house assessments.

## **Table 7**

## **School/Neighborhood Impact**

- There is a lot of talk about building and location...How does a new school (on either property) fit in with the unique architecture of Colonial Hills?
- Mental health benefits of a ravine/woods for children.
- Location and ravine lot should be considered an asset.
- There is a good design solution for nearly anything, including renovations.

## **Safety**

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## **New Property/Financial Concerns**

- The state's 66% renovate/replace formula is flawed. It does not account for value of natural environment, walkability, or historic value of current structure.
- The vote for financing in 26 or 28 would be for the whole of phase 3 for whole community, and not CH specifically, right? If so, it seems to me that if the schools buy the property, then funding for the building of a school at Boundless will happen.
- If capacity increases, when will a redistricting conversation happen?
- More clarity on the process for selling property.
- What other options for funding other than raising taxes?
- The current site is a hub of several communities. Moving the school upends this fabric.
- Purchasing decision should be untethered to CHES.

## **Table 8**

## **School/Neighborhood Impact**

- CHES students deserve better than current setup, whether replace or same site.
- Why does CHES need a new site when the other schools are rebuilt on the same location? Can't we use creative designs to meet our needs on the current location?
- All of the drawbacks the principal mentioned are true. I worked in the building and agree.
- Lack of disruption to current school during construction is important (modulars, re-districting, etc.)
- Concern about CHES students needing to go elsewhere for 1-2 year if school is rebuilt on current site. Building on new site would be more seamless for students.
- CHES needs replaced. Can it be done on the same site?
- Either site (current CHES or Boundless) would be appropriate for a new school.
- I loved the old site with "bridge school" that was presented years ago - but even that doesn't resolve issues for bussers, EMS, deliveries, etc. We couldn't design better access if we tried!
- We love the outdoor/wooded space and feel it is important for education. Is there a place to replicate/celebrate the outdoor?
- We'd hate to lose the ravine/outdoor learning/woods - for students and for neighborhood access.
- Worthington kids need quality, safe, and healthy facilities to maximize learning.
- I hoped the renovation/replacement would happen while my kid is still here.
- Only recently has drop off/pick up procedure changed. Change is back. No bus loop is not an option.
- Sherri's space concerns can be fixed with a bigger building on the current site. Elementary school has no green space!
- We moved here and bought house for way too much money to send our kids to a "charming" school in our neighborhood.
- What happens to the current CHES land if we buy Boundless?
- The concurrent development of Rush Creek and Colonial Hills should be maintained.

- Fear about losing neighborhood feel and charm.

### **Safety**

- I have concerns about safety and noise from the railroad - not just kids running on the tracks, but hazmat and derailments.
- Concerned about reduced walkability.

### **New Property/Financial Concerns**

- In general positive views on purchasing Boundless property.
- Please maintain neighborhood feel of school and CH neighbors.
- Seems foolish to pass up on this property purchase. It's a great opportunity and is forward thinking. We support the purchase!
- Worthington is increasingly landlocked...property is invaluable.
- Don't need all answers today...this just provides options.
- Worst case scenario, can't agree on what to do with it, sell it - favorable market/location.
- Good opportunity to buy land.
- Take advantage of this opportunity. Purchase the property now.
- Buy the property now.
- I think it is a good plan to buy the property.
- Good opportunity to buy the land for possible future use.
- Risky for neighborhood if another entity purchases the Boundless property. Appreciate that Worthington Schools wants community feedback. Other entities likely will not.
- Buy the land as an opportunity. School needs replaced/renovated.
- If we have excess money, was part of the bond issue unneeded?
- The negative impact on Colonial Hills community is far greater than any gain from new land, especially given the uncertain future of the current CHES location.
- What needs of the district will be harmed by the loss of the money used to purchase the site?
- Where would this purchase money come from?
- Absolutely yes on purchase - a no-brainer for WCSD and maybe future CHES (this land is unheard of!)
- Road access to 161 is nice benefit. However, consider walkability as many students will walk.
- Totally agree that Worthington Schools should buy the property and that CHES needs replaced.
- Who owns road off 161? Is that private property?
- Continued development of nature/outdoor classroom space is important. I'd like that in the new school space...Boundless has options potentially.
- The idea of more space for the school is attractive.
- As a former teacher (42 yrs) in Worthington, Colonial Hills needs to be rebuilt in a new location.
- What is the current financial status of Boundless? And why do they take the property on and off the market? Do we trust the owner?



- What happens to my property value if the school is moved...not technically in “Colonial Hills.”
- Ways to fund school besides taxes, sell school bonds? Keep taxes down and try to use existing property to save money.

### **Table 9**

#### **School/Neighborhood Impact**

- I’d love to see the current site kept as I feel it is rich in Worthington’s history, being the first elementary school.
- I’d love to see a creative design plan that could build on current site.
- Better playgrounds are important.
- I’m a senior citizen who supports schools.
- Nothing is more important than a “neighborhood” school!!
- Colonial Hills site is central to neighborhood. Don’t move it.
- Build on existing site. Own property. No new land purchase.
- Neighborhood school is key.
- What does a renovated CHES look like?
- Community involvement is critical.
- Exploration of field near Rush Creek for new school, i.e., existing site.
- Leave the school and use the money to renovate.
- I am pretty confident that the current site could incorporate a bus loop and parking and recess areas without disruption to boarding homes.
- Designs of Colonial Hills site with bridge over ravine were fantastic. Bring those back.

#### **Safety**

- Safety of the new site is my biggest concern. The idea of being on a major road (161), next to a railroad track, and close proximity to a major highway (71) are all major changes from our current setting.

#### **New Property/Financial Concerns**

- Cost building Colonial Hills site vs. new Boundless property.
- Do “we” have the money to buy the property? Where from?
- What cost analysis of “repair” as opposed to build?
- How much is the “building” going to cost?
- Shared roads and maintenance on Boundless site is a nightmare.
- Use Boundless as portable swing-space for all 5 elementary school rebuilds!
- Let’s go forward with the purchase.
- I assume it would be more cost-effective to rebuild or renovate on the same site vs. starting the infrastructure from scratch.
- I like the idea of new development opportunities in Worthington, at Boundless or at the existing site.

- Encourage district to purchase Boundless parcel but not to relocate Colonial Hills ES to that spot.
- This is a good opportunity, even as an investment.
- Go for the opportunity to buy the property - this is the best use for this property for Colonial Hills.
- What do we know about Boundless's other property?
- No thru traffic between Indianola and 161.
- Who will control the road? School or Boundless maintain gate?
- If there is a gate at Indianola it does not allow for access to 161.
- I like that there will be limited traffic if the school is moved.

### Table 10

#### School/Neighborhood Impact

- I do feel the existing school would be highly sought after by community schools.
- What does a system update look like in consideration of keeping in school during construction?
- A big concern is the future use of the current site; what could this turn into, and how does this affect property values?
- CHES is a gem of a school. It should be renovated into a two-story building on the beautiful property and left alone!
- This will change the community in a profound way. The community is walkable and tight-knit, used to the current size and school procedures.
- I always think teachers and school administrators are the voices we need to amplify and take most seriously. (I'm a parent)
- Threading the needle on preserving the neighborhood & community, giving the kids the best education they deserve.
- Our kids deserve an expanded outdoor experience!
- Loss of outside learning space & ravine.
- Planning/accounting for current population plus SPED population.

#### Safety

- I'm concerned with kids needing to walk across 161 and new commute routes - can it be done safely? Can kids still go through the neighborhood?
- Homeless camp

#### New Property/Financial Concerns

- How will entry off of Indianola need to be modified - cost, accessibility, staffing
- Accessibility -flex spaces, universal design (many people can access it)
- Going thru others to get to Colonial Hills (bridge-shared road)
- Traffic (buses from 161)
- Agreed with Trent's comments about the process and benefits of land banking the property.

- I believe the new site will hold long term value even if not developed.
- What does the potential new walking pattern/busing look like to a new site?
- Could Worthington support a change in the need for more buses?
- CHES is outdated, and Boundless is a good property acquisition option. The character of Colonial Hills neighborhood is important to maintain.
- Dream Big! A new site and school has so much potential!
- Central Ohio is growing rapidly, and we need to be open to making changes in long-standing neighborhoods.
- A new school give us a chance to grow and expand in the future!
- I am excited about the potential for the current Boundless property to become a space for our children (and future children) to thrive (green space, updated facilities, enough room.)
- Enormous potential, prioritize accessibility, concern about traffic.
- Could Colonial Hills get a unit & collaborate with Boundless?
- How many more students would a new building allow to be educated?

**Table 11**

### **School/Neighborhood Impact**

- What happens to old school?
- Colonial Hills needs safer facilities
- Indianola pass-thru can not happen.
- Re-sale of current property.
- Indianola/Park Overlook traffic will increase even if no drive through
- I would want the school to maintain on current Colonial Hills property.
- If we're displaced for renovation, where would we go? How long?
- If renovation, what are options for safety?
- What would a renovation look like?
- If the school stays on the current site, can reno/rebuild help with accessibility of site? (Bridge to South field)
- How do we keep the school "walkable"?
- What do we need to be able to address issues with the current site (beyond money)? Can we get it?
- What might be "next door" long term - no control.
- If renovated, where do the kids go to school during this time?
- If you renovate would the safety issue and parking be able to be fixed?

### **Safety**

- Where does Worthington end and Columbus start? Thoughts/concerns about policing.
- How to control traffic in Colonial Hills proper to Colonial Hills.
- Staff and students during school, weekends, and off hours.
- Concern over non-neighborhood environment.
- Proximity to RR tracks and Route 161 safety/noise.

- Treatment of those at Boundless property. Mental health?
- Train tracks
- Homeless camp by tracks.

### **New Property/Financial Concerns**

- As a resident of Park Overlook, I would prefer the district purchase property over anyone else.
- 161 access is a huge positive
- I like the idea of “controlled” access to the back Boundless entrance.
- I like the idea of school purchase vs. other unknown options. We need to keep school in neighborhood.
- Does new site increase the need to bus students from far corner?
- For non-Colonial Hills resident students, what equity would come from new site? Does new site introduce any new inequities we would need to address?
- Would love to see trees kept on east side of property by railroad tracks.
- No thoroughfare between 161 & Indianola.
- Maintaining the ravine behind CHES and Boundless.
- Limiting neighborhood traffic
- Like the idea of new building with more space.

### **Emailed Comment**

“While I’m sure this is a “beautiful site” where kids can frolic, and play with purple unicorns. I’d like to see the level of excellence in learning increase at the same level as my property taxes. NO MORE MILLAGE.”