

Cincinnati Public Schools  
Office of the Board Members  
P.O. Box 5381  
Cincinnati, OH 45201-5381

Dear CPS Board Members:

I am writing in regard to a notice of appeal we received from Frost Brown Todd.

As you are aware, there has been much discussion regarding the placement of the new gym and administration buildings at Westwood School. The position of Westwood Civic Association (WCA) is that our historic district should be protected, while still developing a campus that is functional and safe for our school children. We felt that we had reached a good balance of those factors when we chose the Epworth Avenue build as the best all-around option.

WCA has worked closely with the CPS facilities staff and their design team since we first became aware of the project. It has not always been easy. We have had to insist on maintaining an open, honest, and inclusive process to make sure that everyone had an opportunity to have input. Even though we had to restart the process several times as CPS staff attempted to shield the process from public input, we were able to keep it open, and work out a reasonable plan for completing the project. Our goal is to do the best thing for our entire neighborhood. CPS seems to portray this issue as pitting the neighborhood against the students. I hope you will keep in mind that the students are part of the neighborhood, and will be the future leaders. What will the children say years from now, if they knew that today's leaders made a bad decision and used them as the justification?

*From Frost Brown Todd appeal-*

*Furthermore, as part of its community engagement process and at the specific request of the community, CPS examined the possibility of putting the addition on the western side of the site, adjacent to Epworth Avenue, as opposed to the preferred location on the eastern side of the Site adjacent to Harrison Avenue. After careful study of the proposal to put the addition on the western side of the Site, the architects and planners contracted by CPS have concluded that the Site simply does not work from functional, safety and budget perspectives if the addition is placed on the western side of the Site. Therefore, the decision jeopardizes CPS's plans to move Westwood School back into the Building and ultimately the long-term preservation of the Building.*

This is not the way the process actually unfolded, and I believe that the attorneys might be confused about the process. Both sides of the building were always considered options, and it was never discussed that the Epworth option “jeopardizes CPS's plans to move Westwood School back into the Building and ultimately the long-term preservation of the Building.” That sounds as if CPS was threatening to stop the project if they do not like the option selected by the community. WCA is in favor of completing this project as soon as possible. The “no-build” option was never on the table.

We will continue to deal with all issues using a forthright, open, and honest approach. We have gone to great lengths to insure that as many people as possible were included

in the process. That is the best way to make sure that this project is completed in the best interests of everyone involved.

You may have heard about a small group of vocal opponents to the WCA's position on this issue, concerning the potential effect this project might have on one street in Westwood. They were invited to our last meeting, and were given ample time to express their views. We will continue to work closely with all of our neighbors, and will be happy to discuss this aspect with you as well. Their concerns reflect one part of the overall project, but we need to consider what is best for the entire neighborhood of 35,000 residents, which of course includes the students.

Please consider reviewing your decision on the placement of the addition, and allow WCA to explain our process and reasons for our decision for this project. We would be happy to address any concerns you might have about our position, and discuss some points of disagreement with the CPS facilities team. We feel confident that we can address all of the concerns raised by CPS, and find a way to get this project back on track.

The legal process uses up precious time and money that could go toward completing this project. Taxpayers will be paying all expenses.

We ask that you consider all the costs of this unprecedented appeal, and take another look at the project with an eye toward completing it and moving on to the critical task of educating our future leaders.

Thank you for your support of our schools and our neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

Jim McNulty  
President  
Westwood Civic Association