



BARRY GLASSMAN

HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 7, 2022

For more information, contact:

Cindy Mumby

Director of Governmental & Community Relations


410-340-5376

camumby@harfordcountymd.gov

Harford County Executive Glassman Urges Town of Bel Air to Allow New Homestead-Wakefield Elementary School to Move Forward, Opposes Public Road Through Campus

BEL AIR, Md., (June 7, 2022) - County Executive Barry Glassman sent the attached letter dated June 2 to the Bel Air town commissioners, urging them to allow the new Homestead-Wakefield Elementary School to move forward. Town officials have conditioned their final approval on the inclusion of a public road through campus. The Harford County Board of Education opposes the new road due to safety concerns and other issues.

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HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE

6/2/2022

Mayor and Town Commissioners
Town of Bel Air
39 N. Hickory Ave
Bel Air, MD 21014

RE: Homestead Wakefield Elementary School

Dear Mayor Bianca and Town Commissioners,

As a partner to both the Town of Bel Air and Harford County Public Schools, I believe our shared goal is a modern facility to continue the tradition of excellence at Homestead-Wakefield Elementary School. I write to express concerns about the timely completion of this project.

I am aware that the Town would like to construct a public connector road through the property owned by the school system; however, the Board of Education has determined they need the property for an appropriate redevelopment of HWES. This redevelopment could include an emergency access road, which I understand is a desire expressed by the Town.

In addition, the Town's suggested road placement as noted on its website appears impractical. While it suggests that a road could run around the school facility, construction of such a road would require a very large amount of the Board of Education's property. It would also raise safety concerns and fail to provide an efficient route through campus.

I understand that HCPS has asked for relief in the courts; however, I ask that your Planning Department staff reconsider their recommendation to require the public road. The educational needs of our students and families, as indicated by the plan approved by the Board of Education and Maryland state authorities, outweigh the convenience of a public road.

To avoid further delay, I also ask that the Planning Commission address this issue quickly and take measures to amend its conditional approval of the HWES project plan to remove the public road requirements.

Until this issue is resolved, our shared goal of a modern facility for HWES is at risk. My administration has funded the first year of construction for the project in our budget that begins on July 1, 2022, and we expect it to be completed on time. Even if the school system's educational needs were to be pushed aside, changing plans at this late date would subject the project to additional administrative hurdles and delays that in turn would add to its cost - a borne by our taxpayers.

Therefore, I urge you to allow this project to move forward. The students, parents, and staff of HWES have waited long enough.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Barry Glassman".

Barry Glassman
Harford County Executive

CC: Dr. Sean Bulson, Superintendent, Harford County Public Schools

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