

MEMO

To: TNT Members

From: Laurie Johns

Date: 4-21-06

RE: Tuscaloosa City School Board Open Work Session 4-13-06

The purpose of this meeting was to hear the consultant, Kelley Carey's presentation of his demographic study he did for the board and the recommendations he formulated. I attended and took many notes, but found that the Tuscaloosa News did a good job of summarizing the meeting and the presentation made. Therefore, I have copied their article into this memo following my notes.

Mr. Carey stated that his demographic study was based on an almost 100% accurate study of the students enrolled in the city system. They were able to locate nearly every student by address. They also took a complete facility inventory including room-by-room usage of each facility. His "Projection Model" is a method he created and which he claims has proved very accurate for over 20 years of his consulting. He bases it on actual enrollment for the last 5 years in each grade of each school. Then he uses the birth rate and the percentage of those births that end up enrolling in city schools. He projected that the Tuscaloosa City school enrollment will increase by 1,000 over the next 5 years.

He states as a conclusion that the growth in Tuscaloosa is to the North East, the East and South East. His study did not include any research on what is causing that particular growth pattern.

One item that was brought up in the question session that was not touched on in the Tuscaloosa News article was the issue of Technical Schools. School Board Member Ginny Capps brought it up and stated that while we have a very good tech program, it is housed in the oldest and most run-down building. She emphasized that technical programs should not be overlooked. The consultant agreed strongly with her and shared that he had recently recommended that a high school technical program be built on the campus of a jr. college/technical school in another city. This was done very successfully and has allowed the sharing of resources and instructors in a very constructive manner.

For those of you who are interested in reading some of consultant Kelley Carey's articles here are links to them:

<http://www.asbj.com/specialreports/0406SpecialReports/S3.html>
<http://www.asbj.com/lbd/2001/inprint/public.html>
<http://www.asbj.com/lbd/2004/inprint/carey.html>
<http://www.asbj.com/lbd/2003/designing.html>
<http://www.asbj.com/lbd/2001/inprint/Carey.html>
<http://www.asbj.com/lbd/2001/resources/102000carey.html>
<http://www.asbj.com/lbd/2001/resources/082000carey.html>
<http://www.asbj.com/schoolspending/carey.html>
<http://www.asbj.com/lbd/2001/resources/101999carey.html>

This is the "master" link:

<http://www.asbj.com/lbd/2004/resources.html>

Here is the Tuscaloosa News article on the meeting and presentation:

Study projects schools growth

By Antwanette Jones
Staff Writer
April 14, 2006 3:30AM

TUSCALOOSA | With a projected student population increase of more than 1,000 in the next five years, city school leaders said they need to begin planning now to deal with overcrowding.

"It's time to start thinking," said Kelley Carey, president of Associated Planning & Research Inc., as he reviewed with the school board a report from an 18-month demographic study of the school system.

The study, which thus far has cost the system \$19,600, examined future growth and enrollment trends for the system and the population trends at individual schools during the past five years. It also looked at where students live and school enrollment in comparison with the capacity of each facility.

Citing strong residential growth patterns, Carey recommended building two new elementary schools, one in the northeastern area and another in the eastern part of the southeast sector. Although he assured that it wasn't necessary to act immediately, he cautioned school leaders to "land bank" school sites now to avoid escalating land prices and allow for better site options.

Carey also suggested adding on to Paul W. Bryant High School, which based on enrollment trends, will become overcrowded in the next five years. Bryant High has 1,013 students, and enrollment is expected to climb to 1,447 students, well beyond the building's 1,200-student capacity. An expansion could carry the school for another eight to 10 years, he said.

In addition to other options, he recommended designating specific areas of the school system as "defined choice," giving students in those areas the option of attending a school in their zone or another school nearby their homes. For example, some

students attending Verner Elementary could attend Central Primary School or Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary as an alternative.

Under this recommendation, these students would also be allowed to attend the middle and high schools in that cluster. A similar plan was suggested for students who live near Central High School, which Carey said sits at the edge of its attendance zone.

Neither option would involve rezoning.

Board member Virginia Powell said the report didn't address the present needs of students.

"I'm taking this with a grain of salt because I know we have construction needs where children live today."

She and board member Tulane Duke questioned where middle school students would fit into the scheme of these plans. Several of the recommendations discussed at the meeting focused on elementary and high schools, although schools such as Tuscaloosa Middle are close to reaching capacity.

Powell also seemed leery of Carey's projected increase in student population and pointing to federal census data from 1980 to 2000 that she said showed city growth at 2,000.

"You're saying in 5 years we're going to do what we haven't done in 20 years?" she asked.

Carey said the most important point to consider is the number of students the school system is attracting. The system has ample room to attract more students, he said.

"It's who the school district is capturing, who's in the classes, not who lives in the city."

He said the defined choice options would also impact middle schools, although the plans seem to point immediately to specific elementary and high schools.

The study is a small component of the strategic planning process under way in city schools. School leaders, with input from the community, are putting together a five-year strategic plan, which is slated for a final board vote in June.

The next strategic planning forum will be May 2 at Central High.

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