

ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

Karen Everett,
Public Information Officer



Francis Jack Russell, President
Kenneth R. Dement, Commissioner
Lawrence D. Jarboe, Commissioner
Thomas A. Mattingly, Sr., Commissioner
Daniel H. Raley, Commissioner

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release:
March 31, 2009

For more information contact:
Karen Everett
301-475-4200 ext. 1342

Board of County Commissioners to Hold Public Information Meeting

The Board of County Commissioners for St. Mary's County will hold a public information meeting on Tuesday, April 7 to discuss a proposed master plan for the Hayden Property. The 172-acre site was purchased by St. Mary's County Government for a new elementary school and other public facilities.

The parcel of land, known currently as the Hayden Farm, is located on Rte. 245 in the Leonardtown Development District. The public information meeting will discuss pending proposals for facilities to be situated on this property.

The meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. in the Commissioners' Meeting Room in the Chesapeake Building in Leonardtown and will be aired live on Channel 95. The meeting will also be rebroadcast on Channel 95. Log on to www.stmarysmd.com for a schedule for Channel 95 or call the Public Information Office at 301-475-4200, x1340.

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MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release:

December 24, 2008

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COUNTY GOVERNMENT TO ACQUIRE PROPERTY FOR FUTURE PUBLIC FACILITIES

The Board of County Commissioners for St. Mary's County approved the purchase of a 172-acre site in the Leonardtown area as the location for a new elementary school and other public facilities at today's meeting for \$5,259,500.

The parcel of land, known currently as the Hayden Farm, is located on Rte. 245 in the Leonardtown Development District. "The county identified the need for additional school sites several years ago," explained Jack Russell, President, Board of County Commissioners. "This land meets an immediate need and will also give us more flexibility in planning for future facilities including a new Leonardtown Library, parks and additional schools."

County Government began setting aside funds for the acquisition of land for public facilities in 2005. "Sites suitable for public facilities are in short supply in St. Mary's County," said Commissioner Thomas Mattingly, Second Election District. "By setting aside capital funds, we are now in a position to acquire this property." This major investment in land is comparable to the investment made in the 1970's for the land occupied by the current Governmental Center. "That land purchase served St. Mary's County well for the past 30 years; this major investment will meet many needs for the future," he added.

Acknowledging the current tough economic times, Commissioner Russell went on to state that prudent investments still need to be made for the county's growth. "Were we to pass on this opportunity and wait for kinder economic times, we would risk paying a higher price on the real estate or finding no suitable parcels," he concluded.

This parcel is ideal for public facilities because of its size and location. It is large enough to accommodate multiple uses and it is located within the Development District. It is located on Rte. 245, an adequate state road with public transportation and is close to other public facilities. It is also close to new housing developments, including the Leonard's Grant subdivision.

Dr. Michael Martirano, Superintendent, St. Mary's County Public Schools, commented, "St. Mary's County Public Schools has been working collaboratively with St. Mary's County Government to obtain viable and acceptable school sites. This property is acceptable for the school system to move forward with the planning of a second new elementary school that will address the overcrowding issues in our elementary schools." The purchase of the property is expected to be completed within 120 days.

The meeting was televised live on Channel 95 and will be rebroadcast. Check the schedule at www.stmarysmd.com or call the Public Information Office at 301-475-4200, x1340.

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**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CONCERNING PROPERTY ACQUISITION
DECEMBER 24, 2008**

Why is the Board of County Commissioners acquiring this property?

The Board of County Commissioners for St. Mary's County approved the purchase of a 172-acre site in the Leonardtown area today as a result of the continuing need of the Board of Education for additional school sites in the future in addition to the needs of the citizens for public facilities. We need an elementary school site right now to present to the state for planning approval.

How much is county government paying for the land?

County Government negotiated a price of \$5,259,500. Settlement will occur within 90-120 days from the date of the Contracts of Sale.

Why spend this money now?

These funds have been set aside over the past few years (starting with a Board of County Commissioners decision in spring 2005) specifically for acquisition of land. These funds are capital funds that cannot be used for operating expenses. The Board of Education must identify a site for the next elementary school by January 15, 2009 or risk losing state planning approval. If we wait until the economy recovers, the land might not be available and prices will be higher. Additionally as a county we will not meet the school capacity need for our growing community.

Where is the land?

The subject property is located just outside the incorporated town of Leonardtown, west of Hollywood Leonardtown Road (Md. State Route 245), on Hayden Farm Lane, in the Leonardtown Development District. The property is located within a mile of the County Courthouse in Leonardtown and approximately twelve miles west of the Patuxent River Naval Air Station.

What other uses are planned for this land besides an elementary school?

We will do a master plan for the site. It would be ideal as a campus that includes a middle school as well as an elementary school. In addition, the County is currently reviewing potential sites for a new Leonardtown Library and athletic fields for the central part of the county. The site is not under consideration for use as a detention center or homeless shelter.

How is the county able to justify this expense, especially in light of the current economic picture?

County Government had the foresight to begin setting aside funds for the acquisition of land for public facilities in 2005. Though the focus was on school sites, we also recognized that sites suitable for schools and other public facilities have been in short supply. When the opportunity to possibly purchase this particular tract of land presented itself, especially with regard to its location, size and topography, the County realized that such an opportunity may not arise again in the near or distant future. Because we set these funds aside in prior years, we are now in a position to acquire this property. This major investment in land is comparable to the investment made in the 1970's for the land occupied by the current Governmental Center. That land purchase served St. Mary's County well for the past 30 years; this major investment will meet many needs for the future.

Prudent investments need to be made for the county's growth. Despite the current economic uncertainty, St. Mary's County will continue to grow. The Board of Education currently projects a need for three elementary schools within the next six years (with Evergreen Elementary as number one) and a middle school and a high school within the next 12 years. If the commissioners passed on this opportunity, they would risk paying a higher price on the real estate or finding no suitable parcels at a later date.

Will this purchase impact the county's operating budget?

No, the purchase of this land will be financed with a combination of impact fees and transfer taxes – all of which were collected in prior years and set aside specifically for this purpose. Both impact fees and transfer taxes are dedicated to capital projects, and cannot be used for operating purposes. The county commissioners began to set aside funds into a dedicated capital project for land acquisition beginning in 2005.

What are the advantages of this piece of land?

This property is located within the development district, close to services and with the ability to be easily served by water and sewer. It is ideally located for one or more schools and other public services, and is close to housing developments and centrally located. The majority of this parcel is developable.

The state normally requires that schools be located within a development district. The size of the parcel will also allow a campus-type development, perhaps with two schools, creating some economies of scale and transportation efficiencies.

Isn't the county opening a new school in 2009?

Yes, the Evergreen Elementary School, located in Wildewood, is on track to open in August 2009. It is one of three new elementary schools that the Board of Education has indicated will be needed in St. Mary's County over the next six years to accommodate growth.

Tax Map





