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QUEENS CIVICS HOST MEETING ON CREEDMOOR GIVEAWAY

The Queens Civic Congress announced a meeting as part of its continuing opposition to the severely flawed plan to construct three schools at Creedmoor Psychiatric Center, according to Corey Bearak, an Executive Vice President of the coalition of more than 90 civic, community, cooperative and tenant associations and chair of its Special Committee on Creedmoor. The special meeting also sponsored by the Bellerose-Hillside, Bellerose Commonwealth Creedmoor, North Bellerose, Rocky Hill and Queens Colony Civic Associations, takes place, Sunday, March 26, 2000, from 2:00-4:00 p.m. at Bellerose Jewish Center, 254-04 Union Turnpike in Floral Park, one block east of Little Neck Parkway.

The Queens Civic Congress opposed the School Construction Authority/Board of Education plan at Community Board and Community School Board hearings in January and last month urged an immediate halt to all plans to develop the site and design the schools. "Any further action on this educationally dysfunctional plan wastes public funds," said Bearak in a letter to SCA President Milo Rivero and elected officials. "Waste no further time, move to redesign now."

Specifically, the Queens Civic Congress faulted the failure to follow a Community-initiated Master Plan to re-use surplus land and buildings at Creedmoor, squeezing three schools on a tiny site, placing an elementary school immediately next to a high school (including the use of shared facilities), the inability of the site to accommodate school and other buses, the need for on-site parking when off-site parking just does not exist, and the lack of facilities top provide students with a complete school experience.

At the meeting, civic representatives will report on the current state of the misguided development plan and invite public officials to indicate their support for the community's position. Additional actions to stop this plan will also be outlined.

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[Additional comments and concerns on the proposal follow.]

Queens Civic Congress Outlines its position on Creedmoor

“The Queens Civic Congress finds the plans to squeeze a high school, intermediate school and an elementary school on Creedmoor’s Building 51 site (off Commonwealth Boulevard) severely flawed,” explained Bearak. “It makes no sense to develop more than one school on this site. The site plan clearly presumes to count land currently buffering a heavily used highway to make this small site appear less inadequate.”

In addition the plan fails to recognize and account for the special traffic consequences and impact unique to this site. It fails to provide on-site parking when there exist no nearby streets to accommodate parking for personnel. Further, it lacks any ability for New York City Transit and school buses to turn on narrow Commonwealth Boulevard. Any route that would enable buses to drop off and pick up students would require buses to travel residential streets and travel roughly one additional mile. This because the site plan fails to provide for an-onsite bus turnaround and would have no space to accommodate this need.

The Queens Civic Congress, acting through its Special Committee on Creedmoor, wants the SCA and Board of Education officials to follow the Master Plan developed over two years by the community groups surrounding Creedmoor and incorporated in the Master Plan submitted to the Governor by the Queens Borough President’s Working Group on Creedmoor. The Working Group included the Queens Civic Congress, community groups, District 26 board members and officials and local elected officials.

At successive meetings that included Board of Education officials, the Queens Civic Congress made clear the need to use the entire site to provide students a full-range of facilities, including athletic facilities not be readily available at other sites being developed as schools elsewhere.

Page 33 of the “Creedmoor Master Plan discusses the “Public Educational Complex.”
Any configuration shall make use of the entire 26 acres for public school purposes and schools shall be developed as part of a unified architectural plan. In addition, adequate athletic facilities and open spaces shall be incorporated into these plans.

Moreover, Board of Education officials clearly represented at the September 15, 1999 Creedmoor Working Group meeting, that it planned to proceed as if it purchased the entire site. No disclosure occurred that day of any plans to develop more than one school on the site occupied by Building 51.

The unsound SCA-Board of Education three-school-squeeze-proposal clearly creates environmental impacts not likely to occur if development followed the Creedmoor Master Plan. Moreover, the acquisition triggers the City’s ULURP [Uniform Land Use Review Procedure] process and no community support exists for any school proposal not developed in accord with the Master Plan.

The Master Plan outlines a framework for the SCA and Board of Education to work with the community; it makes sense to lose no time and return to this original commitment.