

MAROA FORSYTH

Home of the Trojans



Building a Better World One Student at a Time



DISTRICT NEWSLETTER- October 2011

Facilities Addition

Community Forum

The Maroa Forsyth School District will be conducting a community forum on the much talked about facility plan on Tuesday, October 11 at 6:00. This meeting will take place in the high school cafeteria and will attempt to answer any questions the public may have in regard to the proposed facility improvements that may not be answered in this "Facilities Addition" of the District Newsletter.

Facility Plan

The current facility plan is divided into several phases. We are approaching the end of the initial phase of the plan. This phase was designed to address the immediate needs of the district. Phase one is the phase that has received the most attention and is the blueprint for the improvements over the next 1-2 years. Phase two involves either an addition to the high school or the construction of a new bus garage/unit office facility. This phase will be dictated by enrollment growth of the high school over the next 3-5 years. Phase three involves an addition to the grade school in Forsyth. Currently, there are six

classrooms available to accommodate a growth in enrollment at the grade school. Based on past enrollment trends, this addition may become necessary 6-9 years down the road. The final, and most expensive, phase of the facility plan is phase four. Phase four includes the replacement of the current middle school that was constructed in 1928. The District's goal would be to complete this phase within the next 10-15 years.

Over the next few pages of this newsletter, we will take a closer look at each phase individually.

Initial Phase

As mentioned, the initial portion of the facilities plan was designed to address the most pressing issues in the District. The largest of these issues was the need for a full window and exterior door replacement at the Middle School. This project was initially estimated to cost roughly \$300,000. After some initial on-site testing, it was determined the glazing on a number of the windows contained asbestos. The containment and removal of the asbestos brought the projected total cost to approximately \$400,000. As

a result of a positive bidding climate and better than expected on-site conditions, the project was able to be completed for just under \$290,000.

This allowed the district to make numerous improvements throughout the district with the money that was allotted for the window project. Some of those improvements that took place at the middle school include, replacement of all window air conditioner units, installation of new window treatments, re-keying of all middle school doors, replacement/addition of sidewalks and handicap ramps, miscellaneous electrical repairs /upgrades and re-mulch the playground.

The grade school was improved with installation of a sound system in the cafeteria, additional humidity controls on the HVAC system, and additional concrete work around the storage shed located on the south east corner of the parking lot.

The high school received its share of improvements as well. The damaged floor tile in the cafeteria was replaced and an expansion of the visitor bleachers at the football field was completed. We were also able to conduct an energy

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audit of the high school facility in order to identify potential areas of improved efficiency as part of the next phase of the facility plan.

All the projects previously mentioned were able to be completed at a cost of \$389,800 or roughly \$10,000 less than the original window replacement budget alone.

Phase One

Phase one of the facility plan consists of several aspects. The first aspect of this phase attempts to address energy use/efficiency at the high school facility. This concern was the direct result of energy consumption in this facility compared to the energy consumption in the new grade school facility. Prior to the completion of the grade school, there was nothing for the District to compare the energy usage of the high school facility to. This was the largest and most modern facility within the district. After the completion of the grade school in 2009, it quickly became apparent the energy consumption at the high school was significantly greater than this new, energy efficient facility. For instance, the electric bills are roughly double at the high school throughout the year and the natural gas bills are more than ten times higher than the grade school facility during the winter months. The majority of these savings can be attributed to the geothermal heating and cooling system at the grade

school. Initially, the District explored the option of retrofitting the high school with the same geothermal technology. It was quickly determined the payback on such improvements would take longer than the projected use of the facility. As mentioned, during the initial phase of facility plan, an energy audit was conducted by the District's engineer. The engineer has identified a number of items that will improve the efficiency of the building that will be implemented, as the plan moves forward. Some of the improvements include an updated HVAC controls system, occupancy sensors for the HVAC and lighting systems, and implementation of other energy savings measures. The original budget for the efficiency upgrades was \$300,000. The current estimate for the recommended improvements is \$286,000. The payback on the energy efficiency upgrades is between 5-7 years depending, on the energy markets.

Another aspect of this phase is a remodel of the high school cafeteria. This has been an area of concern for the high school facility since the District took occupancy in January of 2004. While the varying levels of the seating area provide great site lines during a performance, they provide a tremendous tripping hazard. The District has attempted lighting the various elevation changes, varying the color of the floor tile at the elevation changes,

and adding additional hand rails with little success. The proposed remodel will install a brick knee wall with a stone bench at each elevation change. The original budget for this project was \$30,000.

One of the most exciting aspects of the plan is the construction of a greenhouse. This greenhouse will be a nice addition to our facility and allow the District to expand its curriculum in the areas of science and agriculture. The original budget allotted \$100,000 for a greenhouse. The estimate that is under current consideration is \$110,000. While this is a little more than the District originally planned, several key improvements were recommended. Some of these recommended improvements include: automated temperature and humidity control, as well as a split face block foundation to increase the aesthetics and strength of the structure. We feel the additional money needed to complete this project is well worth the investment. I have included a picture below showing what the greenhouse will look like when completed.



The largest project in the first phase of the facility plan

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includes the installation of a new, all weather track and an artificial playing surface for the football field. The original budgeted amount was \$1,300,000.

The District first explored the possibility of installing an all weather track in spring of 2010. All project bids were rejected due to the fact bids were thirty-two percent higher than preliminary budget estimates.

During the fall of 2010 alternate track manufacturers were researched. It was at this time the possibility of artificial turf was first discussed. Many hours of research and product comparisons took place. The District was able to find one of the leading manufacturers of sports surfacing in the nation that was qualified and competent to install both artificial playing surface and an all-weather sports surface. Preliminary discussions focused on the track, but it quickly became apparent that an artificial playing surface was a viable option. The District requested preliminary estimates and were supplied with a rough estimate of the 1.3 million that is in the original facility plan. After further site inspection and tentative design of our site, it appears the cost to implement a new eight lane polyurethane track and equip the football field with the field turf would cost 1.28 million.

This number consists of three major aspects. The cost of the track surface, the cost of the field surface, and the cost of the site work

(engineering, drainage, earthwork, paving, etc.). The site work/ prep is the most expensive at a cost of roughly \$640,000, the artificial turf is \$465,000, while the track surface is \$175,000. It should also be noted, this is a polyurethane track, which is an upgrade over the latex surface that was bid in the spring of 2010. The implementation of an all weather track will allow Maroa Forsyth to support its own track program at the middle school and high school levels, a long time goal of the District.

The field improvements will greatly extend and expand the use of the area. Currently, the football field is used solely for football competition. The new artificial turf will allow for increased accessibility to all students at Maroa Forsyth. The artificial surface will provide a practice surface that is free of imperfections that are common on the current practice facilities. The field expansion and playing surface, complete with the appropriate markings, will meet the National High School Association requirements for competitive soccer. As you are aware, there is currently not a soccer facility for the students of Maroa Forsyth.

This surface will also provide a practice facility for the baseball and softball programs during the times in which their field conditions are unplayable. Currently these programs are forced to use paved playground/parking areas for practice when their fields are unplayable.

The improved playing surface will also allow the marching band increased opportunities to practice, on a dry, uniform surface. It is a goal of the District and the music department to one day host marching band competitions.

The field will also allow an expanded curriculum for the physical education department. There are certain activities that we currently do not have the space for. This multi-use surface will provide this much needed space. In addition to expanded curriculum, because of the drainage system that is associated with the surface, it lends itself to extended play. Teams and classes are able to access the facility earlier in the spring and later in the fall, providing additional hours of instruction and practice time.

Another key aspect of the artificial surface is the improved safety aspect of the surface that has been well documented. Recently, in a three-year survey conducted by *The American Journal for Sports Medicine* it was determined there were 55% fewer neural injuries, 45% fewer long term injuries (lasting longer than 22 days) and 35% fewer short term injuries (lasting 1-2 days) on FieldTurf than on natural grass fields.

Besides the two major benefits of increased use and the reduction of serious injuries associated with the installation of a new artificial surface, there are several other benefits. For instance, the green, earth friendly aspects of the surface not only

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reuse old tires as the infill, but it minimizes water usage and eliminates the need for fertilizers and pesticides.

It will also reduce the number of man hours necessary to maintain a natural surface field, allowing the staff to focus their efforts on other needs throughout the District.

In addition, an artificial playing surface presents a uniform aesthetically pleasing surface that our communities can be proud of.

There is also the potential for the surface to generate income from outside organizations that would like to access the new facility.

One might question the need or the cost for the artificial turf. Artificial Turf is becoming increasingly popular throughout the state and country. At last count, there are close to 150 high schools in Illinois that have artificial turf. Industry leaders have cited exponential growth in the industry for several years with twice as many artificial surface fields installed last year as there were in 2005.

The cost of the earthwork and the surface material for the field is just under \$800,000. While this is a significant investment, it does greatly expand the usefulness of the area and reduces the annual maintenance cost associated with a natural grass field.

After conducting a review of the field maintenance at Maroa Forsyth, it was determined the District currently spends roughly \$40,000 annually to maintain the playing surface.

This number is compiled by looking at a number of things, including; water, fertilizer, seed, manpower and equipment cost. This figure is supported by numerous sources, including independent analyses by, FieldTurf, AstroTurf, Shive Hattery Architecture, and on a more local basis, DuQuoin and Collinsville High Schools.

With many fields in place for a period in excess of fifteen years, and when one takes into account the increased use of the area and the decreased maintenance cost, the initial installation cost are much more viable.

The following is a rendering of how the field will look.



The District has also noticed the playground at the grade school can seem crowded at times. As part of this phase of the facility plan a backstop is being installed to allow for the students playing kickball or softball to separate themselves from the individuals playing basketball or four-square on the paved area. While this ball field area will not always be available (students must stay on paved area when field conditions are less than ideal) it should help ease the overcrowding of the paved area. The District is also taking steps to improve the quality of the grass in this area. Additional playground equipment is scheduled to be installed next summer as well.

The original budget for this portion of the plan was \$30,000. With the current plan that is in place the District will spend just under \$23,000 for the playground improvements.

The District has received positive feedback on the message marquee at the grade school. As a result, the District would like to add a similar marquee to the high school facility as part of phase one of the facility plan. This would add to the aesthetics of the high school entryway, but would be used as a communication tool for the District. The original budget allotted was \$30,000. The bids we have received were a little higher than that at roughly \$38,000. However, with some of the other projects coming in under the budgeted amount, we would like to move forward with this project as well.

The final aspect of phase one was to make an attempt to address the retention pond to the west of the high school. This area has been an eye sore for quite some time. After discussing possible solutions with the engineer, it was determined the best way to address the problem was to add depth to the north end of the pond. This will allow for the installation of fountain/aerator that will assist in maintaining water quality. To further assist maintaining water quality, rock will be added along the edge of all sides of the pond. This work has already begun. It was recommended to begin this work as soon as possible to take advantage of the dry conditions the area has experienced. The original

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budget for this project was \$50,000. Currently the estimate is “not to exceed” \$37,000, not including the fountain. Preliminary estimates on the fountain are in the neighborhood of \$5000, bringing the total cost of the project to roughly \$42,000 or \$8,000 below the original budget.

The original proposed budget for all projects in phase one of the facility plan was \$1,840,000. The actual cost of all improvements is \$1,800,000.

Phase Two

The second phase of the facility plan involves an either/or scenario. The deciding factor will be determined by the changes in enrollment at the high school. In 2002, the current high school was designed for roughly four-hundred students. While that facility reached a high of 383 students in 2008-2009, our current enrollment is roughly 310 students. The facility is more than adequate to accommodate our current student population. However, over the next four years, the high school enrollment is expected to approach the building capacity of 400. This based on the current enrollment of the District’s 5th through 8th grade classes, thus dictating the 3-5 year time frame for this phase of the facility plan. Should the district experience growth in these classes, an addition to the high school will be necessary. During the design of the high school, future additions were taken into

consideration. The addition would consist of an eight classrooms as well as a set of restrooms to the north end of the facility. This addition would be a two-story extension of the current “classroom wing”. As the addition is designed currently, it will allow for an additional science lab, computer lab, resource room, and five “typical” classrooms. This design can be modified to meet the District’s needs at the time the addition would move forward.

If there is no growth in the high school enrollment, the plan calls for a new bus garage/unit office facility to be constructed. This would allow for the transportation department to be centrally located and the unit office the opportunity to expand. This would also allow the Board of Education a permanent location to conduct business. The largest benefit associated with project, would be the ability to store all of the District busses in a facility that would protect them from the elements and the occasional vandalism that does take place. The estimated cost of either project is roughly \$3,000,000.

Phase Three

Phase three is an eight classroom addition to the grade school. Similar, to the high school facility, during the initial design of the grade school facility, potential future additions were taken into account. The eight classrooms would be located in two separate areas of the structure. Four additional

classrooms would be located on each of the two, shorter wings of the facility that run east and west. For those of you that are familiar with the facility, we would simply be adding four classrooms to the current kindergarten and third grade wings. The hallways would continue to the east with 2 classrooms located on each side of the hallway. The additions would be identical in each wing. This addition would allow for an additional section of each grade level as well as two specialty rooms. The specialty rooms could take on a variety of forms; anything from additional computer labs or resource classrooms, to something more specific, such as space designated for science or art. The initial design provides the district with the flexibility to address current trends and needs in education that are prevalent during the time the addition would take place. Based on the current space available and enrollment trends over the past decade, this phase will not be required for 6-9 years. Based on projections, this phase would cost roughly \$4,000,000.

Phase Four

The final phase of the current facility plan is the replacement of the middle school. While our current 1928 facility has served us well for decades, it provides its share of challenges in attempting to keep up with the advances in today’s sophisticated and technologically advanced education setting. The District is currently trying to

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secure land for this project. The ideal location is adjacent to the current grade school facility on Shafer Road in Forsyth. This facility would accommodate close to 400 students in 6th through 8th grades. Based on projections, this facility will cost roughly \$18,000,000. If the District is successful in completing this phase of the facility plan, the District would have three facilities less than twenty years old, providing quality educational facilities for the students of Maroa and Forsyth for generations to come.

Funding

The funding for these projects will come from a variety of sources. The District's annual operating budget will be used to address some of the issues as funding allows.

The District has bond proceeds from a previous bond sale that will be used for some of the initial improvements. These bond proceeds are subject to arbitrage if the expenses for which they are to be used are not incurred in the near future. Arbitrage, in the simplest of terms, states that you can not make money of government supported bonds. Any interest that is made prior to the release of these funds must be turned over to the federal government. The District will be subject to arbitrage penalties in excess of \$50,000 if some of the bond proceeds are not expended.

The recently enacted County Wide Sales Tax will

provide close to \$500,000 annually for improvements. This \$500,000 in revenue is realized after thirty-three percent of all county sales tax revenue is applied to a property tax reduction to the residents of the District.

Lastly, final payment for the high school will be made in October of 2020. With a referendum, this revenue stream could be extended to address the District's facility needs, most notably the new middle school.

Summary

In 2006 the District approved a five-year facility plan that had a number of additions and improvements to the facilities of Maroa Forsyth. Some of the items we were able to complete include; middle school wall repairs, middle school electrical updates, improved football field lighting, new concession stand/restroom facility and most notably, a new elementary school. The only project that was on the original five-year facility plan adopted in 2006 that was not completed was the installation of an all weather track. The current facility plan the Board of Education approved in May of 2011, will address this shortcoming of the original five-year facility plan and provide the District a blueprint for facility improvements for years to come.

The current facility plan is well underway. As mentioned, the initial phase is near completion. The District was able to complete the necessary projects of the phase, as well as complete

several other improvements, while staying on schedule and below initial cost estimates.

As we move to the next stage of the approved facility plan, the actual costs for all projects listed is roughly \$40,000 less than what was originally budgeted. This will allow the District the opportunity to address any needs that arise during the completion of this phase.

This facility plan will allow the district to make several additions and improvements to our facilities that will increase the opportunities available to all students in Maroa Forsyth for years to come

It should also be noted the facility plan was developed in a way that, with the exception of the new middle school, all projects can be completed with existing funds or future revenues the District must use towards facility improvements.

If you have questions or would like additional information about the District's facility plan, please join us on October 11th at 6:00 in the high school cafeteria for the public forum.

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