


GALLATIN COUNTY

MEMO

To: Amsterdam/Churchill Residents
From: Warren Vaughan, Planning Department 
Date: October 19, 2007
Re: Community Meeting Regarding School Issues

Attached are the meeting notes from the September 27th Churchill/Amsterdam Neighborhood Planning meeting regarding *school* issues. Notes from the meeting are attached.

As stated at previous meetings, this is the third of four educational meeting as we prepare to start the formal planning process. We will have one more meeting on Thursday, October 25th at 7:30 pm at the Amsterdam Fire Department to discuss sewer and water issues. Also, the Amsterdam/Churchill Community Planning Kickoff will be held Thursday, November 15th.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at 582-3130 or email at Warren.Vaughan@gallatin.mt.gov.

Notes from the September 27th Amsterdam/Churchill Neighborhood Planning Meeting re: School Issues

Two schools in the area: Manhattan Christian (private) and Amsterdam (public)

Amsterdam School

- The Amsterdam School is located on a 2.9-acre site, excluding the baseball diamond.
- Water for the school is provided by a well, located just east of the school building. Sewer service is provided by the community system.
- The original school building (4,320 square feet) was constructed in 1962, and includes 4 classrooms, 2 bathrooms, storage, a music room, and the library. The newer portion of the building (5,500 square feet) was constructed in 1996 and includes 4 classrooms, a special education room, and the lunchroom.
- The School District recently passed a school bond for \$1.2 million. The bond will be used to construct 4 new classrooms. It is likely that two classrooms will initially be used for a multi-purpose room until classroom space is needed.
- *Staff:*
 - The school is currently staffed by 10 teachers and five administrative employees. School board members have stated that housing in Churchill is an issue for staff.
- *Students:*
 - These facilities house resources for a kindergarten through sixth grade student body. The School Charter allows kindergarten through eighth grades, though students in the seventh and eighth grades attend Manhattan Schools instead of Amsterdam School in order to participate in the sports programs. With the recent failure of school bonds in Manhattan, it is unclear how Amsterdam School will be affected.
- The School District's boundary includes 100 square miles.
- Like Manhattan Christian, Amsterdam School also has issues with traffic and pedestrian safety.
- The school currently has 5 bus routes. The school contracts with Manhattan Christian for busing service, and currently students for both schools ride Manhattan Christian buses.
- School enrollment has been varied over the past ten years, though the approval of the recent Amsterdam Village development could potentially double the number of students. The Amsterdam Village developer has offered to donate 8 acres of land to the school, as well as professional services in planning for and designing an expansion of school facilities. Additionally, the Amsterdam Village project will be required to donate an impact fee of \$1,000 per lot as the development built out.

- Enrollment has been varied over the past decade, though the 2006/2007 school year showed a 25% increase in students from the year before. Table 1 shows school enrollment over the past decade:

Table 1: Amsterdam School Enrollment
1997-2007

- 1997/1998: 82 students
- 1998/1999: 88 students
- 1999/2000: 79 students
- 2000/2001: 71 students
- 2001/2002: 79 students
- 2002/2003: 75 students
- 2003/2004: 73 students
- 2004/2005: 71 students
- 2005/2006: 78 students
- 2006/2007: 98 students

Manhattan Christian

- Grades K-12 attend, with a current enrollment of 316 students
- Because MC is a private school, there is control over attendance
- Because MC is private, the school buses students from all over the valley (currently have 4 bus routes, though the school plans on adding another route)
- Prior to accepting a new student, the school conducts a basic interview
- The school currently employs 40 total staff members in a 75,000 square-foot building
- The school has a vision of providing daycare/preschool, which is a need in the community. This will require construction of new space for the building
- One of the primary concerns of the school is traffic and pedestrian safety.
 - Churchill Road, as it runs through town, is a state road and serves a lot of through traffic.
 - Amsterdam Road is also seeing a significant increase in traffic as subdivisions are constructed. There are also potential traffic issues associated with the construction and expansion of gravel pits in the area.
 - An associated concern is the lack of sidewalks leading to the school and the potential hazard students face attempting to walk to the school.

Following are questions the planning process needs to examine regarding schools in the Churchill area:

- What can be done to improve pedestrian safety along roads leading to both schools?
- How will the failure of the Manhattan school bond affect Amsterdam School, and what can the Amsterdam School District do to deal with the potential influx of students that had previously attended Manhattan?
- What is being proposed as part of the Amsterdam School facilities plan, and how can the community (and potential new development) help?

Participants

Mark Martello
Don Carlson
Gene Bennett
George and Eleanor DenHartigh
Tim VanDam
Dean Sybesma
Charlie Pipal
Walt Sales
George Flikkema
Del VanDenBerg
Mary Jo Cole
Jay Hansen
Carol Weidenaar
Leroy Logterman
Tracy Dowton
Todd Kitto
Glen Flikkema