

### **Facilities Informational Bulletin-Support Needed**

Greetings Families,

We wanted to take the opportunity to bring you up to date on the ongoing facilities challenges PCS is facing, and ask for your support in our process of securing long term facilities.

PCS currently leases two district owned facilities (Pioneer and GHS), both on a year to year basis. Our search for a new Quincy facility began about a year ago when we were informed that we would not have long term access to the Pioneer campus because the district wants to reclaim the site for district offices. While it was noted in each annual lease agreement that we would have the opportunity to engage in discussions around a multiyear agreement for use of the space, this was never actualized because of the malfunctions of the Church Street administrative building, leading to the district staff needing a different location.

PCS currently has use of the Pioneer facility through June of 2018. For the 2017-2018 school year, our space use will change because the district is reclaiming two classrooms.

Our current Quincy program provides educational services to just shy of 200 students, 150 of which are regularly present at the center several days a week. Plumas Charter School students represent roughly 20% of the districts total enrollment.

We have identified one existing building large enough to house our existing programs, and we are in the process of trying to purchase the property. The facility is located approximately one half mile from the Pioneer location, at 424 North Mill Creek Road. PCS Quincy housed its programs at this site for five years prior to moving to the Pioneer site. At that time we occupied the building under a zoning waiver granted by the PUSD administration.

There are several challenges with the potential purchase of this facility, all of which we are trying to mitigate as we believe the site would be perfect for program. While the zoning waiver from the district was an

appropriate option for our school nine years ago, we do not believe at this point that it is a viable option. The primary reason is the waiver does not impart the autonomy and long term stability we are seeking, as a district granted waiver could be revoked at any time depending on the prerogative of the administration.

**Challenges:**

Zoning- The proposed facility is located in Light Industrial zoning, which according to current county zoning code, cannot allow for a school. Our Quincy program was housed in this building prior to our move to Pioneer, under a waiver provided by the school district.

- In order to address the zoning challenges, we applied for a General Plan Amendment with the Planning Department in early November. We asked for a rezone of the property to Commercial, which if granted, would allow use of the building as a learning center with an additional Special Use Permit.
- The Planning Department has not been supportive thus far of the GPA application. They have expressed several concerns that they need to see addressed before they can continue to process the application.
- Concerns noted thus far by the Planning Department center around noise, air quality and traffic.
- Noise: A Noise survey was completed and submitted to the Planning Department. The study indicates that noise levels for both locations are within county accepted levels, and that there is in fact some higher levels at the Pioneer location due to proximity to the SPI train.
- Traffic: Because there is minimal traffic use on this stretch of Mill Creek, the potential impacts of increased use are of concern to the Planning Department. A traffic study has been ordered to assess these impacts, and will begin soon.
- Air Quality: Feedback was received by Northern Sierra Air Quality that included concerns due to the proximity to the mill. As the Pioneer location is in the same proximity to the mill as the potential new site, and Pioneer is a state approved school site, we struggle with this concern, as the potential for exposure does not change or increase if we moved a half mile down the road. It is worth noting under this concern that the Air Quality around the Pioneer site is also impacted by significant traffic including logging trucks that run by this site daily in two directions. The new potential site does not have this exposure.

### **State Precedence on Zoning Compatibility**

- According to research to date, six other counties in California allow schools to locate in Light Industrial zones, either through the general plan itself, or through an approval or permitting process through the County Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission or the Planning Department. This information was shared at the Planning Commission meeting last week. There is a precedent for the zoning compatibility we are considering.

### **The Challenge from a Community Perspective**

- This issue is not solely a challenge for Plumas Charter School, but a challenge for the community. PCS is a community resource, and fills an important role.

Plumas Charter Schools Quincy learning center serves roughly 20-25% of the total student body in Quincy. Choice in education is an invaluable community resource, and as our enrollment indicates, our communities value this choice. A recent letter to the Board of Supervisors mentions the hope that our county supervisors appreciate that having school choice in our communities is a win-win for everyone. When people are considering Plumas County for their business or professional move one of the first things they research, along with real estate options, is school choice.

My purpose in sharing all of this with you today is to ask for your support as we continue our mission to find a permanent home for a viable alternative education program in Plumas County. We intend to continue to pursue the GPA with the Planning Department, and we understand also that the Planning Commission may consider a code change allowing schools in light industrial areas. I encourage each of you to lend Plumas Charter School your support through this process.

### **How You Can Help**

- Call the Planning Department at 283-7011 and ask to speak with Planning Director Randy Wilson and express your support of Plumas Charter School being allowed to locate their Quincy programs at 424 North Mill Creek Road. If you don't want to call, write them a letter.
- Attend upcoming meetings of the Planning Commission and express your support during public comment. Planning Commission meetings are scheduled the first and third Thursday of every month

at 10am in the conference room at the Planning Department Building. The next meeting is on 2/16/2017 and the potential for a change in zoning code is on the agenda.

- Attend upcoming meetings of the Board of Supervisors and express your support during public comment. Board of Supervisors meetings are held the second and the fourth Tuesday of every month at 11am in the Board of Supervisors meeting room at the courthouse. The next meeting is on 2/21/2017. We are hoping to get our challenges on the agenda at some point in the next month.
- Write letters to the editor for the local newspapers expressing your support.

If you would like any further information, please call the PCS administrative staff at 283-3851.

Thank you for your support,

Taletha Washburn