



LAKE TRAVIS ISD

Every heart. Every mind. Every day.

January 30, 2007

In recent weeks, Lake Travis ISD's search for land to accommodate its growing student population has garnered much interest. Generally speaking, given the nature of real estate negotiations, taxpayer interests are best met when related considerations are discussed in closed session of a public Board meeting as permitted by state law. Although the District has attempted to maintain the confidentiality of negotiations in order to protect its position with respect to current and future real estate dealings in general, in recent days many of the questions and comments that community members have posed to District officials and members of the LTISD Board of Trustees have indicated that the community is seeking more specific information about a particular potential land acquisition.

In summer 2006, Lake Travis ISD engaged the services of a real estate consultant to assist in identification of potential land sites for future development as approved by voters in the 2005 bond election. In addition to other land sites, the land tract owned by the Grumbles family - generally located between Highway 71 and Hamilton Pool Road - was presented to the Board of Trustees as a potential site that may satisfy the location and topographic needs of the District for the location of a future high school, middle school, central events center and transportation center.

Title records indicate that different members of the Grumbles family own various interests in the several tracts. Not every land owner owns an interest in each of the tracts. In the fall of 2006, the District asked a representative - not a Board member or employee - to visit with one of the land owners regarding the District's interest in the property. As a result of that conversation, the District believed that this land owner was interested in discussing the possibility of selling one of the tracts. Although determined unsuitable for LTISD, since that time the District has come to understand that the Grumbles are currently offering that tract of land for sale.

After continuing to discuss the availability of potentially suitable property for the District's needs, LTISD determined that due to the size, location and other features of the Grumbles' tracts it was in the best interest of the District - considering its growing student population and facilities needs - to seek to survey and assess the Grumbles' tracts for their suitability for future facilities. On December 27, 2006, in an attempt to ensure that each and every landowner was duly notified of the District's interest in discussing the purchase of the tracts and in surveying and testing the property, LTISD sent letters to each of the owners as they were named on title and tax records.

One of the family members contacted the District and indicated that he was not interested in selling. The land owner told LTISD that he would not allow the District to come onto his property to survey without a court order. Several days later, another member of the family contacted the District and indicated that other members of the family were not at that time opposed to considering the District's interest in purchasing the land.

Because one of the land owners who lives on the property had indicated that the District would not be able to have access to the land without a court order, the Board of Trustees determined that it was necessary to authorize the administration to seek judicial assistance to gain access to the property if necessary. The Board passed a resolution authorizing such on January 8,

2007. However, the District planned to continue to attempt to gain access to the land with the permission of the Grumbles.

In the last several days, the District has received correspondence from other Grumbles family members indicating that they are unwilling to allow the District access to the property. The District has yet to reach one of the family members to hear their perspective.

In considering the Grumbles' property, the District has not acted without recognizing that its eminent domain authority must be used only when necessary to best serve the interests of its students and the broader community. The District recognizes and respects the long-time ownership of the Grumbles family and their membership in the LTISD community. The District also recognizes the passionate opposition to development that some community members consistently assert. However, the District must keep in mind that it is, and will be in the future, competing for scarce land against for-profit commercial and residential developers. The District believes that this concern is very real, particularly given that the Grumbles appear to currently be selling a portion of their land.

The District must recognize and address the recent demographic projections that its student population is estimated to increase approximately 63% over the next ten years. LTISD must obtain property and build facilities to meet the needs of current and future students. While it continues to seek access to the Grumbles' land for the purpose of assessing its suitability for future facilities, the District continues to consider other land. Those who have been vocal in their opposition to the consideration of the Grumbles' property have asserted that the District should look elsewhere; the District does in fact continue to search for suitable, affordable land and has found it to be scarce.

At this time, the District's Board of Trustees has authorized only the survey and assessment of the Grumbles' property. It continues to be the District's desire to work collaboratively with landowners to find optimal solutions for all interested parties. Property would be condemned only if it were in the best interest of the District and the students it serves, and as stipulated in state law the property owners would receive fair market value for their land.

LTISD is committed to wisely utilizing the resources of its taxpayers while dealing fairly with landowners regarding compensation for District-acquired property. LTISD will continue to honor the commitment made to the community as a result of the voter-approved 2005 bond election and will continue to work in the best short- and long-term interests of the District and the students it serves.