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FASNY Open House Attracts Visitors, Traffic Plan Proposed

Pat Casey | Jun 12, 2012 | Comments 0



The French American School of New York opened its doors to White Plains residents on Saturday.

The French American School of New York (FASNY) opened its doors to White Plains residents Saturday afternoon, June 9. FASNY staff and representatives from the architectural, engineering, traffic consultant, law and public relations firms hired to move the proposed campus development along, were on hand to answer questions and conduct tours of the proposed campus development and 60-acre nature conservancy.

The flow of people was fairly steady, according to FASNY representatives manning the door, who said they felt confident the project would be moving forward. In a large reception area with windows looking onto the former golf course, boards with architectural renderings, site plans, environmental impact statements, storm water management plans, and a traffic analysis and management plan were on display. Visitors seemed to represent a fairly even mix of those in favor and those opposed to the development of the campus. Many visitors were from outside the immediate neighborhood and expressed their support of FASNY as an educational institution. Others, who were from the immediate neighborhood were concerned about the impact of traffic on local streets.

Anthony Russo, a traffic consultant hired by FASNY, explained that the proposed plan for dropping off and retrieving children from the campus each day had a staggered schedule among the nursery and pre-Kindergarten, lower school (grades 1 to 5), middle school (grades 6 to 8), and high school (grades 9 to 12). In all, 33 buses would make two trips each day. Parking would accommodate 428 spaces, with 40 reserved for high school students. The campus would support a total of 1,190 students across the different grade levels.

Russo further explained that FASNY is proposing a left turn lane with a new traffic light on Ridgeway at the entrance to the school. Another new traffic light would be introduced at Hathaway Lane and Ridgeway. In order to accommodate new turning lanes, Ridgeway would be widened by cutting into FASNY property. Cars and buses entering the campus would follow a one-way road that loops through the FASNY property, keeping all school traffic, including buses as they load and unload, off of public roadways.

Russo said he has been collaborating with White Plains Traffic Commissioner, Tom Soyk, who recommended adaptive traffic light technology to conserve energy. White Plains has installed a new adaptive light at the Route 119 intersection and will review its operation. If the city approves the upgrade, FASNY may pay for four additional new traffic lights where Ridgeway connects with Mamaroneck Avenue, at Old Mamaroneck Road, North Street and the Hutchinson River Parkway.

A White Plains resident, currently living on Hathaway Lane, expressed concern that cars on the school property, while being encouraged to follow the proposed traffic plan, might opt to turn left onto Hathaway Lane, rather than keeping right to circle back out at Ridgeway. "How can you ensure that people will not try to cut through the neighborhood, that there will be no left turns at Hathaway?" he asked. Russo explained that all FASNY cars entering the school property would be monitored and that people would be stationed at key points to ensure traffic flow remained on the school property.

While elements of Saturday's presentations showed that major strides had been made toward preparing a neat preliminary draft DEIS, a special meeting of the Common Council on Monday night, June 11, has an agenda item, that if approved by the Council, will send the Revision No. 1 Preliminary DEIS submitted by FASNY on May 9, 2012, back to tackle deficiencies where it does not address or fully addresses issues raised by the scoping document prepared by the Common Council in 2011. These deficiencies would need to be addressed before the preliminary draft DEIS is posted on the city's website and submitted for public review.

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