

Principals Wary of Effects of Class Size Rule

Schools, From Page 1

The fast growth in the area and the Class Size Amendment are major factors to the overcrowding in elementary schools, Palmetto Elementary School Principal Eddie Hundley said.

"I would like to have more room, but I understand the reasons behind the growth," Hundley said.

The growth in the area has some questioning where the children will go. Gene Witt Elementary Principal Myra Russell said the new developments in her district will most likely cause an overcrowding issue.

"Greyhawk is building another 501 homes that are in our district," Russell said. "There needs to be a lot of rezoning."

State legislation will also be causing some headaches for educators.

The Class Size Amendment, which was passed in 2002, sets requirements of class size determined by grade level that must be met by the 2010-2011 school year. According to the legislation, Pre-K through third grade will have 18 students per class, fourth through eighth will have 22 students per class and ninth through twelfth will have 25 students per class.

"Next year we are really kind of worried," Russell said.

Witt currently has 843 students, though the school was built to hold 829. The most students the school has ever had was in 2001-2002 school year when they had 900 students. Though they are down from that number, Russell says they are climbing back up.

"We are using every nook and cranny," Russell said. "If we could stay where we are, we could manage."

There are several other East County elementary schools that are crowded. Russell said Mills in Parrish and Ellenton has more than 900 students and McNeal is still hurting for space.

"They are busting," Russell said.

Palmetto Elementary School had 815 students enrolled as of Oct. 3. In order to meet the class size requirement, the school could only accommodate 705 students. But because of the growth in population north of the river, the school will have to find another way to house the students.

Hundley said he believes the school is not one that is receiving the additional classrooms but is on track for

either a new school or a renovation. All the classrooms of the older building are being used as well as four portables.

Dan Lundeen, supervisor of student demographics, projections and assignments, said it is difficult to classify overcrowding.

"Its not a real simple thing to answer," Lundeen said.

Lundeen said there are several factors including the size of the permanent facilities, the number of portable facilities, the size of classes and the size of the staff. He said in terms of permanent facilities, the districts elementary schools are over crowded.

Not all East County elementary schools are currently experiencing overcrowding. Principal Gary Holbrook, of Freedom Elementary School, said there is one classroom that is currently not being used, but most likely not for long.

"We're probably in the best shape of all of them," Holbrook said.

Though the fairly new school has not gone over its class size requirements yet, the numbers are growing by the day. Holbrook said on Oct. 3 and 4 there were nine students added to the school roster.

"Its tougher (with the area's growth) but we've been able to keep up," Holbrook said. "The strength of our school is our teachers."

Elementary School	Current # of Students	After Class Size Reductions
Palmetto	815	705
Braden River	593	637
Witt	848	751
Freedom	636	766
Duette	9	0
Myakka	466	375
Tara	834	737
McNeal	740	766

Subdivisions, From Page 1

subdivision option was not in the community's best interest.

"With the tremendous growth in the area, someone could come in and purchase a 1,000 acres showing streets and get approval," Stein said.

"We are putting in place a review that is consistent with the current practice," Stein said that developers still would be able to develop rural subdivisions, but it will be done on a responsible level. When it comes to refusing a public workshop Stein said that they had three public hearings and that she doesn't think work shopping it would fix an inferior ordinance.

"We invited the community to bring forward another option in writing," she said. "If someone has a concrete option or a workable solution we are glad to take a look at it."

The elimination will be official Dec. 1. Since the proposal to eliminate the option was presented in June, six developers filed proposals for rural subdivisions. If completed before Dec. 1, the developers will avoid going through the entire planning process.

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Alvarez's) felt they were able to be back and make as normal of an existence in and un-normal environment they can."

Though the family has left, the effort to help is continuing. Mungillo said the school is continuing their fundraising with a lot of enthusiasm from the students. "The kids are still coming up with ideas," Mungillo said. "We're going to continue to raise money."

The school will partner up with the Alvarez girls' elementary school and provide them with the funds raised.

"It seems like money keeps coming in," Mungillo said. "People continue to be impacted by these events. Its not something you can just turn on and off."

In addition to the continued fundraising efforts, such as an upcoming car wash, the school plans to do other

NewsWorthy

J.P. Igloo Forced to Sell

Marvin Kaplan and **Sen. Mike Bennett**, the owners of MJ Squared, were the only bidders and won the foreclosure sale of J.P. Igloo on Sept. 22 at 11 a.m. in the Manatee County Courthouse.

MJ Squared attorney **Adam Mohammbhoy** offered \$5,000 for the facility and didn't face any opposition. Neither **Greg Richard** nor **Frank Scarpaci** showed up in the Manatee County Courthouse. They both owned 25 percent each, sharing it with **Peggy Husmann**. MJ Squared bought the note from Regions Bank and J.P. Igloo had the option of paying them off.

After a long fight in court and several attempts from Scarpaci and Richard to save the facility by filing for federal bankruptcy protection, the sale is now final. They were hoping for an investor to save the facility and kept asking for more time. Judge **Alexander Paskay** put an end to the delay and decided to put the facility up for foreclosure. Husmann's former husband **James Perez** attempted to buy some more time by filing for personal bankruptcy during the foreclosure sale, but Judge **Marc Gilner** decided to go on as planned.

The future of the ice-facility will be declared in a few weeks when MJ Squared has decided on whether to keep the facility open.

Parrish Community Foundation in Fundraising Process

The Parrish Community Foundation Board of Directors met on Sep. 10 to elect new board members. **Leslie Wells** of Leslie Wells Realty, **Craig Marquart**, former postmaster, **Angela Jackson** with Verizon, **Leslie Pelley**, CFO of Poynter Institute, Parrish residents **Sandy Coulter** and **Tiffney Mosley** were all chosen. The PFC was created to enhance communication, culture, conservation and the community.

The board will host a fundraiser, "The Turkey Festival" in corporation with Mill's Elementary on Nov. 19 at the school. The money will go towards the project of building a new community center and a botanical garden. Wells will also donate \$100 for every house sold by Leslie Wells Realty. In addition, Neal Communities donated a check for \$1,000 to the Parrish Community Foundation becoming a bronze member.

IMAX Theatre Battles Continue

The legal battles over the development of the 210-seat IMAX theater in Lakewood Ranch continue. Recently San Marco LLP filed a suit against Schroeder-Manatee Ranch, Inc. on charges that SMR had not intention to fulfill the contract to purchase seven acres between Natures Way and Town Center Parkway.

SMR argues that San Marco has failed to secure this location and filed a lawsuit against them because San Marco failed to provide an IMAX theater in accordance with an earlier agreement.

San Marco accuses SMR of never intending to fulfill its part of the agreement.

The San Marco Plaza, a \$17 million retail project, was to include 80,000 square feet of retail, restaurant and office space on the northwest corner of Town Center Parkway and Nature's Way.

The first phase of the project has begun and is slated to open this spring with tenants such as a coffee shop, wine bar and home decor store. The second phase was planned for the area west of the first phase with the IMAX theater as the anchor of the complex.

projects. They plan to establish a pen-pal letter writing program to provide "social and emotional support from kids who have experienced hurricanes to those who have just gone through one," Mungillo said.

You too can help the Gulf Coast victims of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. To donate to "Bucks for Biloxi," send monetary donations to Braden River Elementary School at 6125 River Club Boulevard, Bradenton, Florida, 34202.

To donate to the American Red Cross, contact the Manatee County Chapter at 792-8686 or the national hotline 1-800-HELP-NOW.

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