Mooresville/Decatur THE TIMES

Decatur Discovery Academy receives final approval from Indianapolis City Council

By Linda Karn

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DECATUR TOWNSHIP — The Decatur Township School Board was informed Jan. 11 during its regular meeting that it has received final approval for charter school Decatur Discovery Academy.

The Indianapolis City County Council voted 28-1 giving the school system approval to proceed.

A city-county council vote was required because the Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson oversees charter school operations in Marion County.

Decatur Discovery Academy, a public school, will offer a new innovative way of learning that is free from government regulations. This innovative way of learning is called Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound.

The academy will welcome students beyond the county and state boundaries to attend this charter school according to Troy Guthrie, public relations officer for the schools.

The charter school is expected to educate 100 students from ninth to 10th grade in fall of 2005 and will eventually expand to accepting 200 students including grades 11 and 12. The public school will be separate from the Decatur Township Public School but yet they can seek to partner in certain learning resources.

The plan includes a budget of $6,500 per student. The charter school will seek grant money as it forecasts a 2005-2006 school year budget of $890,000.

The 15,000-square-foot school will occupy a site at Ameriplex, located at 5125 Decatur Blvd.

This facility is adjacent to the Challenger Learning Center and Ivy Tech. Its proximity is crucial because the academy will be partnering with these institutions.

“The charter school is like opening a new school that will require hiring teachers and staff,” Guthrie said.

The number of teachers and staff needed to operate the facility has not been determined.

However, a seven-member school board has been selected. The members are as follows: Jane Barnes, Bruce Borud, Cheri Corsaro, Don Huffman, Anthony Scott, Larry Taylor, and Chris Wilkes.

In other business:

n Andy McNeilly, AIA and Associate of and Project Manager of SchenkelShulz Architecture, presented a conceptual plan to build a $4.5 million transportation facility located on an estimated 14 acres at Decatur Boulevard, which turns into Kollman Road. The budget guidelines requested the plan not to exceed $4.5 million. McNeilly said he expects to seek board approval next month to begin the design phase.

The initial phase is to build a parking lot for 60-plus buses. The long-term goal is to provide parking for 125 to 150 buses. The building of the maintenance operations will be the second phase. No time lines were given for project completion.

Guthrie explained it was imperative to move the transportation center away from it current location near the high school campus because of the high volume of traffic entering the area.

n The estimated $25 million Intermediate Learning Center's dedication is scheduled for Sept. 11. The dedication ceremonies for the estimated $9 million renovation to Stephen Decatur Elementary is scheduled for 2 p.m. March 19.

Board President Herb Bazemore presented Superintendent Don Stinson with an autographed picture from President George Bush in honor of Stinson being named Superintendent of the Year by the Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents.

n Decatur Central High School Band Director Timothy Cox updated the board about the band participating in the 3-1/2 mile Fiesta Bowl Parade in Phoenix, Ariz., during winter break. Cox said the band missed the finals in the field show competition by 1.2 points.

Stinson praised Cox for his dedication " to do the extra things for our children."

n Stinson said that a trustee needs to be selected to complete the Education Foundation and Decatur Central High School Alumni Association. Creating a alumni association is a means of raising monies to offset tighter budgets. Stinson contends studies show that people are more willing to give to their high school than their colleges.

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