

WHITEHAVEN

Community Development Corporation

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August 25, 2020

Ms. Miska Clay-Bibbs, Chair
Shelby County Board of Education
c/o The Board Office
160 South Hollywood Street
Memphis, TN 38112-4801

RE: Addressing the Board During the August 25, 2020, Virtual Business Meeting

Name: Dr. Yvonne D. Nelson
Home Address: 3519 McCorkle Road, Memphis, TN 38116-3923
Organization: McCorkle Road Neighborhood Development Association, Inc. of Memphis dba
Whitehaven Community Development Corporation
Subject: The May 17, 2019 bid awarded to Memphis Wrecking Company to demolish Graves ES

Dear Ms. Clay-Bibbs,

As spokesperson for the MRNDA dba the Whitehaven CDC, I am speaking to you from the perspective of the areas concerned citizens, who collectively wishes to address the SCS Board regarding your blighted property, formerly known as Graves Elementary School, 3398 Graves Road, which is being requested for immediate demolition.

Records from the Memphis Flyer reveal that on Tuesday, February 25, 2014, amongst a “standing-room-only crowd,” when Dorsey Hopson was SCS superintendent, journalist Bianca Phillips wrote that “nine of the 13 schools on your original list of proposed school closures,” including Graves Elementary School would “be closed effective the end of that year.” Advocating for the western part of the community, District 6 Board Member Shante K. Avant “pushed the board to allow Westhaven students to stay in their current building for a year,” but said nothing in defense of or for our students at Graves. The article concluded with Hopson stating he, “didn’t yet have any plans for the nine school buildings that would be vacated.”

Fast-forward to March 2015 when one (\$1) dollar timely submitted bids were made on Graves and three other schools. SCSs would eventually deny all four of these bids. As a matter-of-fact, in yet another “standing-room-only-crowd” I personally was not even given a full minute and a half to speak on plans for re-purposing Graves ES into a Person-Centered Planned Community Center for the neighborhood.

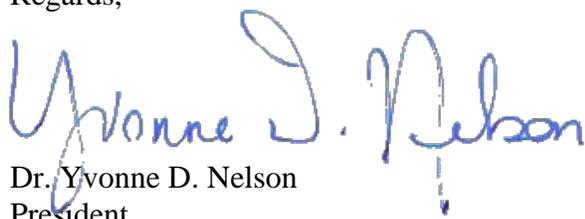
Unbeknownst to me until recently, another set of bids were accepted for the “demolition of multiple locations,” which included Graves Elementary School. This measure was undertaken by Shelby County Schools on or around May 17, 2019. Asbestos survey reports, which are required

by the Shelby County Health Department Pollution Control Section, were ordered for Raineshaven and Graves ES. The reports were completed on May 16, 2019, and May 20, 2019, respectively, and the request to demolish the multiple locations, dated June 2019, reveals that Raineshaven and Graves Elementary Schools were awarded to the Memphis Wrecking Company for demolition at the cost of \$299,200.00 and \$294,500.00, respectively. Among other things, the undated bid sheet listed both #05172019 Graves ES Demolition and ##05172019 Raineshaven ES Demolition for demolition in June 2019.

It is for these reasons that the Whitehaven community comes before the Shelby County Schools Board of Education on this 25th day of August, 2020, to insist this building be immediately demolished, at your cost, and removed from being the eyesore of our community. It is our position that the Board of Education could have accomplished this demolition long before now, whether there was interest in the building or not. You have allowed this building to deteriorate to a point of no return. You barely maintain the lawn and you illegally removed playground equipment that the community, not the Memphis or Shelby County Schools purchased. As a matter-of-fact, neither entity contributed any funds towards the purchase which was majority funded by the McCorkle Road Neighborhood Development Association, Inc. of Memphis. This was done without any knowledge of or respect for and to our community when our purpose for installing said equipment was not only to enhance the school grounds, but to also give the children and families in the community a park-like setting that could be utilized year-round.

In closing, the McCorkle Road Neighborhood Development Association, Inc. of Memphis, doing business as the Whitehaven Community Development Corporation is requesting to be reimbursed a minimum of five thousand, four hundred dollars (\$5,400.00) for the remaining life value of said playground equipment which cost three time as much to purchase and install. These requests for immediate demolition and reimbursement for illegally removed and un-returned playground equipment are hereby being made as of this 25th day of August, 2020, at 5:30 PM CST.

Regards,



Dr. Yvonne D. Nelson
President

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