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8th District Focus Group
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October 7, 2019

Members of City Council
City of Richmond
900 E. Broad Street #201
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Council Members,

During a recent 8th District Focus Group meeting, the topic of our schools came up for discussion. We discussed our current schools, our future schools and those that have been closed, neglected and abandoned. As you know, Oak Grove Elementary School (Ingram Avenue) has been closed and shuttered for years. This abandoned building is currently costing the taxpayers annually which I am sure you agree is unfortunate.

This is fiscally negligent of taxpayer funds. As we are quickly approaching the 8th year of Oak Grove being closed, we would like to ask for your assistance in creating an adaptive reuse plan to help end this community eyesore.

The constituents of Oak Grove reached out to WTVR CBS 6 Problem Solvers, May of 2017 to voice their concerns about this property. There are rumors of just simply renovating this elementary school. There is nothing just simple about renovating a 70-year-old school for students in 2019. It is like painting a rotted fence. We should be investing in new structures that create state-of-the-art learning environments for our children to compete globally.

Some of the major concerns with opening Oak Grove back up as a school are the cost of trying to renovate a building that has antiquated infrastructure, asbestos, mold, lead paint and pipes, standing water in the boiler room, the infestation of mosquitoes, mosquito larvae, and rodents. This type of exposure affects early childhood development, such as lungs, throat, and create other cancer-causing abnormalities. This property is a health hazard to our children.

We are asking for immediate plans to pursue the formula under adaptive reuse, an economical and feasible methodology to transform this property into a more useful element of the community at large. We have surveyed the residents to determine what they believe is best for the Oak Grove community and the city at large. Thus far we

have heard: community center, health center and or a park. We certainly respect the views of those directly impacted in the Oak Grove community and welcome their input.

Should you have any questions or would like to schedule a date to discuss this further, we certainly welcome the opportunity.

We thank you for your time and attention.

Respectfully,

Regie Ford
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