

One high school plan outlined

By Greg Kowalski
Eccentric Staff Writer

The new Bloomfield Hills High School is taking shape — at least on paper.

And it's drawing some unexpected support.

George Derderian, who helped found the Bloomfield 20/20 citizens' group nine years ago to oppose the one-high school plan, came out solidly in support of it at the special school board meeting Tuesday night.

"Times have changed," Derderian said.

"The reality is we have to bury the hatchet, stop the bickering, stop the stupid recall of the board... (having) two schools really isn't logical any more. We can't afford it."

Derderian spoke at the public comment section at the end of the meeting. For nearly two hours prior to that representatives of the Fielding Nair International consulting firm presented "an 85 percent schematic" proposal for the new high school, and the board took comments and questions from the audience.

It's "85 percent" because the plan doesn't include the actual specs and the possibility of a couple of options that could be added to the building.

"We concluded we should do a hybrid option," said Randy Fielding, of the firm.

PLAN

Continued from page A1

That hybrid includes retaining a portion of the existing Andover High School, but rebuilding new sections around the older but salvageable areas.

The new design is set to accommodate about 1,650 students and would combine the student populations of Andover and Lahser high schools on the Andover site.

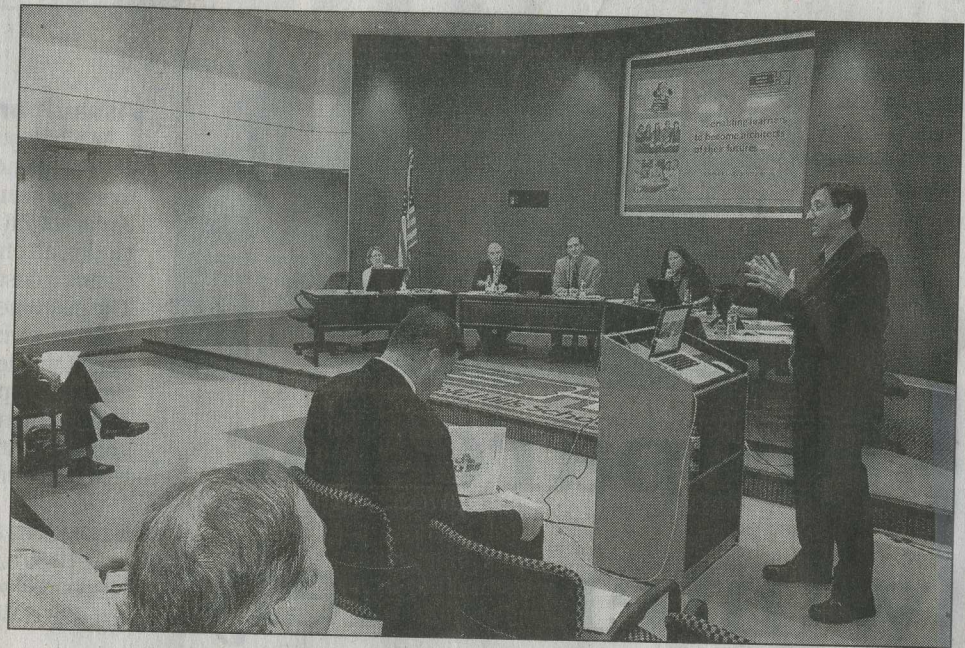
The new building will feature a variety of innovative designs starting at the entrance way where students' works would be placed on display in a showcase window.

"It will have a much more welcoming and inviting entrance," said Isaac Williams, of Fielding Nair. Inside, the existing cramped hallway will be replaced by a commons area forming a new "heart" to the building.

That will be next to the auditorium entrance, cafe and administration offices.

"It's an important space for bringing all together," Williams said.

Learning areas will be flexible so teachers and students can interact and make the best use of their time and the resources.



Randy Fielding outlines the new high school plan at the special school board meeting Tuesday.

"The plan tries to preserve the idea of a small school," Williams said.

Cost of the project is about \$65 million. For an additional \$7.1 million, more upgrades could be made to the athletic facilities, including a 12-lane pool. And for an additional \$8.6 million, all classrooms could be renovated to become "learning communities." This involves renovating and reorganizing the classrooms on the building's third floor.

All of this is contingent

on the millage vote the district will seek, probably in November 2012. If the millage passes, construction could begin in the spring of 2013 and the school could open in 2015. During construction, students would be housed at Lahser and likely another building to be determined.

If the millage fails, the plan will be scrapped and Andover would likely be upgraded to some degree to accommodate the students now attending Lahser. That so-called "Plan B"

will be fleshed out in the coming months.

A wildcard in all of this is the ongoing attempt to recall the entire school board. It's not clear what would happen to the plan if the board members are recalled.

"This is a multifaceted issue for the school district," said board President Ingrid Day, speaking about the high school plan. "It has caused some divide. What we're hoping for is to find a way to unify."