

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mayor, Commissioners and members of the audience. My Name is Nancy Marcus and I am a citizen and taxpayer in the first district of Loudon County. I am standing at the podium because the item that I want to address is the school building program, and I want to address it as a citizen and taxpayer, not as a Commissioner. There are two reasons why I want to speak about this item. The first reason is that I feel that I am very qualified to do so. I have lived in Loudon County all of my life. I attended Loudon County schools and I have three children who also attended Loudon County Schools. I have three degrees in the area of education and I have either taught school or been an administrator in this system for thirty seven years. I am very knowledgeable about the schools in Loudon County and the condition of each facility.

The second reason that I want to talk about the building program is that I am confused. Honestly, I'll just confess, that I am confused. For the last four or five years we have been bombarded, over and over, with negative information about Greenback School. There have been many articles in the *News Herald*, the *Knoxville News Sentinel*, coverage by TV stations, and comments made at public meetings. All of this information has made it sound as if this school is in such horrible, irreparable condition, it could be in some third-world country; and it has made it sound as if it is Loudon County's fault. Not only does this confuse me, it bothers me greatly. I feel that all of this negative, biased and very incomplete information about Greenback has been a grave injustice to the school system (only before the 2004 election) and the past and current Commissions. As I stated earlier, I am familiar with all of the schools and the condition of the buildings, and I feel that Greenback has been treated as fairly as all of the other schools in Loudon County. However, I am concerned about the many people in our county and surrounding area who have no idea about the condition of any of Loudon County's schools; and when they read and hear these reports, they believe they are all true. I have received several scathing emails and letters from "concerned parents" and "concerned citizens" and "concerned students" and "concerned others" regarding this information. Because of this, it is obvious to me that I am not the only person confused by the barrage of misleading and incomplete information that has been published and reported regarding Greenback School.

In order to explain my confusion, I would like to share with you some information that I have collected and compiled over the last two or three years.

SUMMARY: As a taxpayer and educator, I want to support education; however, I also want to know that my money is spent as wisely as possible. I agree with the decision made to correct the dire needs at Loudon Elementary, Fort Loudon Middle and Philadelphia. However, I would make the following suggestion regarding the needs at other schools in the county: if \$30,000,000.00 is proposed for Greenback; take this amount, add a few million to it and divide it three ways to address the needs at Greenback, Eaton, North Middle, Highland Park and Loudon High School.

- a. Continue to renovate the current GB facility for grades 7-12
- b. Build a new PK-6 facility on the purchased property at Greenback
- c. Build a new 6-8 facility for EE, NM and HP
- d. Renovate LHS and add a freshman academy

It makes more sense to me to spend \$30 to \$40 million to address the needs of approximately 3,500 students, over a period of two or three years, than it does to spend \$30 million for 750 students at one school; especially when the needs are greater at some of the other schools.