



RESOLUTION NO. 2024-03

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF NEPTUNE BEACH, FLORIDA, OPPOSING ANY PLANS BY THE DUVAL COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT TO CLOSE ATLANTIC BEACH ELEMENTARY OR OTHER SCHOOLS AT THE BEACHES AND TO CONSOLIDATE ANY SUCH SCHOOLS WITH NEPTUNE BEACH ELEMENTARY.

WHEREAS, as the smallest municipality at the beach, both by population and geography, Neptune Beach already experiences significant burdens as a result of having two public schools within our two square miles; and

WHEREAS, in 2022-2023, the enrollment of Neptune Beach Elementary was 782 students and the enrollment of Atlantic Beach Elementary was 479 students; and

WHEREAS, if the schools were merged, this will result in a sixty-one percent (61%) increase in the enrollment at Neptune Beach Elementary, with a total student body of approximately 1,261 students.

WHEREAS, this alone would place Neptune Beach Elementary above the 1,200-student maximum figure that the Duval County School Board's consultants state is appropriate for a school to be considered effective; and

WHEREAS, we believe it inappropriate that a school be immediately overcrowded and ineffective as a result of a plan intended to save money; and

WHEREAS, Neptune Beach is composed mostly of year-round residents who live, work, eat, and play in our City; and

WHEREAS, the addition of nearly 500 students, and the accompanying traffic, will be crippling to the entirely residential neighborhood where the school is located; and

WHEREAS, without any further changes to Neptune Beach Elementary, Florida Boulevard is already experiencing significant overburden from traffic; and

WHEREAS, the five-way stop with Florida Boulevard, Penman Road, and Forest Avenue is well-known to be a failing intersection, with the City of Jacksonville investigating options to alleviate the already-present problems; and

WHEREAS, recent studies indicate that traffic on Florida Boulevard has nearly doubled in the last ten years, even without adding 500 students; and

WHEREAS, adding such significant additional traffic will overburden the existing streets and intersections and further strain the City's police, public works, and other resources; and

WHEREAS, the impacts will not be felt only in Neptune Beach; and

WHEREAS, aside from Atlantic Beach losing an institution, it will likewise suffer from significant traffic increases as a result; and

WHEREAS, Atlantic Boulevard, an already extremely busy and dangerous corridor, will also be forced to absorb hundreds of additional vehicles transporting students to Neptune Beach Elementary

WHEREAS, even broader, the Beaches community as a whole will suffer as a result of these consolidation plans; and

WHEREAS, while separate municipalities, the Beaches share a common sense of community; and

WHEREAS, to eliminate half of the elementary schools at the Beaches, with only three schools serving the over 45,000 Beaches residents, would alter traffic flows throughout the island, causing new hardships to tens of thousands of people; and

WHEREAS, this plan also ignores economic factors—Neptune Beach pays significantly more per capita in ad valorem real estate taxes to the School Board than areas around the county that will not be impacted by this plan;

WHEREAS, Neptune Beach has the highest median property value in the county, at \$745,000.00, compared to a median value of \$299,000.00 countywide; and

WHEREAS, Neptune Beach, and the Beaches as a whole, consistently pay a significantly larger amount of the total School Board and county budget than their per capita share; and

WHEREAS, to make decisions negatively impacting tens of thousands of Beaches residents on the basis of lack of funding ignores that the Beaches carry more than their fair share of such burden

WHEREAS, these examples are just that, examples; and

WHEREAS, the quality of life of the residents of Neptune Beach, and of the Beaches as a whole, will be significantly harmed if this plan were to move forward;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEPTUNE BEACH, FLORIDA, THAT:

SECTION 1. Adoption of Recitals. The foregoing recitals are deemed true and material parts of this resolution and are fully incorporated herein by reference.

SECTION 2. Opposition to Plan. The City of Neptune Beach vehemently opposes any plan to consolidate or close schools at the Beaches or to otherwise expand the enrollment of Neptune Beach Elementary.

SECTION 3. Repeal of Prior Inconsistent Resolutions and Council Decisions. All prior resolutions or parts of resolutions in conflict herewith are hereby repealed to the extent of the conflict.

SECTION 4. Severability. If any section, sentence, clause, or phrase of this resolution should be held invalid, unlawful, or unconstitutional, said determination shall not be held to invalidate or impair the validity, force, or effect of any other section, sentence, phrase, or portion of this resolution not otherwise determined to be invalid, unlawful, or unconstitutional.

SECTION 5. Effective Date. This resolution shall become effective immediately upon passage and adoption by City Council.

ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Neptune Beach, Florida, on this 15th day of April, 2024.


Elaine E. Brown, Mayor

ATTEST:


Catherine Ponson, City Clerk

