



ROBERT G. CASSILLY

Harford County Executive

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Cassilly Administration Plans to Purchase Land of Abandoned Eva Mar Development for New Public School in Bel Air, Saving Harford Taxpayers \$50M

BEL AIR, Md., (Feb. 27, 2024) - County Executive Bob Cassilly's administration is planning to purchase land for a new public school at the site of an abandoned development project in Bel Air. The school will be built as a combination elementary school and the new home of Harford Academy, which serves students with severe disabilities.

The 45-acre site on N. Fountain Green Road near MD 543 is privately owned by Presbyterian Home of Maryland and was to become Carsins Run at Eva Mar, a continuing care retirement community. Presbyterian Home halted the project two years ago, leaving the shell of a multi-story apartment building that will be razed to make way for the new school.

Harford County plans to pay the land's appraised value, \$6.3M. The purchase must be approved by the Board of Estimates.

Harford County Public Schools had been searching for a new location for the Harford Academy and a new elementary school site to relieve overcrowding in Bel Air.

County-owned property on Schucks Road was originally planned for the combination school, but the site is not on public water and sewer and would not qualify for the state to share in the cost of school construction, meaning that the entire cost of the project would have been borne by Harford County taxpayers alone.

By contrast, the Eva Mar site is in the county's priority funding area and served by public water & sewer. As such it qualifies to receive state funding, which in this case is estimated at up to \$50M.

"We are thrilled that this project will be moving forward," Dr. Aaron Poynton, president of the Harford County Board of Education, said. "The property is centrally located to help relieve crowding in nearby schools, it's on public utilities, and it's closer to the hospital for our students with critical needs."

Soon after coming into office, the Cassilly administration began working with Harford County Public Schools to find a better location than the Schucks Road property for the combination school that would serve students, including those who are medically fragile, and would qualify the project for state funding.

"This is a win-win for our school families and Harford taxpayers," County Executive Cassilly said. "We're repurposing developable land for the public's benefit and capturing state funding that was unavailable for the Schucks Road site, saving our taxpayers as much as \$50M. I would like to thank my staff and thank HCPS and Superintendent Sean Bulson for working with us toward a fiscally responsible solution that will provide our students and school communities with the space and the modern facility they need."

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