

Flow of information is a point of contention For Brownsboro residents, school plan seems surrounded by secrecy; school officials say, 'just ask'

By Tony Cotten
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"Half-truths and lies" are two accusations that stand out from Tuesday's fiscal court meeting. In a modest and unassuming manner, members of fiscal court moved through their agenda to the spot on the list for public comment.

Soon after Judge-Executive David Voegele nodded to the residents who raised their hands and politely waited for a turn at the podium, the pace of the meeting picked up.

Brownsboro resident Gary Keibler stepped to the mic and began to discuss plans for a new Brownsboro school project that has been announced by the Oldham County Schools.

Keibler presented documents to the magistrates showing the proposed campus, sewer connections and traffic analysis. He said he obtained the documents via an open records request to Oldham County Schools. With his disappointment evident, Keibler described his frustration with members of the Oldham County Board of Education – an entity he feels has been less than forthcoming on plans for the multi-million dollar project.

Two more Brownsboro residents echoed Keibler's complaints that board officials appear to withhold information and show a lack of concern for community input and opinion regarding the project and long-term plans for the Brownsboro.

However, Brownsboro residents aren't the only ones who expressed frustration at the meeting.

Oldham County Schools Assistant Director of Facilities Management Stuart Strickler stepped forward near the end of the public comments time to say he was upset by the "half-truths and lies" being spread by the residents at the meeting.

"The Oldham County School Board has and will work with local government," Strickler said. He continued to say that the school system had complied with every request made by government and that they will continue to do so even though they only have to meet requirements set forth by the state board of education.

"I think it's time somebody says the truth," Strickler concluded.

At the end of Strickler's comments, Magistrate Michael Logsdon and JD Sparks questioned Strickler about the validity of the residents' claims.

"Have we been provided these documents?" Logsdon asked, referring to the documents presented by the Brownsboro residents.

"You can always call," Strickler replied.

"Well, I haven't seen them, that's why I asked," Logsdon replied.

Sparks took a stronger position asking if Strickler meant to label the speakers as liars. Strickler reiterated that he believes the information presented by the residents is misleading.

Upon the second open session for public comments the Brownsboro residents took the podium again and praised the majority of the Oldham County School Board members as well as Strickler, except for

Superintendent Paul Upchurch who they feel is withholding information and quashing public input and opinion.

Warner Brown, a resident of Halls Hill Road in the Brownsboro area, closed the public comment section suggesting that fiscal court broadcast school board meetings on Insight Channel 25 to keep taxpayers informed.

E-mail us about this story at:
publisher@oldhamera.com.