

# Gazette.Net

## Maryland Community News

---

*Published: Tuesday, February 28, 2012*

### **Frederick rejects request from charter school** *by Sharon Smith*

*Special to the gazette*

Frederick Classical Charter School was dealt a major setback in its effort to open this fall.

The Frederick County Public School Board rejected the charter school's request for a waiver that would provide it with an eight-year charter. The school has already been approved for a four-year charter agreement. The eight-year charter was necessary for the school to enter into a lease agreement it could afford, founders said.

Before school board members voted on the waiver on Feb. 22, they heard from several supporters of the school. Valarie Kendall, one of the school's supporters, handed the board a petition containing about 215 signatures in support of the waiver.

"People of this county are very excited about this school and the possibility of it opening in the fall," she said. "This eight-year charter is nothing more than a chance to be innovative. We can't do this if we can't have the eight-year charter."

Tom Neumark, president of Frederick Classical Charter School, said that the founding families involved in the school have been working for the last three years to open the school. It had all the pieces in place, but needed the eight-year waiver to make a lease on Gas House Pike affordable. The owners of the property wanted the charter to last as long as the lease, Neumark said.

Without the eight-year charter the deal on that property could not go through. Frederick Classical charter founders are now in search of a new building.

The founders hoped to open the school in August, but that is beginning to look unlikely. The founders have to find a property that is zoned properly and get a building permit. That takes time and there are not a lot of available properties in Frederick County that currently fit the bill.

"At this point, we don't have anything that is solid," Neumark said. "The board is being very unrealistic."

Jimmy Reeder, April Miller and Brad Young voted in favor of allowing the waiver on the charter. The remaining Frederick County Public School Board members voted against the waiver, citing concerns that an eight-year charter would be setting a precedent.

Angie Fish, school board president, said that Frederick Classical Charter School appears to be viable, but she wasn't willing to sign off on the waiver.

“I am not willing to take on that great a risk,” she said. “I am not willing to go the eight years.”

Terry Alban, superintendent of Frederick County Public Schools, drafted a memo prior to last week’s meeting urging board members to reject the waiver. In her memo, Alban wrote that Maryland has 50 charter schools — none of which have charters that are longer than five years.

Neumark said Frederick Classical would have agreed to a high-stakes review with greater frequency had the board allowed the waiver.

Neumark is hopeful that the founding families of the charter school can still somehow open its doors to 280 students in kindergarten through the sixth grade. The founding families have said they will try to get the school open within 10 years. They are already three years into the process.

“We are committed to doing this,” Neumark said.

frederick@gazette.net

---

© 2015 Post Community Media, LLC/Gazette.Net