

Talbot County Taxpayers Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 438
Easton, MD 21601-8907

March 12, 2010

Talbot County Board of Education
12 Magnolia Street,
Easton, MD 21601

Dear Board Members:

We urge you to reconsider your decision to deny the St. Michaels Fire Department use of the St. Michaels school campus for their fund-raising carnival. This is a very important issue for the Talbot County taxpayers.

St. Michaels' school campus is public property financed by taxpayers. Of course, it must be used in the most effective way to support its intended school purpose. If it has the capacity to support other public purposes, such as other publicly supported or community welfare functions, it should support those as well. This will increase the effective use of this taxpayer property. State law and your own policies encourage you to do this.

The proposed carnival will not conflict or detract from the property's educational purpose and you have no other higher priority use for the property at the requested time. Further, the fire department meets the criteria established in your policy for approval of requests for use of the property. Therefore, the most effective use of this property would be to make it available to the St. Michaels Fire Department.

Public safety is probably the highest priority for government. In the case of Talbot County, we taxpayers are very fortunate to have volunteer fire companies covering our needs for rescue and fire protection. These companies are staffed by outstanding men and women who provide their services without cost. We would be hard-pressed to find a higher form of community service. Their equipment and operating needs are met only partially by government. The rest of the money, about 70%, they must raise themselves.

The carnival is a key element in their fund-raising efforts. The last few years, while the school property was not available due to construction, showed how difficult the fund-raising efforts can be without the carnival.

If the department cannot raise the needed funding or the fund-raising efforts become so onerous that they start losing young firefighters, the taxpayers would have to step in. Equipment and professional firefighter compensation could represent many millions of dollars of additional County government expenditures.

It is in the interest of the County's taxpayers that you make this property available to the St. Michaels Fire Department for their annual carnival.

Sincerely,

Talbot County Taxpayers Association

By:

Edward J. Doyle
President

Cc: St. Michaels Fire Department