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## School district looks to buy 30 acres in Indian Land

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Feb 2, 2023



The three parcels of land along Harrisburg Road are near multiple new and existing subdivision developments in Indian Land. Harrisburg Elementary School is little more than a mile away.

Haley Jones

Lancaster County School District has entered into agreements to buy three parcels of land in Indian Land, totaling between 30 and 38 acres.

On Jan. 30, the Lancaster County School Board met in a special called meeting. It went into a closed-door session for legal advice and to discuss a contract for the potential purchase of land.

In open session afterward, the board voted unanimously for the district to enter real property purchase and seller agreements for all three parcels.

The board announced its quest for land for more schools in the Panhandle area at its December meeting, and has been working with a real estate agent.

In December, district Superintendent Dr. Jonathan Phipps said the district's biggest need was for an elementary school to help relieve overcrowding at both Harrisburg and Indian Land elementary schools.

But School Board Chair Brad Small said he could not confirm or deny that the school entered the agreements with the intention to use the land for a new school.

“The only thing we approved today (Jan. 30) was to go to an agreement to purchase land,” Small said. “Those contracts are not finalized, so there’s nothing really to say until the contract is signed by the sellers as well.”

All three properties — one about 4 acres, one about 5 acres and the other between 22 and 29 acres — are on Harrisburg Road, about 3 miles north of S.C. 160. The land is just over a mile from Harrisburg Elementary School.

In the surrounding area, there are several new developments, with more being built, including Ridgecrest, Covington South, The Estates at Covington and The Villas at Covington.

Small said the next step in the process is sending the contract to the sellers and their attorneys to view and respond.

“We’re at the mercy of the sellers agreeing to the contract that was presented; their lawyers are looking at it,” Small said. “You would hope 30 days or less, but with a real estate transaction like this, it’s hard to say.”

Small said he couldn’t provide any additional information on the land’s intended usage until the district owns the land, if the sellers agree.

The board addressed the district's school population growth in its 2022 Strategic Plan, which said, "Over the last 5 years our district has seen a significant growth index. The district has implemented plans to accommodate this by increasing the number of schools and teaching staff to accommodate growth."

To build a new school, at least 25 acres is required for an elementary, 50 acres for a middle school and about 100 acres for a high school.

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