

Developer a Top Contender to Build Portsmouth School

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Concord Eastridge has proposed building a new Simonsdale Elementary School and a new Olive Branch preschool and community center, as well as developing up to 23 lots that could later be used for housing, school leaders announced at Thursday's School Board meeting. A committee comprising city, school division and private-company employees selected the Arlington-based company as the top contender for a shot at helping the school division and city build a new Simonsdale.

Concord Eastridge officials say the project would be paid for through tax-exempt financing. Other companies the committee assessed are Shockey P3 of Winchester, PDP of Norfolk and Municipal Partners of Newport News. Concord Eastridge received a score of 4.24 out of a possible five total points. Shockey P3 received a 3.02, Municipal Partners, a 2.54; and PDP, 1.68.

All four companies were judged on qualifications and experience, project benefit and compatibility, and the participation of minorities in the company, school leaders said. Concord Eastridge is woman-owned. Board member Keith Nance Sr. was dissatisfied with the timing of the public hearing. He said he didn't think the proposal information was properly disclosed to the public. Nance, who favors building a new Simonsdale, said some people would be upset by other aspects of the proposal, which he said could increase traffic.

Michael Haller, senior vice president of Concord Eastridge, said the plan is conceptual and "not cast in granite." He said the company wants to work with the community. The board is slated to vote on one of the four proposals Tuesday. The vote would signify the start of negotiations that could lead to a contract with one of the companies.