

LOCAL

Polk School Board hears about two potential high school sites along Lake Hatchineha Road

Paul Natcher
Lakeland Ledger

This copyright article appears at

<https://www.theledger.com/story/news/local/2023/11/20/polk-school-board-learns-of-two-potential-northeast-high-school-sites/71592383007/>



The Polk County School Board heard about two additional proposed high school sites Tuesday during its work session in Bartow to accommodate the fast-growing student population projected for the northeastern region of the county.

The proposed sites were identified as the Bowen and Mcteer properties in unincorporated Polk County. Both front Lake Hatchineha Road and are within two miles of the Port Hatchineha neighborhood to the east.

The Bowen property at 0 Lake Hatchineha Road was brought forward by Public School Development Solutions, which had developed Scenic Terrace

and leased the property to the district in a P3 agreement, or public-private partnership.

The Bowen property is on former pasture land southwest of Marigold Avenue and Lake Hatchineha Road.

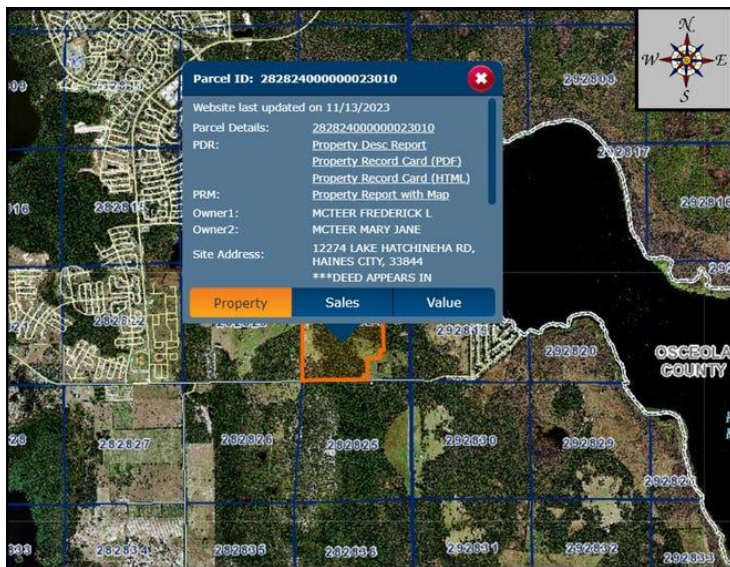
ADVERTISING

On three sides, the Mcteer site is surrounded by the Creek Ranch property on the north side of Lake Hatchineha Road. The County Commission recently approved a land use change for more than 1,800 single-family homes and a commercial district on the western-most portion of the Creek Ranch.

Residents in or near Port Hatchineha have hired a lawyer and appealed the commission decision.

The original Creek Ranch proposal was to include a new high school, but because of local residents' opposition, that site was scrapped. As many as seven sites have been explored by the district for a new high school, Superintendent Frederick Heid has said.

Joshua McLamore, the district's director of facilities planning and operations, presented information about the two sites to the School Board at the work session Tuesday.



Depending on the project team selected, PSDS would work with architectural firm Harvard Jolly to provide a design for a 240,265-square-foot school, which as originally proposed would not meet educational specifications for the programing the district wants to host in the building.

The McTeer project would be designed to educational specifications for a 343,409-square-foot building designed by architectural firm Schenkel Shultz. At this site, the district would use the same project model it has used historically to deliver new schools.

The Bowen property would be comprised of two non-contiguous parcels. County records show the parcels are 332.63 acres. The two parcels are divided by a strip of land with the address 0 Fire Tower Road, and the land is also owned by The Bowen Brothers LLC.

The School Board would be using a site selection committee to determine which of the two sites will be the eventual place for the new school. The board could vote on the site it wants by December or January.