From: Carter Flemming <carterflemming@gmail.com>
Subject: **Track Meet**
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To: William Clendaniel <william.clendaniel@acps.k12.va.us>
Cc: superintendent@acps.k12.va.us, Harkness Steve <harkni@aol.com>

Mr. Clendaniel: I am writing in response to the all day track meet that was held at TC on Saturday (May 1st). Our neighborhood was subjected to the loud speaker system from 8 in the morning until 6 at night. The nature of a track meet requires that announcements seemingly have to be made every single minute during the entire event. Whether it is the first call for some event, the third call for some event, telling athletes where an event is taking place, announcing the winners of each heat, telling the winners where to come pick up their trophies or any number of other things, the voice on the p.a. system is constant. I have no idea what level the volume was set on, nor do I know whether wind conditions or other factors contributed to the outrageous level of noise coming from the speakers into our neighborhoods. But what I do know is that the entire day demonstrated a total lack of consideration and respect for your neighbors.

I looked over into the stadium and as usual, the rather small crowd of spectators was seated on the bleachers near the school building so it was not a question of having a full stadium to broadcast over crowd noise or anything else. Perhaps you have set the p.a. system for a full stadium football game and now think that is the "correct" setting for every single event over there, whether there is any crowd or not. Now that Mr. McKeag has been removed from his position, we have no one to even attempt to call about the unacceptable noise level when it is happening. We have asked the school on dozens of occasions in meetings to come over to our yards and listen to what we hear and adjust the sound accordingly, but this has never happened. I suspect it does not happen because no one really wants to acknowledge what an incredible level of noise pollution you are putting out and so the answer is always on the order of "We had it set on the correct volume and so it should have been fine" and "We will make every effort to make sure it doesn't happen again." What we have been trying to tell the school for years is that your version of "correct volume" has no basis in reality for our neighborhood. It is not "fine" by any standard of consideration and is simply not necessary in order to have a successful sports event in the stadium. And it does happen again and again and again. There is no reason to broadcast announcements for an event on your property that impacts neighbors in all directions beyond that property. We hear the sound inside our homes and being outside is simply not an option on days like yesterday.

As we have said many times, we know our proximity to the school means we will hear some spillover from sports events. But there is quite a difference between being aware of things going on over there and the reality we have of being an integral part of every single minute of every announcement from morning until night for 10 hours. The solution has always been easy in terms of coordinating the sound we hear by sending a school representative over here who can be in contact with the announcer in the booth. They can then realize what we are hearing and tell the announcer to turn the volume down until it reaches an acceptable level for your needs in the stadium and does not unnecessarily impact our lives across the fence.

The school system spent money to get a new sound system in the stadium. As we have commented in the past, what it has done is to make sure that your neighbors can clearly hear every single word that is spoken from it because the speakers are huge and are pointed toward our neighborhood. Despite assurances during the construction phase that we would be involved in the installation of the new speaker system and consideration would be given to placing the speakers on the far side of the field facing the school and not the neighborhood, none of that happened and the new speakers are just bigger and a higher quality than the old system so the sound we hear is worse instead of better. We have had our Advisory Committee meetings and expressed these concerns multiple times and yet in the end, the school has done nothing to mitigate the complaints we have expressed for years about the sound system. Yesterday was a perfect example of the school's total lack of concern for the impact an all-day track meet has on the surrounding community. We had no way to contact anyone from the school system to ask that the sound be adjusted during the long 10 hours of the meet and that is unacceptable. We need to have a system in place that allows for the sound to be adjusted as an event is happening, not to hear promises about future events.

I look forward to hearing from you on this matter and I hope you will have some real solutions to propose to end this ongoing situation. I am aware that you are getting ready to retire and so once again, we will be starting over with administrators who do not know the long history of this issue. That is why we would like to find a solution now that would be in place when your successor and Mr. McKeag's successor comes on board. The status quo is simply not acceptable to us and should not be to the school either. Thank you. Carter Flemming