

# The Last Forest dealt blow by KC Plan Commission

**JEANETTE BROWNING**  
**FAUBION**  
*CITIZEN STAFF*

The Park Hill School District's plans for its alternative high school — and possible future third district high school — have cleared the City of Kansas City's Plan Commission.

The Kansas City Plan Commission met Tuesday, Nov. 6 at city hall with a packed audience in attendance, including district parents and staff as well as members of The Last Forest preservation group.

At question was a special use permit on district-owned property located at Northwest 68th Street and Waukomis Drive. Hopewell Elementary School is currently under construction there, with the district hoping to start work soon on its high school program — LEAD Innovation Center. If enrollment continues to grow, LEAD could be expanded into a third district high school.

The special use permit con-

tained two phases of construction, with the first for LEAD and a second future phase for expansion into a full high school, including possible ball fields and associated facilities. While the Plan Commission did approve the first phase this week, Park Hill will be forced to return to the commission if and when construction of phase two becomes necessary.

The permit will now go before Kansas City's Board of Zoning Adjustment.

Last week, the district hosted a one-hour public meeting at Line Creek Elementary School, primarily to satisfy the Kansas City Plan Commission's suggestion that the district engage the community after Last Forest members spoke out at the commission's October meeting. The Plan Commission delayed its decision to allow the school district an opportunity to address concerns raised by preservationists.

# PARK HILL

from page 1

Previous public meetings held for the same reason drew criticism from preservation group members, who felt their concerns were neither addressed nor recorded for future discussion. The Thursday, Nov. 1 meeting featured a panel made up of district administration and architects working on the LEAD Innovation Center plan, as well as other district consultants. Members of the board of education were in the audience but did not speak.

Members of the Last Forest group recorded the meeting from the audience and after a 20-minute district presentation were permitted to pose

written questions to the district's panel. After the meeting, group members expressed frustration on social media, stating the district failed to answer questions directly and offered sometimes contradictory information on its future plans and cost estimates of construction.

For about a year, the group has worked to raise awareness of district plans to build on the 272-acre property, which contains old growth forest, former farm land and the Line Creek Trail. The group currently has more than 13,100 signatures on an online petition and a website located at [lastkcforest.com](http://lastkcforest.com).