

Joint School Advisory Committee for the Portsmouth Middle School

Minutes of November 21, 2006 Meeting

A meeting of the Joint School Advisory Committee for the Portsmouth Middle School was held on Tuesday, November 21, 2006 in Room 106 at the Portsmouth Middle School.

Attendance

PRESENT: City Councilors Joanne Grasso (Committee Chair), Ned Raynolds; School Board members Nancy Novelline Clayburgh, Dr. Mitchell Shuldman, Sheri Ham Garrity; Community members Anthony Coviello, Rose Sulley, Eric Weinrieb (arrived late and was not present for the Guest Speaker).

ABSENT: Assistant Mayor Tom Ferrini, Helen Maldini

PARTICIPATING: Dr. Robert J. Lister (Superintendent of Schools), Stephen Bartlett (Business Administrator), and John Stokel (Middle School Principal)

Call to Order

Chair Grasso called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Guest Speaker

Dr. David Burdick, a professor at the University of New Hampshire and a wetlands restoration engineer, gave a presentation, utilizing charts, and discussed wetlands, the use of resources on the site, and emphasized the following points:

Dr. Burdick's Discussion Points

- Vernal pools
- Topography of the Jones Avenue site
- Wetland restrictions that may pose some challenges for a building
- A description of border and tidal wetlands as well as isolated wetlands
- Off-site impacts (run-off and sedimentation)
- Erosion and the impact to wetlands
- Wildlife and the value of isolated pools for frogs and salamanders
- Reduction of sediment that flows into Sagamore Creek, which is an off-site impact
- The question of moving vernal pools
- A concern of vernal pools that do not have fish in them
- On-site and off-site impacts were discussed as well as the aesthetic impact to property
- The issue of clay and bedrock, which present some water run-off difficulty
- Financial costs versus ecological costs

Dr. Burdick encouraged the Committee to be creative and consider the costs associated in working with clay on site. He also discussed the process for mitigation of wetlands.

Questions/Answers re: Jones Avenue Site There were many questions from Committee members regarding the Jones Avenue site, which will be taken into consideration throughout the Committee's deliberations.

Opportunities for the Public to Comment on Sites Several residents were in attendance at the meeting. A discussion ensued about the question of a public forum/public commentary session for individuals/residents to voice their opinions regarding either site. There was discussion as to whether or not a public hearing or public commentary session would occur at the JSAC meeting, School Board meetings, or at City Council meetings. Chair Grasso stated that residents have an opportunity to speak on the issue at School Board and City Council meetings during the public commentary sessions.

Inventory of Relevant Factors Mr. Bartlett distributed an inventory of relevant factors that would affect either the Jones Avenue site or the Parrott Avenue site. There was discussion of this list, which included the following categories of factors: Community Interest Factors, Cost Factors, Education Factors, Environmental Factors, and Safety Factors. (A copy of the list is attached to the minutes with a few adjustments to the original.)

Repairs to Present Middle School Mr. Stokel reported the School Department has spent approximately \$40,000 in repairs at the Middle School between the roof and heat (boilers) since the beginning of school. He stated there are many concerns about the possibility of the lack of heat this winter, the disrepair of the building, and the lack of bathroom facilities. He said that he has had discussions with the Superintendent of Schools regarding a plan for continuing school during the winter if there is a major issue with heat and the building is not usable.

Next Meeting The Committee decided that it would not meet in December. The next meeting is scheduled for January 10, 2007 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Adjournment The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.