

Joint School Advisory Committee Meeting

Minutes of the January 10, 2007 Meeting

A meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee was held on Wednesday, January 10, 2007 at the Portsmouth Middle School Library

Attendance:

Present:

Chair: Joanne Grasso, Councilor

City Council Member: Ned Reynolds and Tom Ferrini

School Board Members: Nancy Novelline Clayburgh, Sheri Ham Garrity and Mitchell Shuldman

Planning Board: Anthony Coviello

Advisory Members: Rose Sulley and Eric Weinrieb

Ex-Officio: Robert Lister, John Stokel, Steve Bartlett and Helen Maldini

Call To Order:

Chair Grasso called the meeting of the Joint School Advisory Committee to order at 7:00 p.m.

Minutes Approved:

The Chair called for the approval of the November 8, 2006 minutes. Ms. Ham Garrity moved the minutes be approved and Mr. Coviello seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

The Chair called for the approval of the November 21, 2006 minutes. Ms. Ham Garrity moved to accept the minutes seconded by Mr. Coviello Mr. Weinrieb asked to change the minutes to show that he arrived late and was not present for the guest speaker, Dr. David Burdick. The minutes were approved with the changes as requested by all members but Mr. Ferrini who abstained due to his absence at the meeting.

Discussion:

The Factors were reviewed and each member put a value to each of these factors.

Items removed from the original list include:

Under **Community Interest Factors**

- Student health/faculty health
To combine Walk ability with Bicycle friendly

Under **Cost Factors**

- Time Frame
- Impact on infrastructure (i.e. extension of services)
- Operation and maintenance (in and out)

Under **Education Factors**

- Meet state standards

Eminent Domain will be discussed further by the committee at a later time.

Public Commentary Session: Ms. Grasso read a letter written by Laura Pantelakos expressing her concern with taking property by Eminent Domain.

Mr. Peter Rice, New Castle, a member of the Peirce family, read a letter from his mother which was also read at the City Council meeting on October 16, 2006, expressing the intentions of the property was for recreational purpose only. Mr. Rice stated that he and the other members of the family do not want the property taken for any use other than recreation.

Mr. Ralph D. Bernando, Portsmouth, stated that he wished that the public commentary session had been held at the beginning of this meeting before values were given to the lists. He is opposed to the property being taken by eminent domain and also feels the Parrott Avenue site is not suitable.

Mr. Shawn Rafferty, Portsmouth, thanked the committee for all it's work and is anxious to get more information on the sites.

Ms. Ann McKearin, Teacher at Portsmouth Middle School, stated that she is looking for a place for the best education for the students and told of current conditions including banging pipes, outdated science labs, lack of meeting space, and limited access for handicap students.

Mr. William St. Laurent, Portsmouth, is concerned with the tax rate and feels that the Parrott Avenue site may be the best site.

Ms. Mary Pontrello, Portsmouth, wanted the committee to look at the long term affects on the community. She wants to keep the taxes low enough to allow families to stay or move into the community to attend the schools.

Ms. Ann Walker, Portsmouth, is against taking property by eminent domain. Doing this would discourage others from leaving property to the city in the future. She feels Jones Avenue would be the best site.

Mr. Patrick Ellis, Portsmouth, feels Jones Avenue would be the better site. He sees the current building as inadequate to meet the needs of the middle school concept.

Ms. Shaula Levenson, Portsmouth, is looking for more information on the sites but feels that the Parrott Avenue site is not the right place for the Portsmouth Middle School. She would like the location of the Middle School to have fields adjacent where students could walk to practices and games.

Mr. Carvel Tefft, Portsmouth, wonders how much the committee has done at looking at other sites in Portsmouth. As a former member on the committee to build a new high school, it was determined early that

renovating the old high school could not be done. He feels this will be the same as the current Middle School on Parrott Avenue.

Discussion:

Mr. Ferrini made a motion, which was seconded by Ms. Sulley to have Team Design present at the next meeting on January 24, 2007 and hold a public commentary session at the following meeting on February 7, 2007.

The motion was approved 8 – 1 with Ms. Novelline Clayburgh opposed.

It was agreed that Team Design would be asked to have their report put on the School Board and the City website after the presentation.

Dr. Lister will have available information for the committee on costs of transporting students to fields, costs of housing students while renovating the Parrott Avenue site, costs of double sessions, etc.

A recommendation to the school board will be made as soon as possible but more information is needed in order to make that recommendation. That will be part of the discussion at the January 24, 2007 Joint School Advisory Committee Meeting..

Next Meeting:

The Joint School Advisory Committee scheduled future meetings for:

January 24, 2007 at the City Hall Chambers to allow for the presentation from Team Design to be televised.

February 7, 2007, 7:00 p.m., Portsmouth Middle School, Room 106 or the Portsmouth Middle School Library which will include public commentary

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

jdf