

LONG RANGE FACILITIES USE PLANNING COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

May 21, 2007

The LRFUPC meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Mike Heinrich. Members present were: Mike Heinrich, Leo Langer, Frank Rose, Jill Engstrom, Linda Kast, Walt Blackford, Dayle Gray, Steve Scoles, Mike Shelton, Ray Gabelein, Donna Riley, Dan Poolman, Leigh Anderson, Donna Evans, Tom Sage, and Kathleen Landel. Absentees were: Scott Mauk and Jan McNeely.

There were no corrections or additions to the minutes of the April 16, 2007, meeting. Mike Shelton moved to approve the minutes. Linda Kast seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as submitted.

The response to the LRFUPC portion of the Community Forum was reviewed. LRFUPC members who attended the Community Forum received the following comments from attendees:

- Some people were opposed to selling any properties.
- People connected to the schools already are aware that a building may need to be deactivated.
- There were questions as to the cost of possible future renovation projects. (*Dan Poolman said at this meeting that there are no major expenses planned in the next few years.*)
- People were interested in grouping students in ways other than age. Highly capable students could benefit from unconventional student groupings. Multi age groupings might help with bullying problems. Because technology changes quickly, multi-age groupings may be able to use the same programs.
- There was not much debate on the fact of falling enrollment. Most people were looking for solutions by making SWSD a magnet school.

Jill Engstrom and Donna Riley agreed to compile a report of comments made by community members attending the Community Forum for the LRFUPC

Mike Heinrich asked the question, "Who does the LRFUPC want to hear from?"

- Some wanted to hear from those people who are intimately involved in the school system – administrators, teachers, staff.
- Others said that the teachers and staff on this committee have represented their peers very well with their comments and suggestions and that additional input seemed redundant.
- The Superintendent's voice has not been heard as he wanted this committee to proceed in an unbiased way. Some said they would like to hear his thoughts now.

Would it help the LRFUPC to tour the schools?

- Yes, if the committee could narrow the choice for deactivation down to one or two schools. Those would be the schools to tour.

There was discussion regarding the charge from the SWSD Board to LRFUPC. The Committee felt that it was our job to make recommendations on the facilities but beyond our expertise and scope to make recommendations on student groupings and curricular changes. Committee members expressed that administrators and teachers are better equipped for these decisions.

Committee members were admonished to keep in mind the benefit for students concerning ancillary facilities such as gyms, theaters, playing fields, shops, and the like. It would be unwise to deactivate a school and then later have to go the taxpayers to ask for money to build these facilities at another location.

Declining student enrollment over the past years has had an impact on staffing as the District has tried to match the reduction in student numbers with a proportional reduction in administration, teaching, and classified staff. It is not as easy to use that method to reduce building capacity and that is why this committee was formed. Some expressed the hope that money saved in this process could be used to pay for smaller class sizes, extra programs, etc.

Mike Shelton reminded the LRFUPC that Island County would approve institutional use for those schools within Island County that might be taken out of service. Using such a facility for retail purposes would not be allowed.

Mike Heinrich broke the committee into small groups to brainstorm ideas on facilities' use. The following comments were voiced:

- Deactivate the Primary School.
 - Part of the Primary School might be retained for SWSD use.
 - It is the most costly to operate.
 - It is the second oldest school in the district.
 - The least amount of ancillary facilities would be lost.
 - It has the smallest capacity.
 - The Parks and Recreation District could use it as a community center, office space, playing fields, etc. Some other institutional concern could use the Primary School.
- Keep the Langley Middle School
 - It has many ancillary facilities that are still quite usable.
 - House grades 5 through 8 there, or grades 4 – 8, or some other grouping.

- Keep the Intermediate School
 - House grades K through 4

- Keep the High School
 - Utilize extra room by offering space to SVC and/or Running Start program
 - Possibly move 7 and 8th grades to High School to inhabit their own wing
 - Possibly move just 8th graders to High School

- Bayview School
 - Keep it separate. As an alternative high school, it should have its own location.
 - Move the Bayview School into the LMS two-story building.
 - Move Bayview School into the portables currently used by Whidbey Island Academy. Bayview students can take advantage of what is offered at the High School.
 - If Bayview students/staff are relocated, the building could become district offices, a library, small college, or some other educational/institutional use.

- Whidbey Island Academy
 - Move Whidbey Island Academy into the two-story building at Langley Middle School. WIA parents would likely not object to a move for the Academy as long as it fits their identity.

- Deactivate Langley Middle School
 - It could become a community center for the city of Langley and south end of Whidbey Island
 - Locate all District schools along Maxwellton Road

- Make SWSD a magnet school with an emphasis on technology
 - Parents usually move to an area based on employment opportunities with quality of schools as a secondary concern.

Mike Heinrich asked the LRFUPC if they were ready to make a recommendation. It was agreed it would be helpful to hear from Dr. McCarthy first before presenting our interim report to the SWSD Board of Directors in June. Mike said he would invite Dr. McCarthy to the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

