

February 25 2008 Gordon Elementary PAC Meeting

Attending: Ingrid Sulston (Chair), Paul Pavlidis (Secretary), Heather Young (Treasurer), Z Smith (Chair of Gordon Building Renewal Committee), Margaret Davidson (Principal), Mark Townsend, Michael Vogel, Gail Johnson, Valter Gocce, Laura Jordan, Helen Sawchuk, Theresa Godin, David Ascher, Emily Pickett, Thomasina Burgess, Avril Bain, Eva Sereda, Todd Barbick, Cathy Marr, Bruce Gregg, Ann Rowan, Jill Stewart, Bill Uhrich, Cathy Newmann, Nikki Lewis Key, Kate Milne, Niki Blakely, Alison Diesvelt, Elke Porter, Derek von Essen, Pauline Madden, Doni Gratton, Debra Kowpelow, Caz Taylor, Jean Gordon, Catriona Gordon, David Austin, Niloofar Ahanchi, Nicole MaCrae, Jennifer Sears, Anna Johnson, Bill Burnyeat, Colleen Kern, Mark Rutledge, Joanne Rowland, Megan Abele, Andreas Abele, Carla Shirley, Chris Shirley, Lisa Chambers, Cynthia Harper.

Approval of the January minutes: Kate moved, Heather seconded, motion passed.

French Immersion – Cathy Marr and Theresa Godin - Students just returned from Quebec, kids from Quebec coming in May. French Immersion Gala March 7 at St. James community square with a Disco theme, prizes, bar. Tickets are being sold. Thank you to Margaret and teachers for making the program a success. Thanks to Ingrid and Paul for setting up “private” photo gallery for FI. Cathy: I am also the liaison for Kits high; Kits high school Feb 27th Arts Week, older children might be interested.

Read-A-Thon – Ingrid – starting Wednesday for 1.5 weeks, book fair organized by Penny Dagg. Heather is sorting books. Heather asked if we should have an adult table, not that many children’s books (relatively). Ingrid says we’ll try to get more books, advertise to parents. Set fixed price for books, like \$1 for adult, less for kids.

Spring Fling – Ingrid – Continuation of issue tabled from the last meeting. We need to choose a date and time. Discussion ensued. Vote on whether to have it Friday the 9th (after school) or Saturday the 10th late afternoon. Vote: 12 for Saturday. 11 for Friday. (rest are abstentions/don’t cares). Decision carried to hold it on the 10th roughly 4pm, details to be decided.

Announcement list Ingrid - Please make sure you sign up for email announcements about the newsletter. Call me if you want paper newsletters, and newsletters will be in the office.

Seismic discussion – towards a resolution

Proposal for new name. “Gordon Renewal Committee” instead of ‘Seismic’. Cathy suggests that the name might obscure the purpose. Suggestion “Gordon Building Renewal PAC Subcommittee” was agreed on.

Elect a committee chair. Z has been the acting chair. Z was nominated by Heather. Pauline seconded. No further nominations. Vote: None opposed. Z Smith elected chair, GBRC

Z Smith reports: Craig Lane (sick with flu) looked into the question of schedule – would adjusting the plan slow things down. Craig looked at the VSB schedule and shows that Gordon completion is expected May 2011, occupancy Sept 2011, assuming approval is in May 2008. Craig made a Gantt chart using the information for renovation, and it comes out to be about the same answer, that is, completion May 2011 (assuming the money comes at the same time). There are several months of slop – 4 months at the start. Z has asked the ministry to consider shortening this 4 month ‘mystery time’ and use that time for our planning. Summary: there is no need for our efforts to make it take longer.

Feasibility study by CY Loh (engineering firm) was finally made available to us by the VSB. Importantly, this only took two months to prepare. Z assumes that it is reasonable to ask for a

new feasibility study since it doesn't take that long (that is, time is not the problem). And wouldn't change the date for occupancy, in his judgment.

Question from floor: Would kids be in portables if there was an upgrade? Z: Yes, Sept 2009-June 2011, they would probably have to be in portables, but it might be possible to move kids temporarily to other catchments. What we want are a set of good options. We don't have to decide if we want portables or not right now.

Risk and safety: position of GBRC guided by work of Bruce Gregg and Cathy Marr. Cathy: who is concerned that new schools would be safer? Indicated that some parents (apparently not those present at the meeting) are concerned. Bruce: 2005 building code has upped the ante, more scientifically based, for retrofits and new construction from 1995 building code. Code says object is not earthquake proof, but survivable. Whatever we get will be up to this code. We would have to put it in the hands of the engineers. If it isn't possible to upgrade this building to the new code, then we have to have a new building. Cathy: Tracy Monk did a lot of the work before. Mark: is cost of renovation based on 2005 code: yes. Bottom line: whatever we get will be safer than what we have now, and nothing is 100% certain in the event of a real earthquake.

Z: Letter from the VSB was excellent and a pleasant surprise and boost to the cause (VSB letter at).

The next order of business was putting the elements of the resolution together:

1. Reading of Gordon teacher's statement.
2. Discussion of draft proposal
3. Briefing on report. Decision was made to make the report part of the resolution (report at <http://www.gordonelementary.ca/sites/default/files/GordonBuildingRenewalCommitteeReportforPAC25Feb08updated2March.pdf>).

Z moved to accept the resolution, David Ascher seconded. Resolution passed unanimously, 48 votes counted.

Z reported some anecdotes on his interactions with the press and the ministry of education. Z and Bill reported on exploring the potential use of the "Heritage Bank" as a funding source for improving schools. Bill says that the Heritage Bank is at least interested in continuing a discussion.

Next meeting scheduled for March 31 2008.

Adjournment.

Attachments:

Letter from VSB

<http://www.gordonelementary.ca/sites/default/files/Letter-from-VSB-to-Ministry-Feb-2008.pdf>

Resolution

<http://www.gordonelementary.ca/sites/default/files/GordonPACresolution25Feb08.pdf>

Report

<http://www.gordonelementary.ca/sites/default/files/GordonBuildingRenewalCommitteeReportforPAC25Feb08updated2March.pdf>

Statement from Gordon Teacher Committee

A committee of Gordon teachers has met with a committee of parents about the seismic question. The Gordon committee agreed with the parent committee that the best option for right now is to buy time to get better choices. The two options possible right now are not adequate to meet the learning and teaching needs of Gordon students and staff. The committee of teachers understands those options to be:

1. a new building, approximately 2/3 the size
2. a renovated building involving 2 years of turmoil while staff and students stay in the building as the renovations go on.

Either option compromises the learning and teaching of Gordon students and staff.

The teacher committee has taken the idea of buying more time to all of the concerned teachers at Gordon and all of the teachers support this plan.

At the moment, the option favoured by all staff is a new school that is large enough to meet the learning needs of Gordon students, particularly around the needs of the music program and the housing of the school's double language library collection.