



P.A.C. Meeting 4 Minutes, March 6th 2017

1. Welcome from P.A.C. Co-Chairs - Victoria

- The meeting started at 19:02
- Victoria welcomed everyone. Everyone introduced themselves. Attendance: 22 parents, VSB Official Trustee Ms. Dianne Turner, VSB Director of Instruction Ms. Magdalena Kassis, Principal Ms. Hope Sterling, and two teachers (Ms. Alison Sharpe and Ms. Kim Hargrave).
- The minutes from the January 23rd meeting were adopted.

2. Introduction to VSB Official Trustee, Ms. Dianne Turner - Hope

- Hope introduced Ms. Dianne Turner, who was appointed as VSB Official Trustee by the Minister of Education in place of the elected trustees who were fired last fall, and Ms. Magdalena Kassis, VSB Director of Instruction.

3. Update on the Yellow School House situation – Frank

- Frank thanked Dianne for joining us, summarized the recent history of the Yellow School House, which is detailed on our website at http://www.gordonelementary.ca/yellow_school_house, and mentioned our petition to VSB in favour of demolition, which has been signed by about 120 parents so far. [A paper copy of the petition was subsequently mailed to Dianne.]
- Frank quoted the petition wording as follows: “More than three and half years have passed since the Gordon seismic upgrade plan was changed in the summer of 2013 to include demolition of the Yellow Schoolhouse, and a year has passed since the demolition was put on hold in spring 2016, but no acceptable proposal to save and use the building has been received by Vancouver School Board. It is now time to let go of the unused building and get on with creating an exciting addition to the play space that will directly benefit the current and future students of Gordon as well as the wider community. **We the undersigned call on Vancouver School Board to demolish the Yellow Schoolhouse and build more playground and green space for Gordon students.**”
- Frank concluded as follows: “It seems a shame that we have to oppose heritage retention because we love Vancouver’s heritage, but the Ministry’s funding for the seismic update was never enough to cover any significant retention. To get our children into a safe building, we had to agree to the demolition of the 1912 main school building, which was far more valuable than the schoolhouse. But as Margaret once told me, Gordon Elementary is the people: the students, the staff and the community, not the buildings, and Gordon is as strong as ever in our new building, with our new principal Hope.”

4. VSB Position on Yellow School House – Ms. Dianne Turner

- Dianne said she had met with heritage representatives earlier in the day. They have a plan to use the building as an arts space, and asked for a couple of months to explore the idea and come up with a proposal. They made the point that VSB had placed last year’s RFP on the [BC Bid](#) website, which is not often visited by the arts community. The proponent would have to come up with a significant amount of money, but they think the plan might contribute to the community. Dianne said she allowed them two months, until the middle of May. If no viable proposal is forthcoming by then, the building will be demolished.



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- Dianne mentioned her sympathy with those who have sentimental value for the school house, including some Gordon parents who have contacted her directly, and said that value could be recognized in some way in the space. She also mentioned she recognized the pain of losing the 1912 main school building as one of her old schools had been demolished.
- Dianne showed landscape architect Randy Sharp's plan for gardens around the school house. [Randy was involved in building the original Gordon butterfly garden.]

5. Question Period – Ms. Dianne Turner

- Q: What are the costs involved? A: \$180k for laneway widening, which VSB has already paid to the City, and \$300k for upgrades to meet City requirements, including a new foundation, new plumbing and electrical, and removal of asbestos etc. The Montessori primary school proponents were willing to pay that \$300k; they were a not-for-profit organization. VSB policies don't allow leases to for-profit organizations. The Montessori primary school was the only such candidate; the other proponents were for-profit. The policy preventing for-profit lessees dates from June 2016. Magdalena added that excludes independent schools as defined by the Education Act. Demolition of the school house is budgeted at \$58k, which VSB would pay.
- Q: What would the rent be? A: If lessees fixed up the building at a cost of \$300k, they would not pay any rent for 10 years, so effectively \$30k a year.
- Q: Would a language school be suitable? A: Possibly.
- Q: We are making a garden proposal to VSB. Can we propose two plans, one with the school house and one without? A: Yes.
- Q: Is this the last chance that will be given? A: The last RFP was started under a different board of trustees, then the VSB lease policy changed. The situation is cleaner now, and Dianne will make the decision based on what happens now.
- Q: When would demolition take place? A: Likely over the summer or spring break next year.
- Q: Are there criteria for the proposal to meet? A: If the proposal is viable, VSB would give the proponents over the summer to implement it. They have to come up with the money and meet the City to obtain permits etc.
- Q: Can PAC see the proposal before it is approved? A: Yes.
- Parents thanked Dianne and Magdalena for attending, and they left the meeting.

6. Motions and Votes – Promita

- **Vote on Motion from January Meeting:** To pay for soccer nets up to \$1000 from PAC funds. Passed unanimously.
- Hope mentioned the above amount is for four new soccer goals (not nets), at the sides of the gravel field, but they may cost \$1200.
- **Motion and Vote:** To pay an extra \$200 from PAC funds for the soccer goals. Proposed by Jessica. Seconded by Suzan. Passed unanimously.
- **Vote on Motion from January Meeting:** To pay for custom volleyball and badminton nets and sound system up to \$4500. Passed unanimously.
- Alison mentioned the 30 laptops were expected to go into an existing cart, but actually we need a new cart, lockable, with one power cable to connect to a wall outlet. She suggested we could use part of the \$2500 already allocated for soft seating for the cart, since the soft seating will use less than expected.
- **Motion and Vote:** To use from \$500 to \$700 of the \$2500 soft seating money for a laptop cart. Proposed by Karen. Seconded by Julie. Passed unanimously.



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- It was mentioned that art supplies may need more money, \$1500 for five pods.

7. Principal's Update – Hope

- Hope has asked for **three new teachers**, one of whom has already joined, per the BCTF settlement.
- **Heritage Fair** is on Wednesday, which is very exciting. Refer to your child's teacher for the location.
- **Talent Show** is coming up on April 6th. Hope has been involved in the auditions, and is amazed by the students' talents. There may be two shows; details to be announced.
- The **BCTF settlement** has thrown up issues because of class size rules, and there might be some changes, but for now we have to wait. The **Kindergarten Draw** had to be delayed because of this, which Hope appreciates is frustrating. We are looking okay for in-catchment applications, but there are no guarantees. The draw will be in April if it is needed.
- Karen spoke about the advantages of keeping siblings together; relating to **sibling-priority** when siblings are more than one year apart, which is usually the case. Hope said the kindergarten application gives sibling-priority if the older sibling is still in the school. Her hands are tied by VSB rules. There is no sibling-priority for cross-boundary applications. For **French Immersion**, there is currently a waitlist, but some people usually drop out, and people on the waitlist move up.
- Alison said a lot depends on the BCTF approving the agreement, and then on VSB processes taking time to operate.
- Julie asked about the existing French Immersion grade six classes moving to grade seven, if the class size is reduced. Hope said we are looking okay, but she will make it work whatever.

8. Vote on Spinami Replacement – Victoria

- The **Spinami** playground spinner has proved to be much faster than expected, allowing exciting but dangerous experiments in centrifugal physics. Hope has negotiated with the supplier to swap it for a different piece of equipment at no cost.
- Five options were presented to the meeting, and in a show of hands (3, 3, 7, 2, 4, with Victoria, Promita and Frank not voting), parents chose option three, a **low climbing wall**.

9. Spring Fling Update - Suzan, Birte, Julie, Jessica

- Julie said the organizers had met a couple of times. The event will be different from the Bike-a-thon held in previous years. They are intending it to be a **community event**, with an **emphasis on fun** rather than fund-raising.
- There will be a **passport** to visit fun activities, and on completion of the passport, kids can win fun items.
- The Greek community will do **souvlaki**. There may be a bouncy castle and a magician.
- Coming: **Little Kickers Soccer**, **4Cats Arts Studio**, the school band **Contagious**, the famous **cake walk**.
- **Volunteers** are needed to help.
- The date is **Sunday May 28th from 2pm to 5pm**.
- Q: Where will it be? A: To be figured out.

10. Thank you to all P.A.C. meeting attendees

- The meeting ended at 20:26.