



## P.A.C. Meeting 1 Minutes, September 28th 2015

### 1. Welcome from New P.A.C. Co-Chairs

- The meeting started at 19:08.
- Victoria Stephens and Promita Abraham welcomed everyone. Attendance: 27 parents, three administrators/teachers (Margaret, Nancy, Graeme), and renewal project manager Jay Hiscox.

### 2. P.A.C Overview – Promita

- Promita outlined the current vision: increasing parent participation.

### 3. Annual Calendar & Key Activities – Vicky

- **Direct Drive:** Focussed on funding the playground at the new school. A donation of \$50 per family would achieve the \$10k target.
- Funds will also go to Spirit of Math workbooks (up to \$1k), school performances, music and sports equipment. \$15 expenditure per student is already lined up.
- **Programs run by PAC:**
  - Hot lunches will start Monday October 5th, at the Main School and the Annex. More volunteers are needed. A dollar per meal goes to PAC.
  - Coffee Mornings will be continued; six of them, at the bus stop at Old Gordon site. They are a great way to connect with the community and have a chat.
- **Fundraising:**
  - Cash Cards provide PAC with a cut of the face value at no cost to the purchaser. The IGA cards can be reloaded in store from a credit card so the buyer can still collect reward points. This is a great fundraiser for PAC. Contact Sheila Kirkby for more information and to buy cards.
  - Big Brothers Clothing Bin at Old Gordon site on Bayswater St.
  - Cobs on 4th Ave. Mention Gordon PAC when buying, they will make a contribution to PAC.
  - Similarly, Choices on 16th Ave. Mention Gordon PAC when buying pumpkins. These funds are used for field trips.
- **Parents for Inclusive Education (PIE):** Contacts are Denise Edwards and Erica. Everyone is welcome. Please pass the word if you know parents who might be interested, from any school. Meetings are every other month. There will be four topics this year; see the website for details.

### 4. New School Building Update – Jay Hiscox

Jay is the Gordon renewal project manager for the School Board. Construction is still on schedule. The steel framing is up, and the roof is going on. Completion of the project on time is not guaranteed, but the team is feeling confident. Preparation for the move back will start in the New Year. After the roof will come the enclosure, and the windows should be fitted by February. The interior work will proceed along with

fitting out the playground, including the salvaged equipment. PAC support is critically important, since the budget does not fully cover the playground. The team will provide more information to Beth and the Playground Committee in two weeks.

Jay then answered questions from parents:

- Q. Will the landscaping be done by August? A. Some will remain to be done, but the playground will be fit for students to use.
- Q. What are the risks of not completing on time? A. Anything to do with safety. Electrical/fire systems have to be approved, and have to be ready by early July. Students are not allowed in the building without all that in place. We don't control some schedule milestones, such as City approvals.
- Q. Will we stay at QE if the new building is not ready? A. Yes. It is a school-based decision when to move. Look for the new building enclosure being finished by February. If it isn't, then we may have issues moving on time.
- Q. How much longer will the Montessori School remain? A. Until Spring, when the building will be demolished. The lane will be refinished in March/April. The temporary location of the students is an issue for that school.
- Q. What is the exterior look of the new building? A. Lots of brick lower down, but full height in places, toned like the old building. Higher up, there will be panels in interesting colours. Bricks from the old building will be re-used in a wall near Bayswater St. The look has not changed since the development permit pack.
- Q. How many bike racks will there be? A. Lots, the City-mandated amount.

Jay asked about the portables. Nancy was happy with those at the Annex. Graeme said teachers have health concerns about the Main School portables, both for staff and students. Margaret said the air filters were full of dust, but are being cleared out. Jay said to tell Margaret about issues.

Jay said there will be student tours when the new building is closer to being finished. This is a teaching opportunity, and to get students excited about the move back.

Parents thanked Jay for the update.

## 5. Playground Update – Beth Calkin

- PAC is fundraising for the new school playground, with a target of \$145k.
- **Playground Equipment:** The old wooden playground equipment was removed because of safety concerns, which would have happened anyway without the school renewal. To complete the new playground, the Playground Committee chose various pieces of new equipment. See the website for details. The pieces we had for younger students are in storage and will be re-installed, but we need to buy pieces for older students. One suggested piece is the Orbis (\$25k from a Canadian manufacturer) to go on the east side. We are waiting for feedback from the landscape architect on that.
- **Cedar forest/grove:** Needs School Board approval, because of the grounds maintenance issue. The favoured variant is the Excelsa Cedar, which is shorter,



# General Gordon Elementary School



up to 35 feet, and provides good cover. Students use the trees at the Annex as shelter, which are taller and less bushy western red cedars. Beth and Ingrid visited the tree farm, and the expert said the cedars are almost no maintenance.

- **Covered areas:** The Ministry won't fund covered areas under seismic projects. The School Board and City have concerns about climbing on roofs, camping underneath, etc.. The Committee has looked at retractable awnings, which were rejected. There is a big difference between keeping students dryish during play and watertightness for rough sleeping. Trees would be okay. The existing trees were never used for camping, according to Margaret, but the covered areas were. The goal is to pull out 100 students during rain. The new building will be wired and plumbed somewhat ready for covered areas if the rules change.
- **On hold:** Raised veggie beds and the meditation garden. The concrete benches were saved, so we don't need to buy new ones. Space constraints rule out much new equipment.
- **Funds needed:** \$37k for the trees; \$25k for the Orbis; TBD for hockey nets; TBD for a Spinner; TBD for a possible sun shade.
- **Funds available:** Kevin said \$30k has been raised so far, including the \$10k seed money. PAC is not spending as much as before. We can currently put together about \$40/50k for the playground.
- **Further ideas:** Margaret said it is suggested the salvaged granite flagstones from the old building could be turned into a big community table. Jay said this is feasible. It is also suggested that the salvaged window stanchions could be used in an urban sculpture in the north west corner of the site. More information on this will be shared at the next PAC meeting.
- **Volunteers are needed for:**
  - Communications (updating the website and writing updates for the PAC newsletter).
  - Writing grant applications.

## 6. Principal Update – Margaret

- **BC Education Plan:** Margaret gave a quick recap on the province-wide BC Education Plan, which is detailed on the Ministry website. This year is exploration year. One concern of teachers is getting enough Pro-D days. Grades may be on the way out. Other provinces and countries have already taken this route.
- **School Business:** Three talks are upcoming. See the website for details.
- **School Name:** The renewal offers an opportunity to think about changing the school name. The School Board has a defined process to follow.

## 7. Motions & Votes

- **Vote on motion from last meeting:** To fund performances up to \$2000. Passed unanimously.

The meeting ended at 20:40.