

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, September 10, 2013
Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room
1625 Massachusetts Avenue

Present: Dr. Paul Ash, Superintendent; Margaret Coppe, Chair; Bonnie Brodner, Vice-Chair; Alessandro Alessandrini, Jessie Steigerwald and Mary Ann Stewart; Sam A. Lehn, Student Representative

The Minutes were taken by Jean Curran, Recording Secretary

The Meeting Convened at 7:30 p.m.

I. Call to Order and Welcome

The Chair called the meeting to order and invited public comment.

There were no public comments

II. Superintendent's Announcements

Dr. Ash announced that Lexington had a smooth school opening. Mary Ellen Dunn, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Finance reported there were 2,700 students riding the bus this year and she would update the Committee at a future meeting on bus ridership.

Dr. Ash congratulated the high school student mentors to the Lexington High School (LHS) freshman students. Dr. Ash also thanked the administration in each school and all the volunteers, including student volunteers in the high school, middle schools and elementary schools.

Dr. Ash reported there is a new telephone system at LHS which has been crashing and the company will be sending a data card to reprogram the system. Laura Lasa, Principal LHS, will update the Committee on the reprogramming and rebooting and whether or not it resolved the problems. Dr. Ash apologized to all parents who experienced difficulty reaching the school and hope this fix resolves the problems.

Dr. Ash congratulated the teacher mentors. LPS has a teacher mentor program where seasoned teachers are paired with new teachers. This year the mentors and mentees met before the school year began and the teachers are reporting positive feedback on this program.

Dr. Ash reported that Lexington has the largest enrollment in the district since he has been here and will comment on the enrollment later on in the meeting.

III. School Committee Member Announcements

Margaret Coppe announced that she had received an email from Dan Voss who is working on the municipal solar program and he is interested in coming before the Committee and he is also looking for a liaison from the Committee. On Thursday, September 12 at 7:30 p.m. the Appropriation Committee will be discussing the upcoming Special Town Meeting and the proposed modular classrooms at LHS are on the agenda. Ms. Coppe will not be able to attend this meeting and asked if another Committee member would attend in her place. Ms. Coppe also inquired if Pat Goddard, Director of Public Facilities would be in attendance and he stated he would not. Ms. Coppe reminded everyone that there will be a Community Forum – Awareness of the Effects of Violent Media to be held in the Lexington High School Auditorium on October 10, 2013 at 7:30.

Mary Ann Stewart reminded everyone that this week is National Arts in Education Week in our community and schools. She noted that Lexington-based Meru Education Foundation is co-sponsoring acclaimed Indian choreographer and dancer, Madhavi Mudgal and the Gandharva troupe. They will present *Vistaar – Rhythm and Melody in Classical Odissi Dance* on Saturday, September 14, 6:00-8:00 p.m. at the Scottish Rite Masonic Museum and Library (National Heritage Museum, formerly). Proceeds from the event will benefit victims of a recent flood in the Himalayas.

IV. Agenda

1. **Greenway Corridor Signage on Public School Property**

Rick Abrams, Vice-Chair, Lexington Greenways Corridor Committee on behalf of the Lexington Greenways Corridor Committee came before the Committee seeking permission to install signage on 2nd ACROSS Lexington Route. ACROSS Lexington is a proposed 40-mile network of walking, jogging and off-road biking trails that will cover virtually all of Lexington. The second route will be 4.5 miles in length and will connect the town center with the Park Drive Center Recreation Complex (near LHS), Lincoln Park and Lincoln Fields, Bridge Elementary School, the Old Res, Clarke Middle School, Dunback Meadow, Cotton Farm, Upper Vine Brook, residential streets and the bikeway back to the center of town. The signage will be identical to the existing signage; the only change will be a designation of A or B to differentiate the routes. Mr. Abrams will meet with Anna Monaco, Principal of Clarke Middle School and Margaret Coletta, Principal of Bridge Elementary School this Thursday to discuss the signage. Mr. Abrams stated that he would email a summary of the meeting with these two principals.

There were questions and comments from the Committee (i) where does the money come from for the signs; (ii) who installs any posts; (iii) are there any prepared handouts to bring attention to these paths; and (iv) how many total paths.

Motion to Approve the Proposed Signage on the Second ACROSS Lexington Route as Presented (Stewart, Steigerwald) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

2. **Recommended Plan to Add Modular Classrooms at Lexington High School**

Dr. Ash shared with the Committee the need for additional space, the locations and the amount of square foot necessary to accommodate future and present enrollment. Linda Chase, Director of Student Services, provided some enrollment numbers and a rationale for SPED space to Dr. Ash. Ms. Chase also provided information on the spaces for the ILP and the DLP programs at Clarke and Diamond Middle Schools and the need to provide space to educate those special education students until the age of 22.

Patrick Goddard, Director of Public Facilities, presented the Recommended Plan to Add Modular Classrooms at LHS which included space recommendations, budget estimates and a construction schedule. The LHS renovation completed in 2000 had a design capacity of 1,842 students. In FY 2013 the actual enrollment includes 2,007 students and enrollment is expected to increase to 2,154 students by FY 2016. The space recommendations include 12 general education classrooms, 5 classrooms Clarke ILP and 7 classrooms Diamond ILP. Mr. Goddard reviewed the areas where the modularity will be placed and also noted that a beloved crabapple tree will need to be relocated from the quad area. The total project budget estimate is between \$6.7M - \$7.7 M and is broken down as follows: (i) Spring and Summer 2014: \$4.9M - \$5.6M); and (ii) Spring and Summer 2015: \$1.8M – 2.1M. Mr. Goddard reviewed the Construction Schedule and the Project Schedule.

Dr. Ash shared his thought on (i) the overcrowding situation; (ii) the number of students on autism spectrum system increasing; and the 10 Year Master Plan. He stated that the modulars are to address the immediate needs at the High School.

The Committee had comments and questions (i) long-term view considering the community's views; (ii) the need to educate the public about the need for a new High School; (iii) the bidding process for modular classrooms; (iv) will the Committee have to accept the lowest bid; (v) the height of the modulars; (vi) concern about the aesthetics of the proposed location; (vii) loss of green space; (viii) HVAC air circulation; (ix) negative impacts on the student population; (x) possibility of relocating the crabapple tree; (xi) the possibility of moving the modular further down so the green space can be preserved; and (xii) parking spaces.

Laura Lasa, Principal, Lexington High School shared her thoughts on student parking spaces, bus ridership, and educational needs versus open spaces

Margaret Coppe thanked the Landscape Committee who volunteered to help solve the landscaping needs at the high school. She congratulated them on receiving the Homer Lucas Public Landscape Award for 2013, given by the New England Wildflower Society, for their work at LHS,

Pat Moyer, Chair of the Landscaping Commission addressed the Committee and acknowledged fellow members in the audience this evening. Mr. Moyer shared the Landscape Committee's work since 2002, how hard they have worked and fundraised in order to plant trees at the High School, and how students have also volunteered their time to this project. The Landscape Committee wants to minimize the impact and keep the outside beautiful in many seasons.

The Committee thanked Mr. Moyer and the Landscape Committee.

Betsy Weiss, 8 Dover Lane, Landscape Committee read a statement talking about history of the landscaping done at the high school campus since they began in 2002 and urged the Committee to save the quad. Ms. Weiss questioned why the space between the math and foreign language departments was not considered. Ms. Weiss also urged the Committee to consider relocating the modular to preserve as much green space in the quad and the crab apple tree.

3. Lexington High School Class Size Policy – Third Reading

Mary Ann Stewart shared that she feels like this policy came about because of a response to a communication breakdown with the community. Ms. Stewart would like to see this policy either dropped or postponed indefinitely. Jessie Steigerwald stated that she would not support the policy.

Laura Lasa shared her thoughts on the Lexington High School Class Size Policy.

Alessandro Alessandrini shared his thoughts on the policy, which he said does not tie the hands of the principal. Margaret Coppe agreed with Ms. Stewart's analysis and doesn't want

to restrict the principal from allowing classes with less than 10 students, but was disappointed that these feelings were not discussed earlier than the Third Reading.

Motion to Accept the Third Reading of Lexington High School Class Size Policy (Alessandrini, Steigerwald) **The Motion Failed** (2–3) Opposed Brodner, Steigerwald and Stewart

4. Preliminary 2013-2014 Enrollment Numbers

Dr. Ash reviewed the Preliminary 2013-2014 Enrollment Numbers and stated that after October 1 he will have more to share. There were an additional 126 students enrolled this year when school opened (6,510 in 2012 and 6,626 in 2013). At the Elementary Level there are 2,844 students. The Middle School has a total of 1,644 students and the High School has 2,022 students. The enrollment projections were released earlier this year because there is a need to make critical recommendations on redistricting. Dr. Ash reviewed each school and how much space is available or will be available in the future.

There were comments and questions from the Committee (i) redistricting; (ii) could they receive a list of capacity at each of the schools; and (iii) how will overcrowding impact special needs children and programs.

Sam Lehn shared that he needed to leave the meeting because he had to study for a test.

5. FY2015 Budget Guidelines

The Committee members discussed their individual ideas and the reasoning behind those ideas and what should and should not be included in the budget guidelines.

Dr. Ash provided feedback to the Committee discussions.

Motion to Approve Recommended Budget Guidelines, as amended (Steigerwald, Stewart) **The Motion was Approved** (5-0)

6. Recommended Agendas for Future School Committee Meetings

The Committee discussed future agenda items including (i) professional climate update in the fall and spring; and (ii) Student Stress Committee update. There will be a Special Town Meeting on November 4 and the Committee discussed whether to vote on Warrant Article on October 22.

7. Vote to Appoint the Official and Alternate Voting Delegates to the MASC Annual Business Meeting

Motion to Appoint Mary Ann Stewart as the Official Voting Delegate and Margaret Coppe as Alternate Voting Delegate to the MASC Annual Business Meeting (Brodner, Stewart) **The Motion was Approved** (5-0)

V. Consent Agenda

1. Vote to Approve 2013-2014 Superintendent Evaluation Process

Motion to Approve 2013-2014 Superintendent Evaluation process and timeline as presented by the Superintendent (Stewart, Steigerwald)

There were questions from the Committee.

Motion to Approve 2013-2014 Superintendent Evaluation process and timeline as presented by the Superintendent (Stewart, Steigerwald) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

- 2. Vote to Approve 2013-2014 Clarke Middle School Grade 8 Spanish Field Trip to La Guácima de Alajuela, Costa Rica, March 12 - 21, 2014**
- 3. Vote to Approve 2013-2014 Diamond Middle School Grade 8 Spanish Field Trip to La Guácima de Alajuela, Costa Rica, January 29, 2014 – February 7, 2014**
- 4. Use of Drugs and Alcohol on School Premises Policy – Third Reading**
- 5. Homelessness Policy – Second Reading**

Motion to Approve Items 2-5 Above (Alessandrini, Brodner) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

VI. Adjourn

Motion to Adjourn (Stewart, Brodner) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

The Meeting Adjourned at 10:25 p.m.

The next meeting of the School Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, September 24, 2013, at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Offices Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room, 1625 Massachusetts Avenue.

Materials: Meeting Agenda, Memo from Dr. Ash and Pat Goddard from Rick Abrams dated August 21, 2013 re signage; Signage Plan School Property Presentation by Greenway Corridors Committee; Lexington High School Overcrowding – SC Update dated September 10, 2013; Memorandum dated September 4, 2013 from Linda Chase to Dr. Ash re ILP Program Space Needs for LHS; Lexington High School Class Size Policy – Third Reading; Memorandum from Dr. Ash to the School Committee regarding Low LHS Class Sizes; LPS 2013-2014 Enrollment Numbers; Letter dated September 4, 2013 to School Committee Members regarding FY 15 Budget Guidelines; LPS Recommended FY15 Budget Guidelines; 2013-2014 School Committee Agendas – Draft; MASC Official Delegate Form; Draft Superintendent Evaluation, Procedures and Timeline for 2013-2014; LPS Field Trip Request Form from Jonas Clarke Middle School to La Guacima de Alajuela, Costa Rica – March 12-21, 2014; LPS Field Trip Request Form from William Diamond Middle School to La Guácima de Alajuela, Costa Rica – January 29 – February 7, 2014; Use of Drugs and Alcohol on School Premises Policy – Draft; Homelessness Policy – First Reading; LHS Landscaping Committee handouts

Voted by the School Committee October 22, 2013