

MINUTES

Date of Meeting: November 30, 2010

Type of Meeting: Worksession

Place of Meeting: Middle School Auditorium

Members Present: President Dennis Ryan
Vice President Patrick E. Gallagher
Board Member Gina Guma
Board Member Darlene Tangney
Board Member Roy Lester

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Dr. Robert Greenberg, Superintendent
Dr. Randie Berger, Deputy Superintendent
Dr. Vincent Butera, Assistant Superintendent – Curriculum
and Instruction
Mr. Michael DeVito, Chief Operating Officer
Ms. Carole Butler, District Clerk

I. Call to Order/Pledge/Opening Remarks

Call to Order

President Ryan called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM, led the community in the Pledge of Allegiance and praised the HS Production of Moon Over Buffalo.

Dr. Greenberg requested the Board help him decide on the final HS field plans, since he would prefer to submit the District plans all together when he meets with the State Education Department in January to maximize our state aid. He urged the Board to come to a consensus and not jeopardize the 40% reimbursement expected from submitting the full package.

II. Discussion of Long Beach High School Fields

Discussion of Long Beach High School Fields

President Ryan was anxious to resolve this issue and asked if the Board Members would like to express their sentiments at this time. It was determined that the Board would wait until the end of the meeting to present their final comments.

Mr. DeVito reiterated the changes of the last HS site plan. The bleacher system was redesigned and downsized, the placement of the field was moved further east, an auxiliary parking area was replaced with plantings, handball courts were relocated, there are 271 parking spaces, there are 651 seats, well within the 3:1 ratio, and homecoming will remain at MS complex. Referred sound system issue to Tom Ritzenthaler.

Tom Ritzenthaler explained that while the sound system is capable of producing 85 decibels, it would probably rarely do so. Speakers will probably be facing fields, behind the bleachers, pointing towards the buildings for less sound penetration. The light poles which vary in height from 60-80 feet have been moved away from neighboring homes with the new field placement. The berm bed, along the edging of the residential properties is 12 feet wide, 3 ft. high, with an estimated root structure of 7-8 feet.

Board Member Lester talked about the small stadium size, that 85 decibels represents the noise level of heavy traffic, and the berm plantings of pines. Bamboo had been suggested as an alternative..

President Ryan expressed his vision for the site to reflect that of practice fields, did not see need for bleachers at tennis courts which he deemed impractical, and was comfortable with 500-600 seats total without portable bleachers.

Mr. Lester inquired about the height of the portable bleachers, which are too low for football, and the seating at the baseball/softball fields. He is pleased with current design and supports the portable bleachers; would have preferred 1200 seats to accommodate entire HS population, but this is a fair compromise.

Steve Lahey explained that the current bleachers at the baseball/softball fields are in such poor shape that few people use them.

Board Member Guma suggested that the portable bleachers be placed at the softball/baseball fields.

Board Member Tangney supports 400 seats on one side of field and 200 on the other, the angled scoreboard, and the idea of using the new portable bleachers at the baseball/softball site. She expressed concern about the access for ambulances.

Mr. DeVito and Tom Ritzenthaler described the numerous access points on Blackheath Road, Park Drive and Lagoon Drive West for ambulances; and the back to back scoreboard concept.

Board Member Guma supports idea of portable bleachers being housed at baseball/softball fields, and the angled scoreboard. She wants to continue to improve the parking situation with the Town of Hempstead and will work with the Board on monitoring the hours of lighting on the fields.

Mr. Lester concurred that parking has been a horrific problem. Dr. Greenberg has been trying to partner with the fire commissioners and police department to make progress with the Town of Hempstead in this area.

III. Public Comment on the Worksession Topic

<p>Public Comment on Worksession Topic</p>

Eli Haas – 330 Blackheath Road – has been a resident for 35 years and is concerned about safety, not just for the students or attendees of sporting events, but the local community members as well. He submitted envelopes, containing photographs and an email, to the Board. Mr. Haas is responsible for the speed bump on Blackheath Road and complained about the lack of respect for stop signs.

Pat Olson – 624 W. Walnut Street – like Dr. Ryan, he enjoyed the HS production of Moon Over Buffalo which had a packed house and no problems with traffic. He was happy to hear that there are still 2 practice fields, disappointed that no football games could be played at the new field because of the lack of seating; and suggested using the lower portion of bleachers for the band which takes up almost 200 seats. Lacrosse tournament held at MS field on Sunday generated envy of participants; regrets the downsizing of the fields.

Ira Stern – 305 Blackheath Road – agrees with Dr. Ryan’s comments. Five hundred seats, while more than he had hoped for, is adequate; 85 decibels is very loud.

Ron Friedl – 317 Blackheath Road – questioned the height and distance of the berms by the tennis courts, and the volume of the present sound system at the HS. On behalf of Gregory Naham, he requested plans from Tom Ritzenthaler.

Rick Rubin – 211 Blackheath Road – commended the Board, but expressed disappointment at the closeness of the tennis courts to the neighbors.

Darlene Haut – 205 Blackheath Road – is uncomfortable that decision is being made at this time, before the information is received from Tom Ritzenthaler. She described the lights as towers, was alarmed at the decibel level of the sound system, noted the site plan was not to scale, expressed concern about roots, particularly those of bamboo, questioned the availability of funds, and asked about the locking down of the portable bleachers.

Lisa Volpe – 132 Blackheath Road – thanked the Administration/Board for the information that was provided but asked for more time to study the plans before they are finalized, questioned the reality of no spill over from such high lighting, asked about the speaker system in relation to the MS, and noted that bamboo is very invasive and short-lived.

Steve Candon – 10 W. Beech Street – thanked everyone for their due diligence and for their efforts at compromise, explained the lack of attendance by parents/supporters of the fields due to a HS scheduling conflict, and asked the Board to stand strong and provide our kids with a great facility.

Cathy Musk – Co-President, HSPTSA – in representing the HSPTSA Board expressed appreciation for the Administration/Board in its attempts to meet the needs/concerns of the entire community. While understanding the feelings of the local neighbors, the HSPTSA wishes the local community understood their desire for a larger seating capacity. It would have been wonderful to have had an outdoor graduation there, or a place for the students to be all together.

Jackie Miller – Co-President, Central Council PTA – does appreciate all the hard work, shares the same sentiments as HSPTSA. Thanked Board for listening to community; anxious for conclusion of this issue so that the district can move onto all other projects.

Brian Hassett – 14 Fairway Road – thanked the Board for compromise; noted that lights from the Middle School, which he deemed unsightly, can be seen on Fairway Road, asked for an investigation of a sound system at 85 decibels, and voiced concerns about traffic situation in the area.

Gary Brown – 21 Park Drive – echoed the sentiments of Steve Candon, noted that most field supporters were not in attendance because of scheduling conflict with HS, was upset with the compromise, and asked if these were the final plans.

JoAnna Cincotta – 120 Pacific Boulevard – is saddened that the HS will not have the beautiful sports complex that the MS has. The students want the new fields. It would be good for school pride. Lighting may be a issue, but traffic and sound with few spectators should not be a problem for the neighbors.

Michele Brown – 21 Park Drive – feels that emergency situations would be better handled with the old plan with its field location; larger stands would build sense of camaraderie; students will lose the sense of pride with the smaller venue.

Michelle Asarch – 19 East Beech Street – commented that the tennis team has no seating and that the bleachers would be beneficial.

Marie Birnbaum – 294 Blackheath Road – is concerned about the close proximity of the tennis courts to her property.

Felicia Solomon – 269 Blackheath Road – was happy that 2 HS students spoke. Her concern is for the availability of money, would like to see a guarantee of money, and alternative plan if money does not come through.

IV. Board of Education Comments

Board of Education Comments
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Tom Ritzenthaler and Dr. Greenberg responded to questions from Dr. Ryan.

Mr. Ritzenthaler explained that the sound system was the same at the HS as the MS, that the distance between the houses and the tennis courts is 12 feet, and that there are no plans for the grassy area until a meeting with Mr. Sambo regarding driving safety.

Dr. Greenberg maintained that there was no reason to believe that the 40% state aid ratio would not continue. Future Boards can revisit expenditures if things change.

Vice President Gallagher explained that these discussions began long ago; that this was the 4th meeting; that they were not voting tonight because the Board had already agreed when the bond was passed. But the Board listened to the concerns. The site plan was distributed at November 9 meeting. The field was moved. Unfortunately, the bleachers were downsized. Tennis courts always have high fences. Lighting poles were lowered in height and number and they were moved further away from the property lines. Tennis courts should have bleachers. The scoreboard was moved. Emergency vehicle situation is a pre-existing a problem. No more daily Blackheath Pre-K traffic. This is decision night – good that we had this conversation – disappointed at not having 1200 seats.

Board Member Tangney discussed the control of the use of lighting for practices/events. Current emergency evacuation plans should remain in effect. We want to be careful about trees, roots, and property lines. School spirit comes from school; this plan is going to create beautiful fields and the students will love it. Tennis courts will be gorgeous, too. Seating should be inside not outside of fence for tennis. Portable seating should be located at softball/baseball field, never at football field. While the community input is greatly appreciated, it is now time to move on. After traveling on Blackheath Road thousands of times, she understands the hazards. Community needs to get legislators to make changes regarding parking and traffic to improve the situation. Fire department concerns were with sprinklers.

Dr. Greenberg explained that the Board will adopt a policy regarding the lighting.

Board Member Guma considers safety a most important issue and she will continue to work together with the community and the Town of Hempstead to rectify this pre-existing parking/traffic issue. Sound and lighting management, controlled by the Board, will be respectful of neighbors. She will look into plantings. Ms. Guma is proud of the Board and the Administration and thanked the public for their attendance at meetings.

Board Member Lester agreed with Board Member Tangney. The local community needs to help with the parking/traffic problems. He wrote letters years ago to the Town of Hempstead regarding the trouble with parking on both sides of the street. Bicycle traffic is of even more of a concern with students not wearing helmets and riding up to 3 kids on a bike. He asked public to write to their legislators.

President Ryan thanked the community for coming out. He reiterated the need for the fields for the HS but felt there was no need for a second stadium. Mr. Epstein will have the burden of scheduling with the major events being held at the MS. The Board compromised and the fields will be mostly used for practice. Sports are seasonal and do not draw huge crowds. Dr. Ryan thanked the students who came out and assured them that they will take pride in the new facilities. It is time to move on. We want to talk about curriculum, instruction, and budget.

Dr. Greenberg invited everyone to the December 7 Board of Education Meeting when the District Literacy Program will be presented.

Dr. Ryan announced that we are still looking for members for the Budget Advisory Committee until mid-January. Please submit names to the District Clerk.

Ira Stern commented that he had been in touch with Gary Sauer of the Traffic Department of the Town of Hempstead and although there were No Parking signs, people simply disobeyed them with no consequence.

Board Member Tangney encouraged the District to remind the public to obey the parking rules.

Dr. Greenberg has been working on parking/traffic enforcement by Town of Hempstead.

V. President Ryan called for a motion to adjourn the Worksession at 9:20 PM.

Motion by: Vice President Gallagher

Seconded by: Board Member Guma

Approved: 5-0

Adjournment

Minutes submitted by: _____
Carole Butler, District Clerk
January 11, 2011