



PLANNING & BUILDING COMMITTEE

Merrimack School District
<http://www.isone.com/~merrpbc>

March 8, 2004
Minutes

Present: W. Morrison, C. Morrison, S. Heinrich, T. Koenig

Absent: F. Rothhaus, K. Powell.

Also Participating: Superintendent M. Chiafery, Business Administrator M. Shevenell,
Mastricola Middle School Principal T. Levesque, Thorntons Ferry School
Principal L. Carter, Reeds Ferry School Principal F. Hoell, Mastricola
Elementary School Principal K. Custer, Merrimack High School Principal K.
Johnson and Assistant Principal C. Smith

At 7:30 PM, W. Morrison thanked the members of the School Administration for coming and announced that there would be informal discussion until T. Koenig could arrive. He indicated the purpose of the meeting was to discuss transportation issues at all schools, with a focus on the Mastricola complex and how kindergarten would impact the traffic situation at all three elementary schools.

Discussion

K. Johnson told the group the high school is concerned that the new traffic light on Baboosic Lake Road being installed for the new middle school will have an impact on student arrival times at the high school and increase student tardiness. He noted that there are approximately 400 students who currently drive to school and there are 612 total parking spaces at the high school.

S. Heinrich brought up the Committee's prior traffic recommendation regarding a one-way traffic pattern around the school.

W. Morrison noted that, long term, once the Superintendent's and SpEd offices are consolidated and re-located, these buildings could be removed and replaced with parking.

K. Custer told the group that additional parking for parents in the circle area during school hours is needed at Mastricola Elementary School. She also indicated that, from 2:15 PM on, access to the main entrance and the parking lot/circle is all but impossible.

S. Heinrich brought up the Committee's prior suggestions for a bus loop for the current middle school on Baboosic Lake Road and enlarging the back parking lot at the elementary school to accommodate bus drop-off and pick ups. He also felt that the School District should re-build the church parking lot due to drainage and snow storage issues.

C. Morrison suggested that there could be state grant monies available to the re-design and re-build of this lot. (T. Koenig arrived at this point.)

Call to order

W. Morrison called the meeting to order at 8 PM. He reminded the group that the Committee had been charged by the School Board to review School District traffic and parking issues, with an eye toward reducing bus traffic on Bishop Street.

F. Hoell told the Committee that he expects to see an increase of 80 cars per day for kindergarten drop-off/pick-up. He has a concern about how a late start/dismissal time at the elementary schools will impact AM Kindergarten drop-off and PM Kindergarten pick-up. He stated that at this point, his only traffic/parking concern is adequate signage. S. Heinrich agreed noting the signage should also indicate when and where cars can and cannot drive. Long term, F. Hoell indicated that the district might consider widening the area near the north playground and creating a bus loop around the school. He thought buses on one side of the school and parents/cars on the other side of school would be ideal.

L. Carter told the group that there has been improvement in the traffic situation at Thorntons Ferry as a result of the new parking lot, but there is still a back-up on Camp Sargent Road in the winter. He also felt that additional signage might be beneficial. He indicated that he was planning to have kindergarten drop-off and pick-up in the back parking lot and echoed F. Hoell's concerns about elementary arrival and dismissal affecting kindergarten AM arrival and PM dismissal.

K. Johnson said he liked the idea of a horse-shoe loop of one way traffic along O'Gara and McElwain for both arrival and departure.

M. Shevenell told the Committee that he would like to have the traffic consultant that the District had utilized for the Thorntons Ferry parking issue, Dan DeBay look at both the Masticola complex and the high school. S. Heinrich asked if the District had funds available for this.

W. Morrison brought up concerns about children walking on Baboosic Lake Road as well as in the parking lots to get to the sidewalks on Baboosic Lake Road. T. Levesque told the Committee that he expects there will be more walkers at the new middle school than at the current middle school. K. Custer told the Committee that Masticola Elementary School has 25 walkers.

Other issues raised included:

- ❖ Parent parking near the schools
- ❖ Student "Sense of Entitlement" regarding driving cars and having a parking space
- ❖ Many towns and cities have one-way streets.

M. Chiafery and M. Shevenell told the group that whatever recommendations come out of the Committee will be part of the 2005-2006 budget process as the School Board is not agents to expend the Paving Capital Reserve Fund. In addition, they told the Committee that it is unknown at this time whether there will be an after-school daycare program at the new upper elementary school or if the activity based program, currently at the middle school, will continue at either or both the new upper elementary and the new middle school. Finally, they reminded

everyone that what is scheduled/planned in the fall, 2005 may be different than what was scheduled/happened in fall, 2004.

W. Morrison stated he felt the Committee needs to review the maps of the old proposal and revise them relative to the current situation at each school.

Other Business

W. Morrison told the Committee he would like to get minutes from as many meetings as possible approved before elections. He noted that the Website has been updated with minutes through August, 2003, but no minutes have been approved since then. As soon as more minutes are approved, they will be posted so the website will be current. The clerk will provide minutes to members before the next meeting so that members can read them and be ready to approve them at the next meeting.

S. Heinrich made a motion to adjourn. Second: T. Koenig. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,