



PLANNING & BUILDING COMMITTEE

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

March 14, 2005
Minutes

Present: J. Vaillancourt, T. Koenig, C. Morrison, W. Morrison, F. Rothhaus and School Board liaison E. Coburn

Excused: S. Heinrich

Also Participating: Shannon Barnes

W. Morrison called the meeting to order at 7:33 PM. He introduced Shannon Barnes as one of the two people running for the two available seats in the upcoming elections.

Upcoming Issues

E. Coburn and W. Morrison told the Committee that the next major project the School Board and Administration might ask the Committee to undertake would be a plan for consolidating the SAU/SpEd offices at a location which needs to be determined. E. Coburn stated this consolidation is five years out in the CIP. W. Morrison noted that this consolidation opens space at the high school campus for a potential addition to the high school building and expanded parking.

J. Vaillancourt stated she wanted to immediately assess the traffic conditions at the new middle school. She felt there are some major safety issues there. Finlay suggested one-way traffic around the school instead of the current student/car drop-off situation. Jody stated there appears to be drainage/ice issues in the student drop-off area. C. Morrison asked if the road met town standards. F. Rothhaus noted that a part of the problem is lack of signage. He also stated he felt that administrators needing to direct traffic every day is indicative of a problem as well as poor use of resources. J. Vaillancourt felt this issue should be addressed before school starts next fall. Members agreed to look into the matter, but expressed concerns about the best way to proceed. After discussion, it was decided to notify the Administration that the Committee had heard from parents with concerns about the traffic situation, was planning to look into the situation, and would be inviting Tom Levesque, Dick Dumont, and Bob Ralph to the next meeting to get their input. Members also noted that any solution would have to be fairly inexpensive as there is no money budgeted for anything major.

Members discussed the transportation proposal that the School Board approved and sent to the Budget Committee. C. Morrison reported that she had heard comments that the Committee was being used as a “scapegoat.” She stated that the School Board often states, “This plan has been reviewed by the PBC” when the reality is that the Committee didn’t necessarily agree with the plan. F. Rothhaus noted that the three members of the School Board had stated they were unable to use the transportation plans proposed by the Committee because the Committee had stated several issues that had not been addressed and had not made a “recommendation.” Members noted that the Committee had not made a recommendation because one plan including bussing kindergarten and one did not. In addition, members noted the issues that the Committee stated

needed to be addressed, still have not been addressed. E. Coburn told the Committee that, whatever happens, there will only be two bus runs in the fall. She stated she is still checking into the software to plan bus runs.

W. Morrison mentioned that another long-term goal of the Committee was a demographic review and a determination of what population numbers would trigger the need to start planning for additional school space at any level. Members noted the study commissioned by the School Board might be the first step in this goal or might have eliminated the need for it.

Members discussed and agreed that there is a need to meet with the entire School Board on a regular basis to discuss current and future concerns as well as any charges the School Board wants to give to the Committee. It was also noted that for several years the Committee has not approved annual goals, which were then shared with the School Board. However, members felt this was because the Committee has been so busy working on space needs, like the high school addition and the new middle school as well as other School Board charges, that writing and approving annual goals had not been a priority.

Approval of Prior Minutes

C. Morrison made a MOTION to approve the minutes of January 31, 2005. Second: J. Vaillancourt. MOTION PASSED: 4 – 0 – 1. (T. Koenig abstaining.)

Other

1. W. Morrison noted that the Committee would need to find someone to maintain the Website as he is not running for re-election. S. Barnes stated she thought she could do this.
2. J. Vaillancourt asked what the procedure would be after the election. W. Morrison noted that at the first meeting the Committee would re-organize and elect new officers. Members stated who was Chair would affect how people perceived the Committee.
3. The Middle School Space Utilization report was distributed. Members noticed that the student numbers given for each classroom were not actual enrollment numbers. In a review of the other school reports, the enrollment figures from MUES and TFS also seem to be incorrect. W. Morrison will send a memo to Marge Chiafery to ask that these reports be corrected.
4. E. Coburn told the Committee that Representative L'Heureux has approached the School Board about a motorcycle training program renting a portion of the high school parking lot to teach motorcycle safety classes.

Next Meeting

After discussion, the Committee decided the next meeting will be held March 28th and that no meeting will be held in April.

T. Koenig made a MOTION to adjourn. Second: F. Rothhaus. MOTION PASSED: 5 – 0 – 0.

W. Morrison adjourned the meeting at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Pat Heinrich