



## PLANNING & BUILDING COMMITTEE

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

May 10, 2004  
Minutes

Present: F. Rothhaus, W. Morrison, C. Morrison, J. Vaillancourt, T. Koenig

Excused: S. Heinrich

Also Participating: Business Administrator M. Shevenell, Reeds Ferry Principal F. Hoell,  
Thorntons Ferry Principal L. Carter, Superintendent M. Chiafery, NESDEC  
representatives E. Kelly and D. Kennedy

W. Morrison called the meeting to order at 7:46 P.M.

### **Demographics Study**

M. Chiafery told the Committee that the School Board had received an unanticipated grant from H & R Block and had decided to use some of the funds to do a long term demographic study to specifically look at elementary school needs. She reminded the Committee that it has been suggested that, at some point in the future, an elementary school could be built on the back of the Buker property. She felt the “time was right” for such a study as the district is getting ready to both move the 5<sup>th</sup> grade and implement public kindergarten. She hoped the study would look at how space in all three elementary schools is being utilized and determine whether there might be a need for redistricting. She indicated the purpose of this meeting was to ensure that the Committee had a copy of the proposal and to start a dialog about the upcoming process. She hoped the Committee could provide the NESDEC representatives with suggestions regarding information to be gathered and people to be interviewed.

T. Koenig stated that the concept was a good idea, but he felt that it was hard to try to predict demographics for more than five years. He asked if the study would look at individual grades or individual schools. He also questioned whether the current configuration of the elementary schools is utilizing resources wisely.

C. Morrison pointed out that most of the residential development “in the works” is in the southern part of town. She noted 256 units at Harris Pond and stated there was a lot of commercial and industrial development as well as elderly housing planned in the northern part of town.

D. Kennedy spoke of the “echo” effect: when people in large houses who no longer have children move to smaller quarters or condos, people with children often move in. He also

pointed out that 96 children currently in district list a grandparent as primary caretaker. He noted that many people are moving away from big cities in a sort of “9-11” reaction.

Finlay Rothhaus suggested that the study should utilize the Town “Build-Out” study.

M. Chiafery and the principals shared the current enrollments of the elementary schools: Thorntons Ferry – 716, Reeds Ferry – 659 and Mastricola – 550. They noted that the two Ferry schools were mirror image and that all schools had the same educational philosophy and program goals.

D. Kennedy stated he would be looking at the current school “districts” and may determine that no change is necessary. He stated that some school districts shift boundaries annually. He also said the last time redistricting was done was in 1989. He provided a handout showing some of his preliminary research. He noted that usually a school district population breaks out 60-70% elementary, 20% middle and 10% high school. He also noted that the GIS program that was used for helping with the busing issue would help his research.

W. Morrison stated he agreed with T. Koenig and felt that it was going to be important for everyone to understand that any projected enrollments are really “best guesstimates.” He felt the study would only be as good as the data input and the sources of information.

J. Vaillancourt noted the study might show if there are any glaring concerns.

D. Kennedy stated as part of the process he would be looking at the 2000 census, OSP projections, communities in the region, and interview various town department heads, elected or appointed officials and long-time residents. Committee members suggested the following:

- Town Manager
- Police & Fire Chiefs (current and past)
- Nashua Regional Planning Commission
- Jay Minkareh
- Nelson Disco
- John Segedy
- Pete Gagnon
- Developers Steve Keach and John Tenhave
- Greg Michael
- Jim O’Neil

W. Morrison suggested that projections be made looking at both births and building permits.

F. Rothhaus noted, that at one time, 80% of Merrimack’s residents used to commute out of Merrimack to work, but now, 80% work in Merrimack.

C. Morrison asked that D. Kennedy compare the median house prices for each area/region town he reviews.

D. Kennedy noted that his partner, Ray Radonis, would be walking the elementary schools to determine school capacities. W. Morrison explained that the Committee had determined both recommended and maximum capacities of each school using state standards. He stated that these figures and explanations could be found on the Committee website.

D. Kennedy explained that he would give M. Chiafery interim information, which she would pass onto the Committee. M. Chiafery asked for a meeting schedule as she would like to have D. Kennedy meet with the Committee over the summer.

### **Meeting Schedule**

C. Morrison made a MOTION to accept the proposed calendar. Second: F. Rothhaus. The MOTION PASSED unanimously. Meeting locations for summer months will be determined; however, members noted that if they are meeting with members from the Administration, the meeting could be held at the high school without the need for custodial overtime.

### **Re-organization**

F. Rothhaus made a MOTION to keep the same officers as last year. Second: J. Vaillancourt. The MOTION PASSED on a vote of 3 – 0 – 2.

### **Yearly Goals & Objectives**

W. Morrison stated that he would like the Committee to approve formal goals. He noted that some of the projects for the year will include the traffic report, trigger numbers and the demographic study. He asked members to contemplate goals and objectives and requested that the clerk forward to all members copies of the most recent draft of goals that was discussed. In addition, members asked if they would be meeting with the Technology Committee once again.

W. Morrison stated that he felt that a first priority should be writing and approving the traffic report. He offered to prepare a first draft for presentation at the next meeting. J. Vaillancourt reported that she was meeting with M. Shevenell, Kathy Custer, and the traffic engineer to review some preliminary plans for parking lots at Masticola.

### **Approval of Minutes**

T. Koenig made a MOTION to approve the minutes of April 12<sup>th</sup>, subject to correction. Second: C. Morrison. The MOTION PASSED on a vote of 4 – 0 – 1.

### **Next meeting**

The next meeting will be on June 7<sup>th</sup>.

T. Koenig made a MOTION to adjourn. Second: C. Morrison. The MOTION PASSED unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Heinrich