

Evanston City-School Liaison Committee
Special Meeting
October 10, 2013
Minutes

PRESENT:

City-School Liaison Committee

Jane Grover, 7th Ward Alderman
Mark Tendam, 6th Ward Alderman
Claudia Garrison, D65 School Board
Scott Rochelle, D202 School Board
Bill Geiger, D202 School Board

ABSENT

City-School Liaison Committee

Candace Chow, D65 School Board

Evanston High School District 202 (ETHS)

Eric Witherspoon, D202 School Superintendent
Mark Metz, D202 School Board
Shelly Gates, Director of Career Preparation and Community Partnerships...
Ahmadou Drame, Career and Job Coach
Bill Stafford, D202 Chief Financial Officer
Sam Pettineo, D202 Safety Director
Will McConnell, D202 Community Relations

Evanston/Skokie CC School District 65

Barb Hiller, D65 Interim Chief Education Officer

City of Evanston

Elizabeth Tisdahl, Mayor
Martin Lyons, Assistant City Manager
Joe McRae, Deputy City Manager & Interim Parks, Recreation & Community Services Director
Deputy Chief Jeffrey Jamraz, Evanston Police
Karen Danczak Lyons, Evanston Library Director
Kate Todd, Executive Assistant, City Manager's Office

Others

Betty Ester, Resident
Albert Gibbs, Resident
Melissa Carpenter, YOU
Bob Seidenberg, Evanston Review
Mary Mumbrue, Evanston RoundTable

The October 10, 2013 City-School Liaison Committee meeting was called to order at 5:35 pm by Alderman Jane Grover. A quorum was present.

Ald. Grover began the meeting with the 2nd item on the agenda regarding Shared Facilities. Ald Grover noted that this issue was also considered at the Recreation Summit held earlier this year. Consideration needs to be given of how we are using all our facilities and whether we are maximizing our use of them. Ald Grover suggested that this topic be referred back to the

respective administrations for a report on how we use our facilities and what collaboration is already going on. A report from each administration would be presented and discussed at the next City-School Liaison Committee in February 2014.

Ald. Grover introduced Ahmadou Drame, new Career & Job Coach at ETHS. Mr. Drame gave a brief update on the work he is doing at ETHS. His office is in the College & Career Center, where he meets with individual students to review their résumés and assist with job applications. He also offers workshops in classrooms on a variety of topics including simulated work place situations and conflict resolution. He has been meeting with employers and members of the community. Superintendent Witherspoon praised Mr. Drame's work with students at ETHS.

Ald. Grover introduced the Mayor's Youth Task Force. Dr. Witherspoon explained that Assistant Superintendent Marcus Campbell (who was not present due to Parent-Teacher Conferences) had requested more information about how ETHS can partner with this group. Ald Grover noted that Mayor Tisdahl was present and invited representatives from ETHS to speak with the Mayor about the Mayor's Youth Task Force. Mayor Tisdahl she is happy to talk with anyone about the group and mentioned that Mr. Campbell had asked to have additional students included on the task force, which has been done. If more information is needed or questions arise, both the Mayor and Deputy City Manager Joe McRae are accessible any time.

Mr. Drame was called upon to discuss the Career Connections event on November 19. Mr. Drame explained that the event will take place 8th period (2 pm to 4:30 pm) followed by refreshments. The purpose of the event is to bring awareness to students about different employment opportunities for ages 16-24, including individuals not enrolled at ETHS. Employers will be present to talk to students. This is not a "job fair" in that students will not be able to apply for specific jobs, however it will give students the opportunity to explore numerous career options. The Youth Job Center and Oakton Community College are helping with outreach and will be present.

CTE Department Chair Shelley Gates explained the Geometry In Construction classes at ETHS. There are 50 students in the program. They receive credit for 2 classes: Geometry and Building Construction. Over the course of the school year, geometry is taught as they will build a house. The student group is diverse by gender and race. The house is being constructed at ETHS and moved to 1941 Jackson when completed. A "Community Build Day" is planned on October 19. Volunteers are invited to sign up to help. This is a great project which has benefited from extraordinary community support. It is sponsored jointly by: ETHS, the City of Evanston and Community Partners for Affordable Housing. The plan is to have this program be self-sustaining and to build an affordable house every year. Information and progress about the project is available on the website at: <http://www.wildkitconstruction.com/>.

Dr. Witherspoon and Interim D65 Chief Education Officer Barbara Hiller discussed the community-wide reading initiative. Both school boards are devising a joint goal for both districts which is to be a community reading and literacy initiative for residents from infancy through young adult. The special need is reaching pre-K and post high school residents. Foundation 65 and the Evanston Public Library offer excellent programs in this area, including both Spanish

and English. Focusing on reading as a gateway to all learning, the joint goal is still in process of being formulated, and will be rolled out at the District 202 and District 65 joint school board meeting in January 2014. It was recommended that in order to get the entire community behind this, support from the City, primarily from the Library, is also needed. The initiative will be included as a regular agenda item on future City-School Liaison Committee agendas. Library Director Karen Danczak Lyons, D202 Pete Bavis and Asst D65 Superintendent Ellen Fogelberg are key staff members in each organization. Mr. Geiger suggested an inventory is needed of all the reading programs currently running throughout Evanston, and that City staff should be included in preparing the joint goal for the school boards.

Alderman Grover noted that the Safe School Zone discussion held during the September 10 Special City-School Liaison Committee meeting left them with a to-do list. They planned to establish a small working group to look at the issue in more depth and report back. Meanwhile, the City has referred the IGA discussion back to the City's Human Services Committee. She stated that a smaller group met last week about ways to move forward, and one thing that came out of that group meeting was to focus specifically on addressing any police or safety issues around the High School's dismissal time. Many members of the ETHS Safety staff were able to join the Evanston Police Department (EPD) training program offered regarding cultural diversity. This training has included all EPD sworn staff, civilian supervisors and the City's 911 and 311 employees. Claudia Garrison noted that the D65 Board supported a resolution in favor of establishing a "Safe School Zone" along the lines proposed by D202.

Dr. Witherspoon had questions regarding status of blue-light cameras being deployed around the high school. Deputy Police Chief Jamraz responded that technology issues (due to the need for high-speed fiber) with the cameras are being addressed, and two cameras will hopefully be operational in early November with more to follow. Dr. Witherspoon stressed the importance of having the cameras operational as a deterrent and to create more safe passage routes. Ald. Grover explained the Northwestern University (NU) Light Walk will take place next week, which includes representatives of NU's Student Government, EPD, City staff, aldermen and neighbors looking at lighting and safety concerns in the NU off-campus areas. Something similar could be done along the streets near ETHS. Ald Grover suggested anyone seeing areas that are too dark can call 311 to have trees trimmed have street lights replaced if needed. Ald Grover also stated installation of the additional lights on Church Street should happen by the end of November.

Ald Grover moved to approval of the minutes from the two previous meetings. A motion to approve the May 9, 2013 minutes was approved. It was agreed to hold the September 10, 2013 minutes for the next meeting due to the absence of Gretchen Livingston who had provided notes regarding the September meeting. Next meeting is of the City-School Liaison Committee meeting is scheduled for February 27, 2014 at Evanston Township High School.

Ald Tendam asked about the future progress of the Safe School IGA. City Council has put the issue back to the Human Services Committee. Mr. Geiger noted that the meeting of the small group a week ago was a great start and proposed expanding the group to include any others who might be interested in further discussion. The question arose regarding data being collected by the Police Department. Mr. Rochelle wants to leave the meeting with something

more concrete. He believes we have the data. Dr. Witherspoon noted that the gang activity on Howard Street that EPD Commander Parrott had talked about is the same activity happening near ETHS. ETHS staff are looking to be preventative in the area, not intending to call in the Evanston Police for every occasion. Dr. Witherspoon expressed urgent need for this.

Question arose of need for another special meeting going forward. Mr. McRae said the City certainly understands the feelings of urgency. Alderman Grover stated that perhaps the IGA as proposed is too broad, and includes more streets than needed. She suggests re-crafting the IGA before it goes back to Human Services Committee. Data is being collected now by Evanston Police. Concern arose of whether establishing a specific "safe school perimeter" will the offenders just move to another area. There have been a few incidents on Dodge. Ms. Garrison stated that the incidents have been increasing yearly. It was agreed that none of that is acceptable, but the data will give us a baseline going forward. Alderman Grover offered to re-craft the IGA to deal more effectively with Evanston's particular situation. The next Human Services meeting is November 4. Mr. Rochelle stated that data collection is a distraction. He suggested IGA is needed first and then measure against any data. Alderman Tendam stated that this proposal needs to go to the community; this needs acceptance from the community.

It was recommended another City-School meeting be scheduled within a month or at least prior to Thanksgiving. It being too difficult to schedule a meeting this evening, a Special City-School meeting will have to be scheduled by administrative staff and would be hosted by ETHS. Superintendent Witherspoon asked that everyone remember that this proposal is about every child in Evanston.

The next regular City-School meeting is scheduled for February 27, 2014.

Meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Kate Todd
Executive Assistant, City Manager's Office