

SCHOOL FACILITIES INITIATIVE TASK FORCE
THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 2015 – 6:30 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX, COMMUNITY ROOM 1

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Ackerman, Cabral, DeMatto, Greenleaf, Heller, Massett (6:37 p.m.), Trejo, Zoda
Ex Officio: Schmidt, Watson (6:45 p.m.)
Staff: Oefinger, Graner, Kilpatrick, Bresnayan
Consultant: Mike Zuba

There was no quorum present so those present participated in informal discussions.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 14, 2015 – None.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Dr. Graner reported that Claude Chester is no longer racially imbalanced, but it is still pending imbalance. The state has indicated that they will still honor the plan as proposed by Groton. Claude Chester, Catherine Kolnaski, and Northeast Academy elementary schools are still problematic from a racial balance standpoint.

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

a. Housekeeping Items

Town Manager Oefinger reported on a meeting with DEEP officials. A list of properties (possible replacement sites for the Merritt property) was provided to DEEP and some of the properties were walked. The Town is still seeking guidance from DEEP on what types of replacement property they are looking for. The Merritt parcel was purchased under a different state program for field development so the state may possibly be looking for another site for fields. DEEP staff indicated that they will not be able to get back to the Town for a month or more, but they do understand that the Town is committed to the site and proceeding with the plan.

b. Survey Update

Mr. Zuba noted that the survey began on the previous Monday.

c. Public Outreach Plan and Strategy – Getting the Task Force Involved

Mr. Zuba asked Task Force members what they were hearing from the community following the two public workshops and public access television airing of the presentation. Task Force members reported:

- Concern with the Route 1 access
- Initial skepticism followed by support for the well thought out plan
- Programming concerns: integration, availability of robust programs
- Building schools that are flexible and based on education, not specific programs

Mr. Zuba mentioned the editorial in The Day, which stresses the importance of sticking to the facts when discussing the plan. Discussion followed on whether or not to respond to the editorial. It was decided that Graner, Ackerman, Greenleaf, and Trejo would draft a guest op-ed piece.

A tour of the Merritt property was scheduled for 5:30 p.m. prior to the 6:30 p.m. regular meeting on July 9th.

Mr. Zuba identified the need to develop a plan to reach different groups in the community and he reviewed potential outreach methods over the next five months. Trejo volunteered to form a group to attend school open houses. Graner volunteered to participate in Bruce Flax's talk show. With respect to community organizations, task force members must be willing to go to them to make presentations so that it is convenient for the organizations.

Mr. Zuba noted that the survey results will be available on July 9th. Mr. Zuba will not be available on August 13th so the group agreed to move the meeting to August 20th. Discussion followed on meeting with the Town Council, Board of Education and RTM at the first meeting in September.

Other ideas included making 15 minute presentations for athletic groups, posting information boards in physical spaces, and engaging Groton Parks and Recreation, the Senior Center, Chambers of Commerce, business associations.

d. Next Steps

Mr. Zuba summarized next steps as tailoring messages to different audiences and identifying different groups and areas of the community to target based on the survey results.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.