



MEETING MINUTES

PROJECT: Mercer Island School District
Long-Range Facility Plan

PROJECT NO: 2019911.00

DATE: 20 January 2020

FILE NAME: Community Outreach Mtg_200115

SUBJECT: Community Outreach Meeting

MEETING DATE: 15 January 2020

TIME: 6:00 - 8:00 pm

LOCATION: Northwood Elementary School Quiet Dining Room

ATTENDEES:

Community Members

Marie Bender, Resident
Bill Hochberg, Citizen
Patrick Jordan, Parent
Leslie McKelvie, Parent
David Myerson, Citizen
Lucia Pirzio-Biroli, Planning Commission
Suzanne Skone, Chamber of Commerce
Ren Yuthok, Citizen
Tsering Yuthok Short, Parent

MISD Support Team

Donna Colosky, MISD Superintendent
Ty Bergstrom, MISD Executive Director of Finance
Tony Kuhn, MISD Director of Maintenance & Operations
Brandy Fox, Owner's Representative, CPM

Mahlum Team

LeRoy Landers
Jennifer Lubin
JoAnn Wilcox

The following represents the architect's understanding of discussions held and decisions reached in the meeting. Anyone with amendments to these minutes should notify the author within five (5) days of the minutes date in order to amend as appropriate.



INTRODUCTION

On January 15th, 2020, members of the planning team held a community outreach session to get community input on the long-range planning process, goals, and needs. Separate outreach sessions will garner community and staff input. There will be another set of outreach sessions in the spring that will focus on long-range plan approaches. The meeting was open to all members of the community.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

LeRoy Landers reviewed the long-range planning process and schedule, as well as the vision and goals developed by the district and Facility Planning Committee (FPC). A brief overview of district need was provided, covering the areas of educational program, capacity and enrollment, and facility condition. A copy of the complete presentation and other detailed background information can be found on the district website.

COMMUNITY INPUT

The following comments were made by community members attending the outreach session. These comments have been summarized into a list of goals (attached) that will be presented to the Facility Planning Committee and taken into consideration during the long-range planning process.

Vision & Goals

- :: Robotics is a student-led program. It provides an opportunity to motivate and prepare kids for the world of technology. Students can see the pay-off of math and science education, which motivates them to study harder and further a career in STEM. There are a lot of kids in the program that are not getting great grades elsewhere, but they are loving what they are doing. That type of energy can get them motivated. Robotics is part of a national phenomena (First Robotics). Students want to learn more, make things, and compete. The district should step up and provide the resources for this program. The current room for tools is very small.
- :: MISD is a small school district in a small community with a finite budget and ebbs and flows in population. We should think about a school district differently: not as a silo but integrated with the city and other services. For example, develop a theater program that serves both the district and the community. Consider handing over management of district buildings to be managed by the city, so that the district can focus on education, or consider a shared office for city and district administration.
- :: In view of the two failed bond issues, whatever is proposed needs to be financially feasible. LeRoy noted that the intention currently is not building toward a capital measure; it is more about understanding need and what, if anything, makes sense to address the need.
- :: Hands-on skills are important. An ideal school would include areas to teach life skills, such as cooking, financial planning, etc.
- :: Provide spaces that the community can use for meetings and recreational / sports activities.
- :: Schools should 'speak' to the neighborhoods in which they preside. School facilities need to be seen in a context and need to fit into the community.
- :: How do you respond to changes in the future? For example, 3D printers are big now but will not be in five years. LeRoy responded that conceptually, considerations around flexibility and adaptability can address this at a planning level. The more detailed level of building design is not part of long-range planning.
- :: Replace the pool.
- :: There should be more high schoolers biking to school instead of driving.

Educational Programs

- :: The robotics program needs more space. There should be a space for practicing (approximately 20' x 20' arena); currently have to go practice elsewhere. These kids have a business team: they do marketing, management, and have an alliance with a special education robotics team. This program is building our kids for the future. It connects a whole bunch of pieces of curriculum, and is an extension of the desire for hands-on skills.
- :: There is a desire to see robotics pushed down to the middle school and elementary school levels. There is a middle school robotics team now and there are competitions available for younger kids also. There is a huge opportunity to grab those kids. This program meets the goal of inclusion; it pulls in all kinds of kids. Superintendent Donna Colosky noted that MISD also has robotics embedded in the curriculum across the whole K-12 continuum.
- :: There is a need for unprogrammed space that can be flex space. This space could be used for the Destination Imagination program. Kids need to be able to get messy and stretch beyond structured limits.

Capacity & Enrollment

- :: What about year-to-year fluctuations in enrollment? LeRoy noted that the district does annual tracking and adjustments based on current conditions.
- :: Does the enrollment projection ignore arrival of mass transit arriving in 2023? There is concern that the number of kids per resident may increase significantly. Ty Bergstrom noted that the current enrollment projection *does* include this consideration and the District will track and assess any changes, and may need to adjust projections if there is a major swing in the enrollment.
- :: Have we examined the student population and the apartments on the north end? That is where they would see the growth. Yes, the demographer considered this. The enrollment report is available on the website.
- :: Is it possible for the long-range plan to build in flexibility? For example, when schools were not fully used, they were used as housing.
- :: The current school levy retires in 2022. Levies are up for renewal every 4-6 years. Capital improvements would be a separate bond issue.
- :: Is it better to delay decisions until changes happen (such as light rail) or adjust/make changes along the way? LeRoy noted that the core planning approaches will be put out to the broader community and they will either corroborate or not. The long-range plan starts to set a framework with regard to how the district and the board can start thinking about strategies for facility management. Having a plan in place will help the district plan for the future.
- :: There is a strong history of collaboration in the Mercer Island community. Let's think big and think of integrating the city together with the district, so they can be flexible to evolve as programs change. Create synergies. The district should be liaising with the city and planning committee.
- :: Transportation is important for both safety and health. Address climate change and make bike transportation safe around the Island. Reduce the number of cars on the Island.
- :: Four new portables were put up at West Mercer Elementary after Northwood Elementary was completed. Are these being used, the plan was supposed to be getting rid of portables? It was noted by the district that these portables are fully utilized.

Facility Condition (Physical Condition & Educational Adequacy)

- :: Replace the Mary Wayte Pool facility. The existing facility should just be torn down. It is uniformly viewed negatively in the community. However, it is needed as the community pool and the high school pool.
- :: Acoustics are important and particularly critical in learning spaces.
- :: West Mercer Elementary School is a former wetland. You can hear water coursing under the site during a rainstorm.
- :: Consider if the district should build larger classrooms in the future. Thinking about the square foot per student metric and whether the new middle school classrooms are working at the size they were designed? They were planned at the smaller size option rather than the bigger option.
- :: What about playgrounds and landscaping? It was noted that this is part of a long-range facilities plan. There are some FPC goals around these topics.
- :: The district should encourage kids to bike to school instead of driving. This is a paradigm shift that we need to encourage kids to think about. How about charging students to park at school?

Next Steps & Comments / Questions

- :: The long-range planning process should encourage ways to take a different path.
- :: It is surprising that sustainability did not get a lot of votes from the FPC. LeRoy explained that the group that voted assumed that sustainability would already be included as a priority, and this will be recognized in the planning process.
- :: It would be worthwhile for the district to do a large-scale survey to see if the community agrees with what the Committee thinks, similar to what the city does (1,500+ people). LeRoy noted that there will be a real-time survey of larger community in the next round of community meetings and also an online survey that is open to the broader community.
- :: It is important to communicate to the broader community through other means beyond the district's website and social media, to reach a wider audience. Consider using Nextdoor to tell people what is going on. The planning process should not get ahead of what the community knows and decides.
- :: When is the second outreach meeting going to happen? LeRoy noted that the first community meeting was cancelled due to weather and has not yet been rescheduled.
- :: When will presentation incorporating tonight's goals be available on the website? Brandy Fox noted that it will be available shortly after next the planning meeting, around January 28th.

Community Planning Goals

The following goals were developed from community member comments during an outreach session on January 15th, 2020, and additional emailed comments. The list of goals will continue to be updated as more community input is received.

PROGRAM

- > Provide robotics facilities that meet short-term and long-term program goals (increase space)
- > Expand curriculum for engineering and S.T.E.M. at all levels in the district
- > Provide more unprogrammed “messy” space, including maker space and tools
- > Promote student-led curriculum programs
- > Provide space to acquire life skills at school (cooking, financial planning, etc.)
- > Create facilities that help kids learn more, make things, and compete
- > Evaluate if recently built classrooms are appropriately sized

FLEXIBILITY & ADAPTABILITY

- > Look to the future and prepare to respond to changes that are still unknown
- > Plan for changes in technology on the horizon

FACILITIES

- > Put sustainability at the forefront of development plans (for example, roofs should be constructed with solar panels or be solar panel ready and no fossil fuel infrastructure)
- > Consider acoustical performance
- > Replace Mary Wayte Pool

TRANSPORTATION

- > Encourage biking rather than driving to school (and provide infrastructure)

COMMUNITY USE

- > Balance community use space across the Island
- > Schools should be seen in the context of the neighborhood (fit and beauty)

CONNECTIONS & PROCESS

- > Consider district and city synergies: integration opportunities and community priorities
- > Consider the district and city as one (city manages facilities / district manages education)
- > Connect to Island planning initiatives
- > Recognize that financial affordability is paramount for the long-range plan