

FACILITIES TASK FORCE III

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, January 17, 2008

Groton-Dunstable Regional Middle School North – Library

6:30 p.m.

Present: Voting Members: Bill McDonald, Nancy Bugbee, Maryanne Squeglia, Gary Hogle, Dave Johnson, Karen Lofgren, Elena Lazaris, Josh Degen, Pete Carson, Walter Alterisio
Nonvoting Members: Pete Myerson, Karen Tuomi, Steve Silverman, Ruthann Goguen, Dr. Alan Genovese, Steve Byrne, Tim Sheehan

Chair Bill McDonald called the meeting to order at 6:54 p.m.

The Chair made a motion to accept the FTF meeting minutes from the November, 2007 meeting. The motion was unanimously accepted.

One member of the FTF brought up the suggestion that this committee prepare reports on *each* of the school facilities in this District. Elena Lazaris had just completed one on Prescott Elementary School and presented the report to the FTF last November. Dr. Genovese added that *this* had been done by the previous Facility Task Force and made reference to the feasibility studies/reports that were in the FTF II binder. Discussion then ensued regarding whether or not there were enough members interested in 'taking on' a school/facility and completing a feasibility report on that chosen building. Subsequently, a motion was made to form subcommittees for each individual school/facility and have reports done on each one of them, as in the same manner Prescott was done. The motion was unanimously accepted. Members then volunteered to research and prepare a report on each of the District's schools/facilities as follows:

Karen Lofgren	Boutwell
Dave Johnson	Swallow Union Elementary School/Union Building
Nancy Bugbee	Florence Roche Elementary School
Gary Hogle	GD Regional Middle School
Maryanne Squeglia	Tarbell and GD Regional High School
Bill McDonald	Peter Twomey Youth Center

It was then determined that Bill McDonald and Nancy Bugbee would work on creating a template that would be used by the members to gather their information and create their reports. Mr. McDonald stated that he would email all members the template within the upcoming week so that they could begin gathering information for their respective schools.

The next issue brought up for discussion was the issue of possibly taking Prescott off-line as an elementary school and what that 'scenario' would look like. Dr. Genovese conveyed to the members the importance of the work that this Task Force was doing in looking at each of the facilities and researching the towns' enrollment projections. He stated that he saw two concurring activities taking place here: that of the Task Force carrying out its charge with researching and preparing reports on the school district facilities, completion of the enrollment projection/demographics study, and making recommendations based on the findings; and secondly, the obligation that *he* had in looking at and considering the fiduciary picture of the District. He stated that, given the time constraints and *present-day* reality with which he was faced - that of the bleak financial picture of the School District and the towns, and budget preparations coming into full swing - he would most likely have to make some facility/classroom space decisions within the upcoming weeks, with or without the completed FTF individual facility reports.

Gary Hoglund then mentioned that the information in the enrollment projection chart did show available space in all of the schools (with perhaps the exception of the High School this year and next where it is very close or at capacity), for years 2007 through 2016. When talking about new development and births, Mr. Hoglund noted that they based their enrollment projections on 1.6 child(ren) per *new* home (referring to the maximum number of new houses forecasted in both towns). He stated that it was his opinion that the only possible thing missing in having a, perhaps, more *professionally*-researched enrollment projection/demographic study, would be to hire NESDEC and have them complete a study, which would incur a cost to the District. There was a strong consensus among the members present that the enrollment projections and demographic study that Gary Hoglund and Dave Johnson had done was outstanding, thorough and quite comparable to what NESDEC would produce if done. Dr. Genovese noted that unfortunately, *no one* could perfectly predict the future, and that a significant change in even *one* of the variables could throw off the solid work/figures that Mr. Hoglund and Dave Johnson had researched and prepared. Bill McDonald praised both men for their efforts and time in preparing such a thorough and comprehensive enrollment and demographic report. Mr. Hoglund stated that to *complete* their report, they would need to write up an executive summary to add clarification to their charts and figures. He noted that he and Mr. Johnson would have this ready for the next scheduled meeting.

Bill McDonald then gave a brief summary of what he presented, on behalf of the FTF, to the School Committee at the January 2, 2008 School Committee meeting. He stated that it was basically an 'update' as to where the FTF was in reference to fact-finding and researching information on all of the District facilities and enrollment projections. He noted to the School Committee that this FTF was 'behind schedule' in getting a report ready for presentation (with recommendations), because of several scheduled FTF meetings being cancelled due to inclement weather (note: two meetings in December were cancelled due to snow storms).

Dr. Genovese then brought up the question of what the FTF members thought its timeline looked like as far as presentation of a final report to the School Committee. Members agreed that the individual school/facility subcommittees needed to do their research and complete their reports within the next two-three weeks and then meet to summarize a formal report which contained short-term/long-term recommendations as well as 'areas' for further future consideration. It was decided that the FTF would 'aim' for having everything ready for a formal presentation to the School Committee at a scheduled March meeting. Pete Carson would need to confer with the School Committee Chair if, indeed, a date in March would be amenable.

Two dates in February were proposed, and agreed upon, for upcoming FTF meetings, primarily for discussion of the individual school/facility reports and preparation of final recommendations: Thursday, February 7 and Thursday, February 28.

Pete Carson brought up the question of whether or not members of each of the schools' School Councils would be an 'asset' / beneficial in helping out the individual subcommittee volunteers in doing their reports. Nothing decisive was agreed upon, but the principals who were present voiced that they would try and send out emails to School Council members to see who would be interested in helping out with the subcommittees.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:57 p.m.