

**7/11 DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
PURSUANT TO EDUCATION CODE SECTION 17387**



Minutes of the Regular Meeting
Wednesday, December 2, 2009
5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Del Mar Hills School
14085 Mango Drive, Del Mar, CA 92014

Organizational Items

Call to Order – *Time: 5:35 p.m.*

Flag Salute: Led by Shirley Bales

Present: Members Jennifer Emberger, Janet Handzel, Wayne Harris, Susan Paul, Cinda Peck, Bob Shopes, Randy Wheaton, and administrative assistant Shirley Bales were present.

Also in attendance: Cathy Ingrassia, Shana Lazenby, Erin Morgan, Sonia Nayak, Ed & Jean Stewart, Sara Wingate, Kelli Politoske, Obie Roy, Ann Garland, Wendi Santino-Ramseyer, Marybeth Norgren, Sara McMenamin, Elisabeth Epel, Curtis Ulrid, Karen Aiken, Fernanda Aguiar, Susan Friedland, Arlene Dutchik, Robert Dutchik, Jason Epel, Doug Politoske, Joe Ingrassia, Annie Cheng, Lee Parnell, Susanne Hall, Estela de Llanos, Heidi Niehart, Molly Schneider, Doug Rafner, Darlene Klugherz, Melissa Schneider, Miranda Rafner, Dustin Rafner, Megan Rafner, Cami Ramseyer, Janet McLugin, Allie Schneider, Jeremy Schneider, Deborah Muns-Park, Craig Sherman, Vanessa Black, Elizabeth Prag, Liz Shopes, Katrina Hunt, Patty O'Connor, Connor Perrone, Susan Lane, Sandy Siperstein Refner, Karey Garcia, Karen Stangland, Katherine Weidman.

Approval of the Agenda

Upon motion by Janet Handzel, seconded by Randy Wheaton, the agenda was unanimously approved.

Approval of the Minutes – Meeting of November 12, 2009

Upon motion by Jennifer Emberger, seconded by Susan Paul, the Minutes of the November 12, 2009 meeting were unanimously approved.

Public Comment

1. Heidi Niehart, Ashley Falls parent, hopes the committee will be true to the agenda and eliminate proposals so the community may have an idea what will be presented to the Board of Trustees. She urged the committee to remove Ashley Falls today from any closure proposal to allow the community to move forward.

2. Doug Rafner, Ashley Falls parent, as the committee narrows down various proposals, CDE guidelines mandate that before the committee recommends closure of a school, they must know there are no conceivable cuts elsewhere. Proposal G.1 makes sense, and he urges the committee not to approve any proposal which closes a school.
3. Lee Parnel, Torrey Hills parent, spoke that several new proposals regarding Torrey Hills were added a few weeks ago, and voiced objection to any proposal which places services at Torrey Hills. Student enrollment in the area will continue to grow, in total 1,000 new homes are slated for development in the Torrey Hills area.
4. Joel Holliday, Del Mar Hills parent, spoke that school closures have the potential to tear a Board and community apart as schools are an integral part of communities. The overall educational quality will be diminished with a school closure; a recommendation to close a school will arouse an intense community battle, and is shortsighted given ultimate growth within the district.

Bob Shopes moved to extend Public Comment time by 5 minutes, seconded by Susan Paul, and unanimously approved.

5. Susan Friedland, Torrey Hills parent, spoke that the Torrey Hills community was shocked to recently discover it was one of schools to possibly be impacted. Torrey Hills has high enrollment, many young kids walking to school, lots of traffic, and an overcrowded playground. M&O at Torrey Hills would be terrible because kids are everywhere.
6. Tatiana Schnierow, Del Mar Hills parent, spoke that to close Del Mar Hills would be a mistake, as cost benefits of closing a school are not necessarily clear nor agreed upon. There are many options that do not close any schools; those are the only options that should be considered. The DAC must not look only at the bottom line, but must consider emotional costs as well.

Old and New Business, Presentations

Cost per pupil data

Cost per pupil data was presented as general information, an agenda item that the Board of Trustees had asked the DAC to consider. To arrive at the cost per pupil, Chair Bob Shopes stated he used the two pieces of information available, unrestricted general fund general administrative costs borne by the district, divided by the number of kids in that school on 9-18-09. These costs are not adjusted for utility costs, variations in maintenance, or average salary variations, and are simply a very general look at cost per pupil.

Janet Handzel stated the bulk of the cost per pupil is in salaries. Administrative salaries and teacher salaries are based on the length of time a staff member has been employed by the district. To arrive at the average cost per student, they used the total cost divided by total number of students, \$26,980,450 divided by 4118 total enrollment, for an average \$6,552, but felt this was a data point which did not have a great deal of value in their analysis.

New proposals

None

Revised proposals

Contingency Proposal 1A. Member Wheaton stated that Contingency Proposal 1A replaces Proposal A and is not a proposal in line with other proposals, but rather addresses a concern if one year from today there is no game plan in place need to move District Offices. He recommended the DAC keep this contingency plan on the plate and present it to the Board of Trustees only as a back up plan to temporarily relocate District Offices and Employee Child Care if a permanent solution is not in place. Contingency Proposal 1A recommends moving District Offices in December 2010, over winter break, and set up temporarily on a school site in order to jump right back into business at the first of the year.

Member Paul asked why Torrey Hills for District Offices instead of other sites? Member Wheaton replied he picked Torrey Hills because thought the asphalt area might be the least invasive on the playground itself with a temporary fence separating the playground from District Offices.

Janet Handzel stated Contingency Plan 1A is important to include and brought up timing issues facing the district, such as ECC needing time to license the facility. Looking at the proposals, she stated it is important to note every date that is critical in the final report to Board.

Revised Proposal G.1

Members Shopes and Wheaton combined previous Proposals A and G into G1. Looking at very low costs for a modular building as a moderate long-term solution, at \$65 per square foot, it costs far less than a stick built or remodel. The original Proposal G put all District Offices, Maintenance Operations, and everything at Torrey Hills. The merged plan G1 keeps main District Office core functions in a new building at Torrey Hills, but other district functions at would stay where they are--Technology at Del Mar Hills, and Childcare Administration at Ashley Falls. Preschool and ECC would be merged at Sycamore Ridge, and Maintenance Operations would be located at Del Mar Hills.

Summaries of proposals

Members Susan Paul and Cinda Peck created a draft Summary of Proposals, and Jennifer Emberger pointed out a few changes she recommended to the Summary. Members recommended a more in depth analysis of strengths and weaknesses for all proposals going forward.

Financial analysis of proposals

Members Harris and Emberger prepared a Financial Analysis of Proposals using the same financial criteria weighed against each proposal.

The greatest cost savings were realized for Proposals B and I, which close Del Mar Hills Academy. After a combined Del Mar Hills/Del Mar Heights school enrollment, it is possible to eliminate fixed cost staff at Del Mar Hills, essentially eliminate principal and administrative personnel, for fixed administrative cost savings of \$394,363, utility savings of \$51,610, and estimated teacher salary savings of \$140,000, for a total estimated cost savings of \$585,973.

Cost savings for Proposal H, which closes Ashley Falls School, were estimated to be \$504,642.

Cost savings for Proposals A and D were estimated at \$70,000, which resulted in teacher salary costs savings if one section was reduced in a reconfigured school (the lowest teacher salary averages \$70,000, including benefits).

Proposals C, E, F, and G resulted in no cost savings using the same financial criteria.

Janet Handzel noted that additional cost saving suggestions using capital funds from the sale of the Shores (such as investing in solar panels, leasing excess District Office space, and preschool income) should be included in the final report to the Board.

Janet Handzel addressed the question “Why not just take \$8.5M and invest it now while real estate is in the tank and sell the property in 3 years?” Member Handzel informed community members that is not possible, any real estate purchase has to be education related. Regarding the suggestion to “purchase office space for District Offices in excess of what is currently needed and rent out excess office space,” Member Handzel responded it would have to be proven that DMUSD could use entire property eventually for district offices (including training facilities, or possibly night school) before DMUSD could rent out offices to generate additional funds. The \$8.5M from the sale of the Shores property needs to be looked at carefully in order to generate funds, but there are many Ed Code restrictions regarding what that money may be spent upon.

Enrollment analysis of proposals

Using the same enrollment criteria to analyze each proposal, Members Shopes and Handzel took current available data and rolled those numbers forward to the 2010-2011 school year (K-5 rolled up to 1-6) and used Kindergarten numbers exactly from moderate projections from Decision Insight.

These numbers were based upon a set of assumptions using enrollment data available. If a school is closed, that moves approximately 400 students. If not closing a school, that moves only a handful to approximately 100 students.

If a school is closed and transfers sent to home schools, split boundary area into two schools, Del Mar Hills students disperse to Del Mar Heights and Carmel Del Mar. That fills up both schools to capacity, even a little over capacity. When running a school at capacity, that runs into issues with sections and fitting all kids into sections. Closing Ashley Falls would quickly fill up Carmel Del Mar and Sycamore Ridge to capacity or just over capacity.

Bob Shopes motioned to extend the meeting time to 8:40 pm. Seconded by Wayne Harris, the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of Proposals

Public Comment on Discussion of Proposals:

1. Heidi Niehart, Ashley Falls parent, spoke that if Ashley Falls closes, putting Sycamore Ridge at capacity, what happens when Pacific Ridge builds out. If Ashley Falls is closed those students must attend a Mello Roos school, which would be Sage Canyon or Carmel Del Mar. The DAC should recommend that DMUSD lease or purchase a building.
2. Elizabeth Prag, Del Mar Hills parent, spoke of weaknesses in proposal to close Del Mar Hills, the tragedy of taking kids out of their school, consolidating students West of I-5 to one school at 103% capacity, using 13 portables sitting on valuable and needed blacktop space. Del Mar Heights was never designed to house large numbers of students.
3. Suzanne Hall, Torrey Hills parent, spoke that the state of the budget is not pretty, and she requested the DAC prioritize budget issues when looking at proposals. Although there is some cost savings putting a modular building at Torrey Hills, G1 does not discuss the additional costs of building a tilt up. She urged the DAC to consider Proposal B.
4. Wendy Santino-Ramseyer, spoke to proposal H and stated that litigation will cost more than any savings the district would ever realize. It makes no fiscal sense to close Ashley Falls, all demographics predict Sycamore Ridge will be at/over capacity in a few years, causing Sea Breeze kids to return to Ashley Falls. She recommended Proposal H be taken off the table tonight.
5. Marybeth Norgren, Del Mar Hills parent, spoke that although Del Mar Heights shows an adequate number of sections on paper, 1/3 of those students are in portables. Del Mar Heights was originally designed for 400 students, never for 600 students. DMUSD could run through the \$394k savings on environmental impact issues alone.
6. Estela de Llanos, Del Mar Hills parent, spoke that the DAC has adopted a charter to guide its process. Notably not on the list of criteria is looking at how to spend the \$8.5M in capital funds. School closure is a drastic step, which should be only a last resort.

Discussion of proposals/Remove proposal(s) from consideration

Susan Paul motioned to combine Agenda Items 12 & 13 (Discussion of proposals and Remove proposal(s) from consideration). Motion seconded by Wayne Harris and approved unanimously.

Wayne Harris motioned to extend meeting to 9:30 p.m. Motion seconded by Bob Shopes and approved unanimously.

Randy Wheaton motioned to take Proposal A off the table. Motion seconded by Bob Shopes, and approved unanimously.

Randy Wheaton motioned to replace Proposal G with Proposal G1 in the list of proposals under consideration. Motion seconded by Bob Shopes, and approved unanimously.

Members discussed the various proposals. Member Wayne Harris spoke that closing Del Mar Hills Academy would be a major impact to the community, including full classes and full schools both at Carmel Del Mar and Del Mar Heights. There are some serious issues with how it affects the community, and he understands parents put their sweat and blood into the school. He is not convinced the district needs to close a school. If the district does need to close a school, Del Mar Hills would be the school. He thinks the district needs to find another way out of the financial crisis, and he does not think school closure should be the top choice for the district. However, he does believe the DAC needs to offer an option to the Board for a school closure.

Jennifer Emberger spoke that not a lot of credence is given to the demographics--based on what side of the fence one is on, the numbers can be debated. The district as a whole is projected to be at 90% capacity in 5 years. A school closure or reconfiguration is a two-year project to allow for environmental studies and moving students. She is not in favor of closing any school, it does not save enough money to warrant the hardship.

Bob Shopes spoke that he first heard closing a school could save \$1.6M, then \$500K, now \$385K, not including the costs to close a school, environmental impact, legal fees. He would vote to remove Proposals B, H, and I together.

Wayne Harris acknowledged closing a school is such a large impact to the community, each school has unique environment which does not make it the same to close one school as to close another. Closing a school does save money, somewhere in the neighborhood of \$400-\$600K per year, recurring costs every year. In 5 years it amounts to \$2.5M.

Susan Paul motioned to continue meeting to 10:00 p.m. and invite public comment at this time. Motion seconded by Bob Shopes and passed unanimously.

1. Doug Rafner, Ashley Falls parent, spoke that it was on the agenda tonight to pare down the nine proposals, and he encouraged the DAC to eliminate some proposals, particularly Proposal H which involves a Mello Roos school. He stated it is okay to go to the Board and say the DAC does not have any school closures to recommend.
2. Deborah Muns-Park, Ashley Falls parent, spoke that the DAC Charter says for a recommendation to go to the Board it needs a final approval of 6 out of 7 members. That has been turned around this evening to say the DAC needs an 80% vote to take a proposal off the table. Previously this evening there were 4 members, a majority, ready to take Proposal H off the table.
3. Suzanne Hall, Torrey Hills parent, spoke that budget issues are paramount, and it is incumbent upon the DAC to recommend at least one proposal that addresses cost savings. Torrey Hills parents are a little late in the process because they were assured Torrey Hills would not be involved.

4. Elisabeth Epel, Torrey Hills parent, spoke to G1, specifically increased parking and traffic, as traffic in front of Torrey Hills already exceeds capacity, and parents cannot access their property at peak times due to school traffic. As to the effect on green space being mitigated by the presence of a large public park nearby, oftentimes the park exceeds capacity, and at times had has to close due to excessive use.

Proposal A. Randy Wheaton rescinded Proposal A.

Proposal A removed from consideration.

Proposal B. Bob Shopes motioned to remove Proposal B from future consideration, seconded by Jennifer Emberger.

In favor: Bob Shopes, Jennifer Emberger

Opposed: Janet Handzel, Wayne Harris, Cinda Peck, Susan Paul, Randy Wheaton.

Proposal B continues for future consideration.

Proposal C. Bob Shopes motioned to remove Proposal C from future consideration, seconded by Janet Handzel.

In favor: Bob Shopes, Janet Handzel, Susan Paul

Opposed: Jennifer Emberger, Randy Wheaton, Wayne Harris, Cinda Peck.

Proposal C continues for future consideration.

Proposal D. Janet Handzel motioned to remove Proposal D, seconded by Wayne Harris.

In favor: Randy Wheaton, Cinda Peck, Susan Paul, Wayne Harris, Janet Handzel

Opposed: Jennifer Emberger, Bob Shopes

Proposal D removed from consideration.

Wayne Harris motioned to extend meeting to 10:30 p.m. Motion seconded by Bob Shopes and unanimously approved.

Proposal E. Wayne Harris motioned to remove Proposal E, seconded by Susan Paul.

In favor: Randy Wheaton, Susan Paul, Wayne Harris

Opposed: Jennifer Emberger, Janet Handzel, Bob Shopes, Cinda Peck

Proposal E continues for future consideration.

Proposal F. No Motion to Remove.

Proposal F continues for future consideration.

Proposal G1 (updated today). Susan Paul motioned to remove Proposal G1. No second.

Proposal G1 continues for future consideration.

Proposal H. Wayne Harris motioned to remove Proposal H from future consideration, seconded by Cinda Peck.

In favor: Unanimous

Proposal H removed from consideration.

Proposal I. No Motion to Remove.

Proposal I continues under consideration.

1A Contingency Plan. No motion to remove.

1A Contingency Plan continues under consideration.

Motion by Bob Shopes that 1A be modified to be a recommended contingency plan, rather than a formal proposal. Motion seconded by Randy Wheaton and unanimously approved.

Cinda Peck recommended that on the final board report Maintenance Operations be placed where it is on each proposal, but add a statement that Maintenance Operations could also be located off site.

Public hearings

Chair Bob Shopes will coordinate with Gayle Wayne about procedures for the Public Hearings.

Bob Shopes and Wayne Harris will work on a summary of proposals under consideration to post to the 7-11 webpage by Friday, December 4, at 4 p.m.

The DAC need to schedule a Special Board Meeting after the Public Hearings, during the week of January 11 or January 18, preferably on a Wednesday.

Public Comment

Call for public comment (Limited to 3 minutes per speaker)

None.

Public Communication

Call for public communication

None.

Information Items

Upon Motion to adjourn by Bob Shopes, seconded by Susan Paul, it was unanimously approved to adjourn at 10:35 p.m.

Adjournment – Time: 10:35 p.m.