

MINUTES OF THE ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD  
SPECIAL MEETING OF NOVEMBER 12, 2008

The Anchorage School Board met in Special Session on Wednesday, November 12, 2008, at 12:00 p.m. in the Conference Room 150, at the Anchorage School District Administration Building. President, Jeff Friedman, presided.

A. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, Jeff Friedman Presiding

Board Members Present: Jeff Friedman, Crystal Kennedy, Macon Roberts, Tim Steele, John Steiner and Chris Tuck. Pat Higgins arrived at 12:02 p.m.

Others Present: Carol Comeau, George Vakalis, Ray Amsden, Steve Kalmes, JoAnn Contreras, MOA Senior Planner, Bob Kniefel, MOA Traffic Engineer, Jerry Weaver, Platting and Zoning Manager, Bill Mehner, Heritage Land Bank, Kittle' Miller, the press and Johanna Lee.

B. CONSENT AGENDA

1. ASD Memorandum # 147 - Site Selection for the Southwest Anchorage Area Middle School - Alternative Site M-1A

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve the selection of Site M-1A for a Middle School as identified in the Southwest Anchorage Elementary and Middle School Site Selection Evaluation Amendment #1 Tract 9A Westpark Subdivision Addition dated July 7, 2008.

ACTION:

Moved by: Chris Tuck  
Seconded by: Tim Steele

To approve the selection of Site M-1A for a Middle School as identified in the Southwest Anchorage Elementary and Middle School Site Selection Evaluation Amendment #1 Tract 9A Westpark Subdivision Addition dated July 7, 2008.

Ms. Comeau explained that action on this recommendation had been postponed until district staff could go back to the Sand Lake Community

Council along with representatives from the municipality to address issues that the public might have. Following their own discussion on this issue the Sand Lake Community Council met on Monday, November 10, 2008. The Sand Lake Community Council passed a resolution in support of the district's recommendation.

Mr. Ray Amsden reported that the staff had made a presentation at the community council meeting in October. He believed that there had been more concern at that point in time than there was at the November 10 meeting where the same information was presented to the group again. There were a lot of issues remaining related to water quality but not much discussion about traffic which had been discussed quite a bit at the October meeting. Mr. Amsden indicated that there were comments made at the council meeting that this really is a good school site and if it were not for all of the other issues that they have concern about it would be very easy to recommend it as a school site.

Mr. Vakalis noted that there was a representative from the Mayor's office as well as Ms. Contreras from the Planning Department at the council meeting. The representative from the Mayor's office told the community council that there are no plans whatsoever to fill in the pond. The municipality plans on leaving both that site and the 14 acres adjoining the 25 acres that the district would like to purchase in a natural park setting with natural vegetation. Mr. Vakalis reported that the municipality is monitoring that site and has been monitoring the pond. The results regarding the water quality of the pond were made available to the community council. In layman's terms Mr. Vakalis noted that the water quality of the pond met all of the EPA standards.

Mr. Steiner referenced the list of items that the community council would like to be considered through engagement of the council should the project go forward. He wondered if there was any concern with this list or the way that the council expressed their desire for engagement that the district would have trouble satisfying. Mr. Vakalis explained that the list is the concerns of the community council. The municipality will have to decide whether or not they will act on those concerns and, if so, act upon them. The concerns primarily deal with the adjacent 14 acres. There has been monitoring and there are two test wells adjacent to the pond as well as the pond itself. Whether that monitoring will continue is up to the municipality. Of course when the district has to go in there to build we will be required to handle all of our discharge and run-off to make sure that it will not impact the surrounding area.

Mr. Steiner indicated that he appreciated that the council is asking for these things to be considered should the proposed school project come to pass. That allows time for things to settle down between now and then. In addition the council is not asking for the district to do anything in particular. He noted that there did not seem to be any red flags indicating that the intent of any of these conditions were going to be a problem for the district down the road. Mr. Vakalis understood that the community council wanted to make sure that their concerns were made known in writing. He noted that the concerns are things that will have to be addressed when the development takes place anyway.

Mr. Amsden noted that there had also been concern about having involvement in the process when the design is done. He had assured the community council that the district's past practice and current practice is to engage the public during that process. That is in addition to the typical regulatory and public hearing process that happens. Mr. Amsden explained that they have been bringing the Sand Lake Elementary School project back to that council virtually every month to give them an update and anticipated having the same level of engagement with them during the middle school project.

Mr. Steiner believed that having postponed this action in order to meet again with the community council has resulted in increased good will with the community. It sounded like the community council has appreciated having the opportunity for additional input. He believed that the district is less likely to encounter problems in the future for having taken the time now. He indicated that he did not see any reason not to select the site.

Mr. Mehner reiterated that real estate services from the municipality will in fact continue to do ground water monitoring when the property is acquired. He noted that he will make that commitment in writing to the community council. All of the items that the community council listed as concerns that they wanted to be addressed will be addressed in the design and development phase. Mr. Mehner indicated that the only area that he remains concerned about was that the council indicated in their resolution that they wanted to be considered more than just the public, they want to be considered by the school district as advisors in the design stage. The public is definitely invited into the process but Mr. Mehner was not sure that the district wants to hire them as consultants or advisors per se. He indicated that he may be reading something into this that is not there but believed that would be something that would have to be addressed downstream.

Ms. Comeau noted that the district's interpretation of the word "advisors" is the level of engagement with the community that is currently part of the process. In that way the community will be kept up to date each step of the way in the same manner that they have been involved throughout the process with the Sand Lake Elementary School. The district has been providing monthly updates since when the bonds were first being considered and all the way through the process to date. She believed that level of engagement will continue to satisfy the community council.

VOTE:

Ayes: Tuck, Kennedy,  
Steele, Steiner,  
Higgins, Roberts  
Friedman

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

C. ADJOURNMENT

The Special Meeting of November 12, 2008, was adjourned by unanimous consent at 12:10 p.m.

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Jeff Friedman, President

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Crystal Kennedy, Clerk

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Johanna Lee, Recording Secretary

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Date Minutes Approved