

JOINT WORK/STUDY SESSION - SCHOOL BOARD AND CITY COUNCIL

May 29, 2007

Page 1

The Port Townsend School District Board of Directors and the Port Townsend City Council met in a joint work/study session in the conference room of the Fire Station at 701 Harrison, Port Townsend, WA. Mayor Mark Welch called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. Present for the City were Council members Mark Welch, Michelle Sandoval, Catharine Robinson, Laurie Medlicott and City Manager David Timmons. Geoff Masci, George Randels and Frank Benskin were excused. Present for the School District were Board members John Eissinger, Beth Young, Tracy Reinhart, Loren Monroe and Superintendent Thomas Opstad. Rita E. Beebe arrived later. Also in attendance were City and School District staff, community members and a member of the press.

Mr. Welch opened the session by stating that the meeting was a continuation of the discussion between the City Council and the School Board regarding joint interests, particularly in regard to the Mt. View property and the 80 acres of land that was discussed at the last meeting.

Mr. Welch also introduced Jim Westall and Jim Ewing from the Quimper Foundation, and Matt Tyler from Jefferson County Parks and Recreation.

Mr. Opstad gave a brief update of the community meeting that was held on May 3, 2007, at Blue Heron Middle School. There were 45-50 people in attendance. By the end of the meeting there was no consensus on what to do with the high school. The group had a clear consensus that the district should build a new Early Childhood Education/K-5 building on the Grant Street campus, and close Mt. View Elementary. Mr. Opstad stated that if the timeline for that project began today, students would be in the new building in the fall of 2010.

Mr. Welch reported that the Council had a recent discussion, and the outcome was the desire to clarify what the school district wants. Mr. Opstad said that the district would need to get an appraisal for the Mt. View property and then decide whether to sell it or trade it for land of equal value. He stated that the timing for having the property assessed is at issue. If it is done now, but the transaction doesn't take place for several years, the assessment would need to be re-done.

Discussion followed about the Board's concept of land banking.

Mr. Timmons said that the Council has a concern about timing and choices (i.e. buy Mt. View outright, take the 80 acre land swap out of the equation.) He also stated there is an advantage to having a public/private partnership in regard to potential purchase of Mt. View. Mr. Timmons also said that the 80 acres of land discussed in the previous meeting have been designated for secondary education. Should it remain that way?

Mr. Welch stated a desire to find a solution on current pool issues. Peripheral issues include potential liability to the city for the building, and determining whether the county would find the location desirable for a partnership.

Questions by City Council members/Answers by School Board [unless noted]:

- Q. When would the decision about the Mt. View property need to be made?
- A. If there is a cash buyer, the district could sell the property soon, and arrange to lease it back until the new school at Grant Street is finished.
- Q. If there is no cash buyer for Mt. View, when does the Board feel it needs to be disposed?
- A. The Board would need to determine how long it would take to re-zone the property, and work backward from there.
- Q. Because Mt. View is a public facility, are there requirements as to how it is sold?
- A. [John Watts, City Attorney]: There are no requirements that other governmental agencies are offered the opportunity to purchase it first. There is a law allowing two government entities to cooperate to trade or sell land.

JOINT WORK/STUDY SESSION - SCHOOL BOARD AND CITY COUNCIL

May 29, 2007

Page 2

- A. The Board is required to get an appraisal, and to determine the highest and best use of the property.
- Q. What does the Board plan to do with the Lincoln Building?
- A. There has been some consideration made to selling the Lincoln Building to developers who might wish to convert it to condos. The problem with that is the building sits on the high school campus, with the high school on one side of it and the baseball field on the other side. The district's study and survey determined that the high school lacks adequate parking. The building could be demolished and the site could be used for parking.

Questions by Board/Answers by Council:

- Q. Is the council interested in the Mt. View property?
- A. The city would be interested if the price and terms were favorable. The city is interested in a pool - Mt. View has the pool. It is a good location for public use. There is a concern about taking on another aged building. There is potential for recreation and a place to relocate the police station, although there is concern about building the police station in an area that is within the earthquake liquefaction zone. Concern that the city would take on another liability without some possibility for income. A public/private partnership may help.
- Q. Where is the Council on the idea of trading the 80 acres for Mt. View?
- A. The city can't trade property it does not yet own.

Discussion followed about the Board members' expressed desire to have a land "banked" for the future. Ms. Sandoval asked if the Board considered using the Mt. View property as banked land if the city doesn't want to make the swap? Mr. Eissinger stated that the Board was looking at a land swap only if it is mutually beneficial to the city and the school district. The advantage of the 80 acres to the district is that it is in the geographic center of the district boundaries. Mr. Monroe stated that were the district to keep the Mt. View property, the space would be inadequate to build a new school there in the future.

Several Council members expressed the opinion that discussing the swap of Mt. View property for the 80 acres is unrealistic, both because it is not yet owned by the city, and because the city has it in its comprehensive plan for use for secondary education. Council members expressed an interest in opening this discussion to a larger public process so the community could participate in discussion.

Beth Young stated that the Board is interested in getting rid of Mt. View for the same reasons that the City Council is concerned about taking it on. The Board's goal is to consolidate from four school buildings into three, however there is a concern about having banked land in case it would be needed in the future.

Rita E. Beebe said that the Board members' role is to serve its customers, the kids. The Board is pushing to move quickly. The Board needs to get the public involved, educate the community and build a new K-5 elementary school now. The Board must have efficiencies for financial reasons. She expressed a willingness to work with the city, but emphasized the need to move the process along.

Michelle Sandoval clarified that she doesn't want to go slow on Mt. View. If there are terms that can be worked out, she is interested in moving the discussion forward. The 80 acres is the sticking point because of the long-range needs of the city.

Discussion followed. Loren Monroe stated that if the district builds a new school it would be three years minimum before the district can vacate Mt. View. If the bond doesn't pass, that timeline would be extended. Therefore interested organizations would have three years to communicate and plan. However, when the district moves students into the new elementary Mt. View will be closed, including the pool.

Laurie Medlicott asked why the school district can't partner with the public and be the driver of re-use of the Mt. View property.

JOINT WORK/STUDY SESSION - SCHOOL BOARD AND CITY COUNCIL

May 29, 2007

Page 3

Tracy Reinhart stated that the Board's job is education.

Discussion followed about why the city should take this on.

Michelle Sandoval asked if the district plans to put a new pool in the new elementary school. When told no, she expressed concern that the city would be without a pool when Mt. View closes. Rita E. Beebe commented that the city is keeping the pool open now, not the school district.

Discussion followed about the importance of having a pool in the community.

Tracy Reinhart stated that the state mandate is to prepare students to pass the WASL and prepare a post-high school plan. She stated that the community pays to provide the "extras" such as sports, music and a pool.

Michelle Sandoval stated that families are concerned about dwindling options (pool, French, sports, etc.) Everyone will need to work together to address this.

Rita E. Beebe commented that consolidating elementary schools will save money that can then go to towards enrichment. If the community decides they want it, an aquatic center could be added to a new high school in the future.

Mark Welch commented that the Council's mandate is to represent the needs of the community.

John Eissingering stated that the Quimper Foundation, Peninsula College and any other interested organizations are welcome to join the discussion. He felt that the first option should be to dialog with the city.

Michelle Sandoval asked the Board to consider staying as a partner in developing a use for Mt. View.

Mark Welch opened the discussion to Jim Westall and Jim Ewing from the Quimper Foundation. Points of discussion included:

- Quimper Foundation has been asked to look at a broad view of community recreation and leadership in the county.
- Interested in discovering the community interest in a pool/aquatic center, and Memorial Field.
- Foundation hopes to take a lead in creating community consensus and develop long-range thinking.
- Having all interested groups together in a discussion may end with a different solution.
- Both the community and school kids need more than what they are currently getting.
- Need to frame the question so the community really understands the issues.

Matt Tyler from the Jefferson County Parks and Recreation department stated that the Park Board is considering bringing people and entities together to ask what they want to have for recreational facilities, and how should these facilities be funded. He stated a need to have an inclusive process including all public entities but driven by the private sector.

Deb Johnson from Peninsula College said that it is President Tom Keenan's position that the college is committed to Fort Worden. Although it may be possible in the future to have a satellite location, Peninsula College should be removed from the mix in the pool discussion.

Michelle Sandoval thanked those speaking for their comments. She mentioned that in a financial committee meeting earlier in the day there were public comments on the decrease in library services and the pool. Ms. Sandoval agrees that the issue isn't really about money, but a campaign led by citizens would be beneficial.

Jim Westall said the next step for the Quimper Foundation would be to convene in depth discussions with all involved in East Jefferson County to determine "who wants to play, and at what level?" He noted that there is

JOINT WORK/STUDY SESSION - SCHOOL BOARD AND CITY COUNCIL

May 29, 2007

Page 4

a huge groundswell around the pool and a huge groundswell that both Port Townsend and Chimacum children deserve better. The Foundation's goal would be to arrive at a consensus for the community.

Laurie Medlicott noted that the pool is used far more by adults than kids. Some focus of discussion needs to be about community needs. Possible include Jefferson Healthcare in the discussion, in regard to a therapeutic pool and the needs of aging residents.

Mark Welch expressed his gratitude to both Jim Westall and Jim Ewing and the Quimper Foundation for their offer of an opportunity to begin community discussion.

John Eissinger thanked Board members for coming. He was pleased with the discussion that took place at this meeting, and is interested in continuing the conversation.

Michelle Sandoval said that she feels more comfortable that the school district wants to move forward, with or without the 80 acres. A three-year parameter would allow time for ongoing discussion with public partners.

Rita E. Beebe noted that the Board will need to look at the city's rezoning cycle. Mr. Timmons commented that a request to rezone the Mt. View property could be taken outside of the cycle.

Tom Opstad said that the Lincoln Building has been condemned for student use for 27 years. He would hate to see Mt. View go the same way, when it has a potential for community use.

Loren Monroe asked for clarification on the comment "money is not an issue." Michelle Sandoval stated that she meant private money is available if information, education and a community campaign are undertaken, and she recommended the group focus on that, rather than the notion of scarcity.

David Timmons stated that the city has their own need to make decisions about both the pool and the location of a new police station; and the Council adopted the relocation of the police station as its number one issue.

Rita E. Beebe stated that the city and the county Parks and Recreation department might want to look at Medford, Oregon. Medford is about two years ahead of Port Townsend in planning, and seeing what decisions they made might be interested.

The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas A. Opstad, Superintendent

ATTEST: _____
John Eissinger, Board Chairman