

Community Relations Meeting
10/2/18

In Attendance:

Administration: Dr. Kathleen Bodie

School Committee: Jennifer Susse, Len Kardon, Jeff Thielman

Community: Ashutosh Gupta

8:05 AM – Started meeting. Jeff made a motion to approve minutes. Len seconded. All in favor.

Public Participation: Ashutosh Gupta spoke to us about his experience with the Dallin afterschool program. He has been on the waiting list for two years. Last year he was told that he was at number 5. He is wondering what happened to the additional 25 seats that were added. He claimed that parents have received no communication and that he has not received a response to an email he sent over the summer. His main concern is with transparency.

The committee recommended that he try to contact the program again. Kathy also said that she would follow up with the director.

Len asked for the committee to see a draft of the RFP before it goes out.

Commission on Arts and Culture: The committee discussed how to handle interviews with the seven candidates who applied. We decided that we would interview them by phone and share our thoughts at a future meeting. We decided to ask the following questions: 1) why candidates are interested in the position, 2) whether they can commit the time, and 3) what their connection is to APS. Jennifer said she would send over the call assignments to the committee soon.

Buffer Zone Expansion: Kathy has had some preliminary conversations with the Town's GPS person, Adam Kurowski and with Marilyn Salvas. The main concern is with Stratton/Peirce, Peirce Dallin and Bishop/Stratton. However, it isn't clear whether adjusting buffer zones will be sufficient. Enrollment growth is straining schools in too many places.

Jennifer asked that we consider a policy to allow administration discretion beyond what the buffer zones allows us when a kid moves into a school in 4th or 5th grade.

There was some discussion about whether it makes sense to expand buffer zones now given the upcoming debt exclusion vote for the High School and the possibility of an operating override. Jeff argued that the decision should either be made now (before Christmas) or we should wait. Kathy said she would get back to us about whether it makes sense to do this effort now.

AHRC Documents: We discussed the updated documents from the AHRC—response to incidents and school liaisons. Kathy said she would bring them up to her administration meeting on Friday. We discussed whether it makes sense to include these documents in our policies. Jeff argued that they should not be included according to best practices. Len argued that what should be included or not in policies isn't clear.

Jennifer pointed out that for many years there were school liaisons and a productive relationship between the Commission and principals. The move to codify a liaison relationship is in response to mutual frustration about the vagueness of the relationship. Jennifer also pointed out that the Response to Incident document was developed in consultation (and with support) from the Arlington police department.

Len suggested that we change “serve as a mediator” to “when requested”

Kathy said that she would bring these documents to her administrative meeting on Friday and that we would discuss them further at our next meeting.

9:20 – Motion to adjourn by Len, seconded by Jeff. All in favor