

Minutes October 25, 2014

All members of the committee were present. Also present were Dr. Harner, Superintendent, Nancianne Edwards, Assistant Superintendent, and Mr. Schoch, consultant.

Dr. Harner welcomed the committee and explained the timeline and the specific objectives established by the school board last January. In January, when a proposed middle school redistricting resulted in public opposition, the School Board decided to appoint a committee to help define options for future redistricting.

Mr. Schoch showed the committee a brief Powerpoint that was presented to the School Board at its October meeting. The presentation outlined the issues, showed the numbers and locations of students sent to different elementary schools from ten Open Areas. He also shared information on the birth rate decline and proposed residential development.

A general approach to the next six weeks of committee work was discussed and a number of committee members expressed concern regarding the short period to review the information and develop recommendations. The administration and consultant indicated that the role of the committee is to define objectives and evaluate how well the consultant has been able to achieve those objectives in developing possible boundary maps and approaches to implementing the map.

Minutes, November 4, 2014

All committee members were present along with approximately seven members of the general public. Dr. Harner, Superintendent, Nancianne Edwards, Assistant Superintendent, Bob Riegel, Business Manager, and Bob Schoch, Consultant were also in attendance.

The Committee addressed several logistical matters regarding posting and handouts of informational items, the role of the committee compared to the administration and school board, and videotaping of the meeting.

Mrs. Edwards explained that the primary objective of the committee is to address concerns raised by community members in January 2014 regarding some Open Areas in the district where students are assigned to a number of schools instead of a neighborhood school. She explained that the committee is making a recommendation to the administration and school board and that the decision needs to be made by the end of February 2015 in order to allow time for implementation.

Mr. Schoch showed a presentation discussing the various objectives and related information. After discussion and input from the general public, the committee established individual priorities for the objectives that were compiled and ranked.

The committee and members of the general public discussed various related issues such as proposed residential development, the excess capacity of elementary schools, the requirements regarding special education facilities, and other factors.

The committee asked a variety of questions and then established several redistricting options to be prepared for the next meeting at which time the committee will evaluate how will each option meets the objectives. The options are: 1) Divide the existing Open Areas and transfer students from a neighborhood to a single elementary school; 2) Assign students to their closest school; and 3) Assign entire Open Areas to nearby schools and makes other minor adjustments as drawn on a map by committee members.

Minutes, November 11, 2014

All members of the committee were present. Also present were Nancianne Edwards, Assistant Superintendent and Robert Schoch, consultant. A number of parents also attended.

Mr. Ficarra discussed his attendance at a meeting of the redistricting task force at West Chester School District. Mr. Schoch discussed his attendance at a meeting where the task force presented its recommendation to the School Board.

The committee reviewed the prioritized objectives/guidelines developed and Mr. Schoch explained that some objectives apply to developing the map while others apply to how the implementation of the new map is scheduled.

The committee reviewed the capacities of the schools and explained that the state calculation under the Plancon process is based on 25 students in a regular classroom while the QCSD capacities are based on the average class size for that grade level in QCSD. The latter results in a total capacity several hundred students less than the state capacity.

The committee reviewed data on declining birth rates and proposed residential development and the combined impact on specific eastern elementary schools. These factors have been included in school specific enrollment projections using the cohort survival/grade progression method of enrollment projection. This information established targets of the number of students that should be moved from one elementary attendance area to another.

Four elementary mapping options were developed. Option 1 divided existing Open Areas and sent all students from the divided area to the nearby elementary school. Option 2 assigned elementary students to the closest school noting that 780 elementary students, roughly one-third, do not attend the closest school to their home. Option 3 assigned entire Open Areas to the nearby school. Both Option 2 and 3 exceeded the capacity at specific schools. Therefore, Option 4 was developed which applied pertinent objectives to the situation in various neighborhoods. It utilized school capacities and planned

ahead 5 years to areas where declining birth rates will provide more space and to where residential development will cause school capacities to be exceeded. These options were evaluated as to how well they met objectives.

Middle school feeder patterns were explained showing that students from both Tohickon Valley and Trumbauersville Elementary Schools are split to both middle schools. The committee established an objective of having consistent feeder patterns where two elementary schools would feed one middle school. This objective may compete with balancing middle school class size. It cannot be determined until elementary school redistricting is completed.

Committee members and members of the public reviewed the possible mapping options in detail.

November 18, 2014

All members of the committee were present. Also present were Nancianne Edwards, Assistant Superintendent and Robert Schoch, consultant.

Mr. Schoch showed possible topics and an outline for the committee to make its recommendations to the Superintendent, administration, and School Board. He also provided additional information on questions and issues raised at previous meetings.

With large scale maps of proposed mapping options, the committee focused on specific neighborhoods affected by a fixed boundary map rather than an Open Areas concept. Mr. Schoch explained how various prioritized objectives were applied to the specific circumstances of a neighborhood in Option 4. Using specific neighborhoods and elementary schools, he also explained how the longevity of a fixed boundary map of elementary attendance areas depends on many uncertainties including birth rates that vary by attendance area and proposed residential development subject to uncertain build out schedules.

The committee requested consideration of several changes that would become Option 5 to be evaluated for the next meeting.

The committee continued to discuss various alternatives for implementing the map. It also discussed various concepts for making future adjustments to fixed boundaries. It was suggested that the committee could define what would cause an adjustment, including how out of balance class sizes must become before a redistricting would be needed.

November 25, 2014

Several committee members were absent due to holiday travel. Mr. Schoch was also present.

Mr. Schoch reviewed how Option 5 changes affected school capacities. While some of the specific areas changed could be included, others were not possible. The possible changes became Option 6.

The committee spent much of the meeting focused on the implementation alternatives for the fixed boundary maps. The advantages and disadvantages of the options were brainstormed and recorded. At one extreme, the map could be implemented one year, 2015-16. At the other extreme, the map could be implemented by only assigning the incoming Kindergarten and sixth grade to the new school, which would take 5 years for transition to full implementation at the elementary level and two years at the middle school. A compromise option was developed where the oldest two grade levels would stay at their current school and incoming Kindergarten and first, second, and third grade students would attend the new school. After thorough discussion, the committee came to consensus on recommending the two year transition subject to further discussion at the next meeting when final recommendations are developed.

Mr. Schoch suggested that the committee be prepared for the next meeting with the outline for the presentation to the Superintendent.

Minutes, December 2, 2014

All committee members were present. Also present were Paul Stepanoff, School Board President, Nancianne Edwards, Assistant Superintendent, and Robert Schoch, consultant.

The committee reviewed several minor recommendations made by the bus router, Al Rosenberger. They also discussed the implications of assigning an area to Pfaff ES that has historically gone to Tohickon Valley. It is part of the strategy of moving all students west to provide more space in eastern schools which are at capacity now and subject to much more residential growth potential. That area highlights many uncertain issues regarding declining birth rates and proposed residential growth while considering the available capacity at all schools.

The committee reviewed selected Powerpoint slides summarizing the advantages and disadvantages of implementing a fixed boundary line by three alternatives-immediately next school year, over five years by assigning only the new Kindergarten and sixth grade students to the new school, and over two years allowing the oldest students at each school to complete their final years at the original school. The committee agreed to recommend a two year transition.

The committee developed an outline for the presentation to the Superintendent and Mr. Schoch indicated that he would develop a draft Powerpoint presentation using slides from prior presentations. A draft of that presentation was promised in the next day with further committee input expected during the following week.

