

Elementary School Utilization Advisory Committee (Seven/Eleven Committee)
January 31, 2006
Serna Community Room
5:30 - 7:30 PM

Meeting Minutes

1.0 Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Review

The meeting was called to order at 5:35p.m. by Facilitator, Linda Whitney. Posted on one wall were flip charts listing the Interests, Criteria, Purpose, Roles, and Responsibilities of the committee; on the opposite wall were posted the Generating Revenue, Joint Usage, and Closure/Another Use options generated by the committee to date.

All committee members, except Velma Sykes, were present and introduced themselves.

Facilitator reviewed the agenda for the evening.

2.0 Review of the Minutes

The following addition to the minutes was suggested and approved: As part of the 5th paragraph on page 2 of the minutes which starts, "Ms. Hagemeyer outlined that the Board may have to consider..." **add closure of small schools and class size reductions** - the two items that were presented to the Board last year, but were not acted upon. Thus amended, the minutes of the January 24, 2006 meeting were approved as posted on the SCUSD website.

3.0 Review of Criteria and Decision-Making Process

Susan Miller noted that in the packet distributed there were, in addition to the agenda and minutes, two maps outlining Alice Birney and Bear Flag and their surrounding schools, and a packet of e-mails from various people. E-mails from committee members were previously forwarded.

A committee member commented that the committee doesn't have sufficient information about each of the criterion to make decisions -- too many unknowns. The facilitator noted that items listed as "Criteria" evolved as guides for our discussion. There was agreement about the criteria items at the time they were developed.

Add to Criteria: Make small schools attractive with value-added programs to generate higher enrollment.

There was a lengthy discussion about method to be used in voting. Suggestion to have all votes taken by roll call. Because this is not an elected group, public vote is not required. Some members may be uncomfortable voting publicly, and we need to respect the privacy of all committee members. Voting will be by secret ballot, and the results will be made public.

4.0 Maximizing the Options

4.1 Generate Revenue

The committee discussed the ideas to Generate Revenue and added the following:

Add: Items that didn't move forward last year – examine suggestions from the 2004-05 that have not been implemented.

Add: Senior Centers and other community groups.

Add: Sell property. Work with developers and make sales contingent on developer including a school to replace the one on the property sold.

Add: Study other successful schools.

Committee suggested that any money generated should first, go to the school implementing the program to cover program costs and second, to go towards other schools to implement successful revenue generating ideas.

Committee emphasized the need to have community involvement

These ideas were agreed to by consensus.

4.2 Joint Use

Committee members discussed adding the following items to the list of joint use suggestions:

Consider selling school property for large-scale development projects provided a public school is included in the development plans

Explore the possibilities of clustering small schools/programs in need of a facility within an existing compatible facility until such time the program/school warrants more space

Explore the possibility of joint maintenance of grounds with the City of Sacramento and other organizations or agencies

Sustain existing and ongoing partnerships such as 4th R, sports programs, etc. as these programs are advantageous to the school and community, and bring in and sustain enrollment

Consider the intrinsic value of joint use projects in that the grounds meet the school and community need for a park

Examine, with community input, the Bowling Green Main and Satellite campuses for compatible joint use opportunities

These ideas were agreed to by consensus.

4.3 Closure/Another Use

The focus points of discussion were the lack of time to study completely, the fact that closing schools should be a last resort, the shrinking pool of students to fill our elementary schools, and that some members were adamantly opposed to naming any schools for closure. There was agreement that this is a very difficult subject to discuss and ultimately make recommendations to the Board.

It was discussed that the following comments would precede any recommendations:

It is very difficult to close any of the small elementary schools as the data reviewed suggest that all schools are ensuring a quality learning environment for their students and families

Closing any school should be a last resort and only after a thorough analysis of any and all data so as to determine that the closure will benefit students and ensure a quality learning environment

It was discussed and stressed that community involvement must occur prior to closing any elementary school. Three schools were discussed at the last meeting: Marian Anderson, Alice Birney, and Bear Flag.

The first school discussed was Marian Anderson as that school is in a commercial area and about 90% of the students are transported by bus to and from the school each day. Discussion followed about the viability of it continuing as an elementary school.

The committee took an open vote on the following:

Investigate, with community involvement, the suitability of maintaining Marian Anderson Elementary School as an elementary school. The vote was 5 yes and 5 no, with 1 committee member being absent.

The discussion continued about Alice Birney and Bear Flag. These two schools were reviewed last year by a sub committee of the District-wide Budget Committee. There was discussion about the concept of blending. Both schools have declining enrollment and are very close to each other. Both schools have a percentage of students going to other nearby schools.

An individual closed vote was taken for the following question:

Continue to study and seek input regarding the closure/alternate use of Bear Flag /Alice Birney.

The vote was 6 yes and 4 no, with 1 committee member absent.

Discussion of the following additional recommendations included the following:

Study the equity and access of special school/programs that require entrance criteria

Study the feasibility of establishing boundaries for schools without attendance areas to reinforce the value of neighborhood schools

There are short- and long-term negative perceptions and consequences that affect a school being on the “closure” or “small school” list year after year. Consider these negative consequences and work to mitigate them.

The district should consider establishing a defined policy and plan for school enrollment growth and enrollment decline that supports and encourages neighborhood school utilization so as not to be a financial burden to the district.

If it is necessary to convene another “Seven-Eleven” Committee, begin the committee work earlier, provide more time for committee work, and consider having the current committee members participate, if willing, to maintain consistency and background knowledge.

Susan Miller, assisted by Linda Whitney, will be making the presentation on February 2, 2006. The PowerPoint presentation will include our Criteria, Interests, Purpose, Roles and Responsibilities, and our proposed Revenue Generating Proposals, Joint Use Proposals, and Closure/Another Use recommendations.

5.0 Meeting Closure

After thanking all the committee, and advisory members for their participation in this difficult task, the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.