

Cabot PTO Meeting Notes DRAFT
Wednesday, May 11, 2016

Location: Cabot School Library
Time: 7:30 pm
Present: Andrea Steenstrup, Nicky Chapman, Jennifer Abbott, Valerie Gopinath, Christine Fahey, Sue Bottino, Mary Lou DiBella, Jennifer Thomas, Deirdre O'Connor, Pete Scanlon, Emily Shumsky, Ali Dunn, Sam Butler, Kathy Liu, Jacqueline Badeau, Lindsay Pike, Alice Reynolds, Catherine Dun Rappaport, Annette Nedeljkovic

Item I: Introductions

Item II: Principal's Update – Lou DiBella

- PARC – There has been a lot of anxiety around this testing and it is not just at our school; colleagues from other schools in Newton that Lou has been speaking with have reported the same experience – kids getting very upset and stressed about the exam
- Lou and others feel this demonstrates a need to move towards MCAS 2.0 rather than PARC because this isn't working

Item III: Building Update – from Lou DiBella

- Cabot had a strong showing at the 5/5 meeting and it really helped to show the city councilors just how intensely we feel
- Office Hours: City Councilor Jake Auchincloss will be available from 3:30 – 5 pm on 5/13 outside the Parkview school entrance to address parents' concerns about Cabot renovation
- Lou's advice when speaking with city representatives, councilors, neighbors at the meetings and at these office hours is be sure to emphasize that we are residents; that was a sticking point in their reaction to the recent petition signed by 500+ members of the Cabot community, that there were a few non-residents (even though the non-residents were Cabot staff and families enrolled in Cabot school)
- Some history on events leading up to the 5/5 meeting and vote to pause the current plan:
 - Potter Property acquisition opens up the North side – alternate plans for site design include a 3-story massing on the North side
 - elements of the potential new designs were introduced and rejected months ago because they were very inefficient and did not satisfy

educational programming requirement; even though they were rejected before, this time around they quickly gained traction

- Lou was brought in as the momentum on these potential new plans gained momentum (emergency meeting with Sandra Guryan of NPS and Joshua Morse, City of Newton in days leading up to the 5/5 vote)
- 5/5 vote resulted in a 4 week pause in the design process
- meanwhile MSBA is waiting for us and we will miss some deadlines because the next meeting of CSBC is on June 2nd which already puts the project behind schedule (note that the MSBA only meets 4-5 times per year)
- there will be a Friday closed meeting 5/13 with just the school members from CSBC
- going back to the March 12th plan A-2 (one of the 20+ designs previously considered and rejected) will not work as it doesn't meet the educational programming requirements
- it comes down to a June 2nd CSBC+DRC meeting; Lou was told that at that meeting, if she does not give two thumbs up to the new design, it will not move forward with a new design but revert back to the already approved design
- plan A-2 is also not workable for traffic; it results in poor circulation
- plan A-2 also does not allow for expansion/ modification
- Lou insisted we occupy Carr in 2017 as planned all along
- Lou has been given assurance that Parkview will close (also, the already approved design necessitates the street closing given placement of a building on that street)
- the potential alternate design is inferior in terms of educational programming; we must keep emphasizing this in our meetings, letters, petitions, etc.

Item IV: Principal search update

- The search advisory committee made up of Cabot staff, parents, and other NPS members carried out the interviews and round table as planned and came down to 1 final candidate
- waiting to hear from NPS on this final candidate
- *Note – since this meeting, NPS has announced the appointment of a 1-year interim principal, Eva Thompson*

Item V: Blue Zone Update – Sue Bottino

- new crossing guard, Margaret, has been assigned at the Parkview crosswalk
- SRTS (Safe Roads to School) is looking into getting stanchions at that location as well
- flashing light/ school zone speed limit sign(s) are not working correctly in terms of timing – this is being looked into
- placards have been introduced to help match students with drivers at pick-up; PTO is providing free rear-view mirror hang tags to anyone who might be picking up in the Blue Zone – this has been publicized through flyers, website, and email
- there is additional review taking place of where we need crosswalks and sidewalks

Item VI: Presentation of Draft Budget – Nicky Chapman

- Draft Budget available at <http://cabotpto.org/wp-content/uploads/2016-2017-Budget-planning-1.pdf>
- Motion to approve as well as vote will take place at the next PTO meeting on June 15, 8:30 am
- next year we plan to bring the auction back to Spring Fling (silent auction)
- this year and next year, we are using past earnings but will need to start fundraising again next year for the future
- funds being set aside for end of year picnics
- funds being set aside for the move to Carr

Item VII: Next Year's PTO – Roles and Structure

- generally felt this year's executive team was too large but did well using the structure set up with grade leaders and rotation of co-president teams every two months
- draft leadership roles have been outlined for next year – now we need to build out the descriptions, add hours per week, etc. and post the job descriptions to the website
- also need to outline all of the open Committee Chair positions in a similar way
- ideas on how to communicate the needs
 - include a link to the open positions and publicize/ recruit through emails/ flyers
 - spotlight on responsibilities of each position in Cabot Events
 - set up a volunteer genius

- will consolidate the grade leader teams next year to have 3 teams: K-1st, 2-3rd,4-5th
- will set standing PTO meeting time so parents/staff can plan (e.g. 2nd Wednesday night of every month – hypothetical)
- staff participation will continue – staff will need to nominate 2 members to participate

Meeting adjourned

Next meeting date – June 2015, 8:30 am