Newcastle Elementary Site Council Meeting Minutes

March 3, 2014

The meeting was held on Monday, March 3, 2014 from 8:15 am to 9:00 am in the Newcastle library. Present: Marla Newton, Jacqueline Park, Danielle Dixon, Edana Peacock, Sarah McKenzie, Terry Vanpelt, Eileen Rubenstein, Kristin Cakarnis, Laura Berry and Richard Crispo. Absent: Kim Plowman. Donna Wood attends meetings to take notes.

Agenda:

1. **PTSA Report**
   The Walk-a-Thon is scheduled for May 2. This event will be a 20 minute fun run. There is a kick off assembly on April 16. PTSA is using the organization Orange Ruler to help run the event. Teams are by classrooms and not individuals. Orange Ruler will do random drawings for prizes—students must have an on-line profile to be eligible for drawings. Prizes will not be based on fundraising totals. Donations will be done on-line. PTSA would like to thank classroom teachers for allowing schedules to be a little messed up the day of the Walk-a-Thon.

   The nominating committee is up and running. The slate will be posted the day before Spring break.

   Happy Longfellow and Mark from the City of Newcastle walked around the school during pick-up and drop off times. They are looking to try and come up with solutions to our traffic congestion issues. Edana will meet with Marla to discuss their findings.

2. **Community Report**
   Rich shared that he is no longer the Mayor of Newcastle. Steve Buri is the new mayor.

   Rich tagged onto the above conversation regarding traffic concerns at Newcastle ES. The new Renton SD middle school being built by Hazelwood ES is slated to house 900 students yet they are only providing enough parking for 45 cars. The City has been talking with the school district regarding their parking concerns after seeing what has happened here. Bottom line is property is privately owned and the City only has so much jurisdiction on what they can mandate be done with the property. City can refuse some permits. Typically when a school is being built the planners focus on the school building and not the infrastructure. School districts don’t view traffic as their issue. Question was asked if there has been a public posting of this project. There is but it hasn’t generated much interest from the community.

   Edana shared frustration that she and Kim have gotten mixed messages when talking with the City of Newcastle or a representative from the District as to why the infrastructure surrounding Newcastle ES was done the way it was. It feels like a he said/she said between the school district and the City of Newcastle. Marnie Maraldo, school board member, said the SD wanted to
do things differently but the City wouldn't let them. Decisions don't appear to be documented in writing.

Newcastle’s 95 year old resident, Milt Swanson, recently passed away. He bequeathed over 1,000 items and money to the City of Newcastle. Items include old miner’s hats, shovels, etc. City is looking at putting up a monument by China Creek.

Construction is starting soon on the new middle school and the old brick plant. There will be between 700-1,000 different living units when construction is complete at the brick plant site.

The City will continue its community events such as Earth Day in April, 4th of July celebration and summer Concerts in the Park.

3. **Building Report**
Kindergarten registration for next year is open and 84 packets were handed out at parent orientation. To date a total of 100 packets have been given out. Most everyone wants full day. Laura asked if anyone looks at historical data to determine approximately how many 1st grade students return to Newcastle ES from private kindergarten. Marla shared that District does look at trends and it’s usually about 20 students a year we gain back. Spacing was a big part of our issue this year as to why our 1st grade classrooms got so large. We had no place to put another classroom. We currently have 566 students enrolled.

Read Across America is this week. There are different activities scheduled for each day.

4. **Volunteers and Non-school Aged Children Follow-up**
Marla provided another proposed draft of the sibling policy reflecting changes that were decided upon last month. Laura submitted another draft which included a section on siblings and the library. Rich commented that there is a pretty significant difference between the top portion of the policy and the library portion. The top portion is pretty concrete but the bottom section is much looser which could lead to interpretation issues. Library policy portion was written looser on purpose with the intent that it would be looked at every year and that this portion of the policy could go away if Laura ever left Newcastle ES (Marla will add this statement to the policy). Policy was approved by site council this morning and will be implemented immediately. We will advertise this policy via e-news, hard copies home and it will be put into the student handbook.

Marla will be addressing our school policy on parties as this has gotten very lax over the years. Party policy was written by Newcastle ES and has not been revisited in several years.
**Other**

Question on how to handle our parking lot issues came back up. We need to identify what the problems are: parents, adults, students, school. Parents are not in positions of authority to confront people that are causing a problem. What is next step to empower them? School staff aren’t able to change adult behaviors either. People will choose to do what they want to do and what works best for them. Marla asked that ideas, suggestions that came from the meeting with Happy and Mark be shared with her as a place to start. From there ideas will be shared with District. A few ideas mentioned were: having a Newcastle police presence, adding sidewalks down the center of the parking lot and in front of cars (bottom of the hill), have more teachers monitor outside (Marla can’t mandate they do this).

Parents are still concerned about the lack of time students have to eat lunch. It was discussed before about playing music the last 5 minutes of lunch so that kids are aware their lunch time is coming to an end. Marla will follow-up as to why this hasn't started happening yet.