

DRAFT

**Township High School District #113 & City of Highland Park
Highland Park High School Advisory Group**

Meeting Minutes

May 11, 2016 – 7:00PM

SD 113 Admin Offices, 1040 Park Avenue West, Highland Park, IL

1. **Call to Order** by Chairman Jenks 7:01PM

2. **Members Present:** Chair Jenks, Shafer, Sassen, Tellone, Holleman, Wehner, Friedman and Small

Absent: Behrens, Coretti and Kornberg

Members of the public – Cathy Wiengart-Ryan

3. **Approval of the Minutes** - Motion by Sassen; second by Tellone. Motion approved.

4. **Public Comment** – None

5. **Buses and Parking – Update for 2016 - 2017**

Dr. Sassen - Student parking on the High School property is down this year; there are available spaces. There are plans to expand the carpooling parking passes for students next year. High School staff will monitor parking for traffic flow again next year. We do not expect a change in procedures until a review of the situation after construction has ended on the property in March 2017.

Dr. Sassen met with representatives from School District 65 who use the “Bus App” which lets riders know the status of their bus as it progresses on its route. It provides a 5 minute warning to let passengers know when it will be at their stop for those who want it. There is a subscription rate of \$2.00 monthly for each user. Barry and Rob will review this for budgetary consideration since there is also a cost to the District to have this available.

There is also a potential for the school to modify one of its early morning bus routes to an “express route”. This idea has met with some interest and support from school staff.

Dr. Sassen also relates that the State is considering changing the bus rule requiring transportation for students that live 1.5 miles from the school to a 2 mile radius from the school. It is suspected that this is being considered as compensation for funding reductions that the schools receive from the state. The School District is not considering changing their policy to pick up students within the 1.5 mile radius.

Wehner – Reminds us that we discussed a nominal fee for ridership that might help with funding, commitment and data on bus ridership. It was noted that School Board President Lidawer stated that she felt that the Board would not support any additional fees on students due to the already present burden.

Jenks – Disappointed that we do not have any concrete actions that have been taken to increase bus ridership despite some very good dialogue and suggestions.

Small – What steps has the District taken?

Sassen – 1- Conducted a ridership assessment; 2- Considering a morning express route; 3- Executed a communication plan to parents and 4- Piloted a 2nd activities bus after school.

Wehner – Do we sense that bus ridership needs to be tweaked or do we need to build a new system?

Sassen - I can't speak on behalf of "transportation".

Jenks - There is opportunity to try some new things!

Small - Are there any formal incentives offered to students by the school if they ride the bus?

Sassen - There are no formal incentives.

Freidman - We must change the culture to improve bus ridership.

6. Vine Lot

Sassen – (reading from Mortensen's notes) The landscaping has been approved according to the plan; the planting of sea green junipers within the parameters of the ordinance will be placed on top of a berm with an anticipated screening height of 4 to 5 feet. The District has received 55 of the 71 junipers needed. The planting schedule has not been set yet.

Jenks - The storage garage to the south of the lot will be fixed up in the next three weeks. The center lighting which was on until 11PM will be turned off; the testing period has expired; the teachers were pleased with the two lights as tested; there has been no additional movement regarding the addition of landscaping at the south side of the Vine lot.

Small - The safety issue remains and suggests a presentation to the School Board.

Jenks - Is ready willing and able to make the presentation. There is an interest in adding trees a distance behind the junipers to create a better shield.

Wehner - I am not optimistic that a presentation to the Board will garner the finances to pay for the trees we envision. Is there a way to activate community groups to support this to overcome the resource hurdles?

Sassen - Likes the idea of donations for the trees through such sponsorship. He is willing to help.

Weingart-Ryan - The cost of trees that are white pines 8 to 10 feet in height at Home Depot are only \$109.00

Jenks - That seems reasonable; let's talk to the District 113 Association.

Wehner - This will bring people together.

7. Woodpath Crosswalk – Braille control is installed and being inspected

Jenks – What about the signs. They are large and since we have had no accidents, I support making them smaller.

Small - The School Board may not support making the signs smaller and spending the additional cost associated with the change.

Jenks - Our request reflects what we are here for, to represent the community.

Sassen – Will check on how the signs were originally required or requested.

Friedman - The PTO has been talking about the crosswalk.

8. Police Update – In answer to some questions forwarded by Chairman Jenks....

Shafer - There is an increase in violations around the campus during inclement weather; this is presumed to be parents dropping off closer to the doors on Vine rather than using the designated spots. Other than for inclement weather police staff has not noticed an increase in violations.

Since the beginning of the school year through April 2016, there have been 149 days of school. There have been 2 days when we did not have CSO's assigned in the morning, 2 days with no CSO's in the afternoon and 8 days with only one CSO in the afternoon. Reasons include loss of staffing due to retirement, sick days and mandatory training. Additionally, we have had to assign CSO's to school crossing duties at elementary schools sometime when no other staff member is available to be present at a designated school crossing.

We do not track violations observed at the high school along with weather conditions. We do not track the violations with respect to staffing. We report total enforcement activity. Staff will review this and if there is a benefit to us, we will incorporate additional data.

CSO's are generally assigned to be in place at Vine and St. Johns and the other in front of the school entrance on Vine closest to St. Johns. It has been reported that the CSO's have been seen congregating and that has been addressed by their supervisor, Sgt. O'Neill.

A question was raised regarding staffing with less CSO's if warranted by activity. The Ordinance requires that we maintain two except in emergencies. The Ordinance would need to be changed in order to allow for flexibility in staffing.

Small – He relates that when a ticket is mailed to the violator, they do not know what they have done wrong; therefore we cannot correct the behavior.

Tellone – Relates that he handled a complaint from a man and it was an opportunity to explain to the man what he had done. Additionally Bill related that left turns from the west bound Vine curb lane into the south Vine lot are a safety issue; some drivers still drop off while traveling east bound on Vine in front of the school, instead of using the lot, but overall we have had improvement.

Small - Let's insert the traffic protocols in with the violations.

Shafer – Good idea! Police staff will follow-up on this.

Friedman – Comments that drivers who receive tickets KNOW what they are doing wrong.

Small – How can we address moving violations?

Shafer – We can issue warnings, but CSO's cannot write tickets.

Tellone – Officer Breitenbach sometimes parks with his squad in the “H” lot; this is helpful and drivers improve their behavior when he is there.....Thanks Eric!

Jenks – Are there traffic monitors at the Vine St. lot exit onto St. Johns?

Tellone – Yes, when staffing allows.

Small – Is there a recommendation to reduce the staff required to manage traffic?

Shafer/Tellone – Not at this time and let's wait until construction is completed in 2017.

9. Traffic Patterns, Parking and Safety

Jenks – Are we in a better place today than when we started in August?

Tellone – YES - Staffing is right; still high volume of cars; weather is a factor; (crosswalk stats attached)

Sassen - Thanks to police staff and school staff for doing a great job and the teamwork displayed.

Friedman – There have been some good improvements; concern with traffic back-up on Vine while cars wait to turn into the west lot. What can we do?

Tellone – This is one of our dilemmas; one car turning left can stop traffic; some cars then get impatient and cross the double yellow; staff can't find a way to move traffic so they can circle back; perhaps in the future we can open up the fire lane in the west lot so we can queue more cars there.

10. Other Business

Meeting dates – A motion was made by Shafer to accept the proposed meeting dates. Seconded by Sassen. The dates approved are:

September 21, 2016
November 16th, 2016
January 25th, 2017
April 26th, 2017

11. Motion to Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Sassen / seconded by Tellone – 8:30 p.m.

Next meeting is September 21, 2016 at 7PM