

DRAFT

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

Meeting Minutes

March 16, 2016 – 7:00PM

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

1. **Call to Order** by Chairman Jenks 7:03PM
2. **Members Present:** Chair Jenks, Shafer, Sassen, Lidawer, Tellone, Holleman, Wehner, Kornberg, and Behrens

Absent: Friedman and Coretti

Staff Present: School District Facilities Director Mortensen, District 113 Transportation Director Rob Weiler and Sergeant O'Neill, HPPD

Members of the public – Adrienne Weissman, Cathy Wiengart-Ryan and Kim Stone.

3. **Approval of the Minutes** - Motion by Sassen; second by Kornberg. Motion approved.
4. **Public Comment** – Introduction by Jenks reviewing our group participants and mission

Ms. Weissman – She is a neighbor directly impacted by the crosswalk; a better solution would be a deck across the road. The signs are too big; no other crosswalk has these large signs. How long do we put up with the bad behavior of the students? Students don't use the crosswalk – when will we cut our losses?

Cathy Weingart–Ryan - Why does District 113 feel that they must act with an ordinance that does not comply with the zoning code? Three feet does not screen the lot or headlights. Why is safety such an issue with the lot screening? FOIA shows no criminal activity; please screen the parking lot!

Kim Stone- Traffic is backing up from St. Johns onto Maple – ½ way up Maple in the morning – traffic can't turn right from Maple onto St. Johns; it's a problem for about 10-15 minutes each morning, but fix other things first.

5. **Buses and Parking**

Jenks said to show its commitment to trying to reduce traffic levels around HPHS, the District needs to come up with an improved Bus and Parking plan. Promising long-term and short terms ways to do this – in 2016 - 2017, the District should adopt as many promising "short-term" ideas as it reasonably can

Discussion Notes

- A) Would people within the 1.5 mile radius take the bus if it were available? Could we ask the question to get some feedback, but not guarantee the change so as to create a false expectation? Consensus was YES. Again the issue that bus ridership within the 1.5 mile

radius is it costs more than a parking pass. Are buses overcrowded? Is there enough room to accommodate this concept?

- B) Reduce the bus fee...it should be less than a parking permit.
- C) What about a punch card system to allow students not otherwise eligible (i.e., who live inside 1.5 mile range) to go to an existing stop?
- D) What about charging a minimal fee for those riding the bus outside the 1.5 mile perimeter to assist in lowering costs for those who would ride inside the 1.5 mile perimeter? This would assist in making riders feel obliged to use the service rather than drive and provide better data on ridership. Perhaps we could implement an "opt out" system for bus ridership to create a data base.

Holleman - Not practical due to circumstances that may create the need to use the bus. Why would anyone opt out?

Lidawer - The School Board would probably not support additional fees due to the fees already in place.

Wehner - Could we consider some qualifications that would require a fee to be paid.

Sassen - Let's re-direct our focus to the students within the 1.5 mile radius, not the 268 who ride the bus outside the perimeter.

Behrens – if one student opts out but neighbor doesn't, you still have same bus stop. What prevents student who opted out from using stop?

- E) How expensive is the phone app system notifying student that bus is approaching? Consensus is that this should be explored because it uses GPS and as described it seems useful. Sassen hasn't looked at this yet.
- F) Consider modifying the some early bird routes ...Early bird routes are already modified; drivers stay to pick up a second regular route; drivers are guaranteed pay for a minimum of two hours work whenever they are scheduled.
- G) Actively publicize bus schedules and changes; let students know that the ride is a minimum of 12 minutes and a maximum of 27 minutes; we do little to advertise or pitch bus ridership!
- H) Parking in City Lots - decrease the City parking permit price to encourage parking off site.

Wehner – more walkers from distant lots could slow traffic flow around HPHS.

Sassen noted that we did not have a good experience with this last school year.

Lidawer - Only juniors would be interested.

Holleman - If we should do this we still need to support the ALIVE at 25 program.

Sassen - How would this fit with the carpooling initiative since we sold out the 30 available carpooling passes this year?

Kornberg - What if students were required to car pool? Let's require more than one for any parking permit.

Lidawer - This may work for juniors but not seniors due to after school obligations; let's try it with juniors as a test case.

Wehner - Carpooling is a good social experience.

Sassen - We will discuss the plan for the upcoming 2016-2017 school year at our May meeting.

Stone- Supports Wehner's Idea for further carpooling.

Weissman- Likes the idea of the computer app for buses; Suggest academic relief for using the bus or walking (incentives).

Sassen – Responds that they cannot provide academic relief, but can provide incentives in the way of events etc.

Jenks- Reminds the group that if we were to rely on the RFID system, data will still not be accurate since students may ride the bus even if they forget their ID's.

6. Vine Lot

Mortensen - The oak heritage tree will remain. The grade from the heritage tree to the west slopes down; District will add soil so that the grade is flat and the screening a consistent height across the south side of the lot. The berm will be 18 – 20 inches high, with existing 12 – 18 inch sea green junipers in the front and a second line of larger junipers in the back. After installation, there will be a 36" screen to shield the headlights of vehicles. Soil added will come from the pool excavation and the cost to the District for the modified plan will be several thousand dollars. The drawings are at the City awaiting final approval.

The appearance will be similar in height to the silk screening that is in place now. The shed on the property there will be repaired this spring/summer with a new roof and siding to improve the appearance. The planted junipers will be maintained at a height of 36" to maintain sightlines into the lot as recommended by their security consultant.

Jenks - Notes that Mr. Coretti indicated to him that this is not a high crime area and does not want plantings that will take years to mature.

Wehner – Can additional height be considered at a later time?

Mortensen – Safety is always first, but this group is here to seek a balance.

Wehner – How about placing a line of trees behind the berm, at a distance that would then create a more total screening effect when viewed from the residences at the south of the Vine lot?

Lidawer – The tree plantings could be donations from the graduating senior classes.

Jenks – Ten thousand dollars from the School District's 90 million dollar budget cannot be a lot.

Lidawer – Ten thousand is a lot when we examine creative ways to maintain services with rising costs.

Holleman – Perhaps we can buy the trees through a joint purchase with the City.

Mortensen – Reminds us that the most effective shield is closest to the perimeter of the parking lot edge since the light angle increases as distances increase.

Kornberg / Jenks – Support the donation idea.

Kornberg – Could the school consider a railing on the steps to the school across from the Vine Street lot?

Mortensen and Lidawer – The District will look into that.

Mortensen - Described the issue as related to the group by a teacher with regard to the nighttime lighting in the lot and the diminished ability to trip the lights by the sensors since the light pole was lowered. He related that in a meeting with the City Staff it was agreed to test the lights differently by allowing two center placed lights to remain in until 11PM to see if that is acceptable to both residents and school staff.

Kornberg – Relates left turning violations from the Vine Street lot onto northbound St. Johns.

Weingart-Ryan – Committee recommendations are not being followed. Shrubs need to be interspersed with vertical growing trees. Talking about having lights on until 11:00 without vertical screening is not right.

Stone – Voices objections to the test of the lights citing it adds injury to insult; discussed the crosswalk situation and suggests forcing staff to move closer spots when working late or alternatively adding on-off switch and timers. The Vine lot should be a staff lot on days, not nights.

Weissman – Why are the lights in the north lot not on a sensor?

7. Woodpath Crosswalk

Tellone – Addresses concerns with a backup on St. Johns when the pedestrian crossing is used. On the plus side, when the light is activated it creates a break in traffic to allow vehicles to enter the roadway. Some students crossing St. Johns away from the crosswalk attempt to enter the doors at the Science Center which is not permitted. Usage of crosswalk hasn't increased. Kids cross all over, particularly south of crosswalk.

Jenks – Clarifies the past discussion about the pedestrian crossing signs remaining as they are until we review the traffic etc. at the end of the school year. Woodpath is still experiencing some violators. The signs have not been changed to “no parking, standing or stopping”. (Public Works to be contacted)

Weissman – Objects; students still crossing away from the signal; not being used; the crossing is not neighbor friendly.

Mortensen: Temporary mast has been replaced, only 2 things left to do – stripping on crosswalk and installation of handicap push button system.

8. Police Update – See attached report regarding enforcement. Violations trending down; extra attention will be directed to Woodpath and students not crossing at the light.

9. Traffic

Sassen Some students bike in better weather; alternative transportation will be advertised to encourage use; some thought to incentives through gift cards; carpooling added to the student handbook; waiting for better weather to improve the lot stripping; reports being under parked in the west lot which is used by staff; permit sales to students are down and many are parking in the lot west of Green Bay and Vine.

10. Discussion Regarding an Updated Traffic Study

Jenks - Introduction regarding past discussion and need for new data.

Mortensen - Reminds us that the pool project will not be complete until March of 2017; additional curbs in the lots will be poured this year. Past traffic measurements done at various times of the year.

Jenks - Brings discussion to a consensus that this will be discussed in January of 2017 in fairness to the need to complete the construction project

Mortensen - Notes that City Staff and the High School Staff will meet to discuss traffic etc. on April 20th; discussion from that meeting will be shared with the group.

11. Other Business

Jenks - Meeting schedule to be set at the May meeting.

Wehner - Student replacement for him needs to be identified, preferable if there is overlap.

Lidawer - Will look into the selection of his replacement.

Jenks – Discusses additional sidewalks at the school; one in the north lot and one along St. Johns.

Mortensen - Points out there are some pros and cons; further discussion at the next meeting.

Holleman – City public works should be contacted for this conversation.

12. Motion to Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Sassen / seconded by Wehner – 9:15 p.m.

Next meeting is May 11, 2016 at 7PM