

**TC/BOE STRATEGIC PLANNING SUBCOMMITTEE
COMMUNITY CONVERSATION - MEETING NOTES
MAY 20, 2010**

The TC/BOE Strategic Planning Subcommittee held a community conversation on Thursday, May 20, 2010 at John F. Kennedy Middle School located at 155 Raffia Road. The community conversation started at 7:00 PM.

BOE MEMBERS PRESENT Judy Apruzzese-Desroches, Joyce Hall, Charles Johnson and Chairman Greg Stokes

TC MEMBERS PRESENT Cindy Mangini, Patrick Crowley, Bill Lee and Mayor Scott Kaupin

TC/BOE MEMBERS ALSO PRESENT Clemence Dumont, Carol Hall, Peter Jonaitis, Donna Szewczak and Stacy Thurston

ALSO PRESENT Dr. John Gallacher, Superintendent of Schools and Mr. Matt Coppler, Town Manager

Mayor Kaupin gave an overview from each of the TC/BOE Strategic Planning Subcommittee meetings and the handouts provided at each meeting.

Mayor Kaupin reviewed the TC/BOE Strategic Plan Subcommittee's recommendation for reconfiguration with community members.

- One building senior high school for all grades 9-12 (location to be determined);
- One building middle school for all grades 6-8 (location possibilities: current JFK building or the open high school building);
- Four, possibly three, elementary schools housing PK-2 grade students (depends on degree of enrollment decline);
- Three elementary schools housing 3-5 grade students.

Mayor Kaupin reviewed the subcommittee notes.

- Currently 9 elementary schools are open;
- Currently all house K-6 or PK06 grade students;
- Under the proposed reconfiguration, elementary buildings would go from 9 to 7 buildings or possibly 6 buildings;
- Committee discussed Stowe, Hale, Enfield Street and Alcorn Schools as potential sites for reutilization;
- PK & K would be half-day programs.

Mayor Kaupin stated subcommittee members would like to hear the community's thoughts on the proposed recommendations for reconfiguration.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:

Beth Radkovich, Green Manor Lane – Mrs. Radkovich is a taxpayer and a teacher in Enfield. Mrs. Radkovich believes more consideration to the Green Manor area is needed. The pool and Scitico market have been closed. This part of town has seen many cuts. Nathan Hale School is in great shape. Mrs. Radkovich feels closing a small school vs. a big school is not always the better thing to do.

Sue Braun, Light Street - Mrs. Braun loves parts of the plans like having one high school and becoming one cohesive unit and moving grade 6-8 together. Mrs. Braun believes additional staff will be needed at the middle school for safety issues during dismissal times at the middle school. Mrs. Braun does not like the elementary plans. When will we know what elementary schools will be closed. Mrs. Braun likes the concept of sister schools. Mrs. Braun asked how many layoffs will be needed to pay for a school to be closed. Mrs. Braun appreciates your time and asked subcommittee members to consider the children and the parents.

Tricia Muller, Webster Road – Mrs. Muller is concerned with the students that are attending out-of-district schools because of daycare concerns. She has a child with learning disabilities that is out of district and is thriving at Parkman. She would like him to remain there. Without her current daycare provider, she will lose her job. Mrs. Muller would like subcommittee members to consider the needs of all children.

Tina Leblanc, David Street – Mrs. Leblanc agrees that changes are needed. One high school and a 6-8 middle school are good ideas. Mrs. Leblanc likes the sister school concept. Mrs. Leblanc would like subcommittee members to listen to Dr. Gallacher's plan. This plan can not be effectively done for September 2010. Some students will be moved to numerous schools. Mrs. Leblanc would like us to wait until 2011 to start the town-wide redistricting. Do it once and do it correctly.

Maureen Brennan, Sandpiper Road – Mrs. Brennan thanked subcommittee members for their time but does not agree with everything. We have the opportunity to save the taxpayers money. A lot of the details have not been ironed out yet. There is 20 days left to this school year and students do not know where they will go to school next year. Mrs. Brennan would like us to wait until 2011. Mrs. Brennan stated we have the opportunity to save programs.

Thomas Duffy, ESAA – Mr. Duffy stated he is here tonight on behalf of the ESAA. We are proud educational leaders that understand the harsh times the community is going through. Restructuring is a large complicated task that is needed for systemic change. We support the superintendent's plan and we need to start the process. Mr. Duffy urged subcommittee members not to disregard our recommendations. Moving all 6 grades at one time can not be done effectively. Projected costs are unclear. Mr. Duffy respectfully requests you follow our request and stated those who fail to plan, will fail.

Jill Bourassa, Sam Street – Mrs. Bourassa is a concerned citizen and daycare provider. Children need consistency. Your decisions are changing this. As a daycare provider, Mrs. Bourassa and parents need to know your decision now to make plans for next year. There are only 57 daycare providers in Enfield and finding one is not easy. Changes are needed but change for education and the future of Enfield.

Guy Bourassa, Sam Street – Mr. Bourassa thanked the subcommittee members for soliciting the community's opinions. We have an opportunity to shape the future of Enfield for the next decade. Mr. Bourassa does not agree with all the plans and asked subcommittee members to look at the short term and long term outcomes. The superintendent's plan will give the administration time to redistrict properly with balanced classroom sizes. Mr. Bourassa asked subcommittee members to listen to the great people of Enfield. You can make a difference.

Steve Moriarty, Sidor Drive – Mr. Moriarty urged subcommittee members to consider clean energy when you are restructuring. This is the time to include this in your plans. You can save money in the long run. Mr. Moriarty thanked the town for supporting earth day.

Matthew Moranda, Scitico Street – Mr. Moranda does not like the plan. He went through redistricting and hated it. It is not easy making new friends. Combining high schools and a 6-8 concept is a bad idea. Family sizes are growing. You will be busing children all over the

town. Kids do better in smaller classes. Mr. Moranda asked if the newly hired Fermi football coach will be eliminated. We started this process last year and nothing happened. Mr. Moranda hopes something gets done but not support the proposed plan.

Ross Davis, Iroquois Road - Mr. Davis feels the objective needs to be addressed. A power-point presentation or explanation to the public is needed. Mr. Davis is not against closing a school or redistricting. Limited information has been shared with the public. We deserve to know what the subcommittee members know. Community involvement is needed. Mr. Davis stated your job is to do something for the community not to get re-elected.

Josh Hamre, New King Street – Mr. Hamre stated we did this last year and it isn't any easier this year. Redistricting is needed. Logic is being applied to the project and Mr. Hamre appreciates that. Mr. Hamre stated that the Alcorn liaison told parents it was not important to attend, he disagrees. As an Alcorn parent, it is important to be here and voice your opinions.

Tom Donohue, Celtic Court – Mr. Donohue applauds subcommittee members for looking at the concepts and plans. Combining both high schools is where you will see financial savings. We will be required to expand our high school science labs and the number of credits needed to graduate. Mr. Donohue likes the campus style high school. Mr. Donohue urged subcommittee members to plan for the long term not the short term. We are not closing schools to save money. Mr. Donohue likes the sister school concept. All the data is needed to make the transition easier. We want the best education for our children. Short term goals will not let us get to the long term plan.

Wendy Osoda, Windmill Road – Mrs. Osoda thought there would be a detailed plan presented tonight. Mrs. Osoda believes the risk assessment would be off the charts for starting this is September 2010. Housing all 6-8 students at JFK concerns her. Busing and daycare are huge concerns and needs to be addressed. Having only one high school will limit the number student's eligible to participate in sports. You will never be able to please everyone. Mrs. Osoda urged subcommittee members to slow down and implement the restructuring plan successfully.

Bill Thomson, Duff Drive – Mr. Thomson urged subcommittee members not to be hasty with their decision. He is not against closing and redistricting. Mr. Thomson is concerned about digging at Fermi and combining high schools together. Remember the soil remediation we just went through at Fermi. He is afraid of what will be dug up again. A well thought out developed plan is needed. We did not gain any money when we closed Kosciuszko. We need to make our schools better for our children so they are better prepared for the future. Our children are going to private and magnet schools now.

Jeris Griffin, Olde Field Farms Road – Mrs. Griffin is a product of Enfield. She was born, raised, lives and teaches in Enfield. Mrs. Griffin loves teaching just like many other teachers that are here tonight. She remembers how crowded the schools were when we had one high school when she was in grade 11. We have a well organized system at JFK. We need to take the necessary steps to transition. Moving all 6th graders at once can not be safely or successfully done. Consult with the experts and listen to our administrators. Daycare changes are needed. Mrs. Griffin asked if you know what I know. If you did, you would ask those who do know.

Sara Prosinski, Rye Field Drive - Ms. Prosinski stated if you move all the current grade 5 students to JFK next year, they will miss out of many sixth grade events. Ms. Krucinski asked subcommittee members to wait until 2011 so they can start to prepare the fourth graders for the transition to middle school.

Sheree Winans, Enfield Street – Mrs. Winans is a parent and teacher at Alcorn. She supports neighborhood schools. They are an important piece in our community. Tweak the boundaries and keep class sizes small. Mrs. Winans supports a K-5 configuration but urged subcommittee members to wait until 2011 to do this correctly. With the current plan, some children will move 4 times. This plan needs to be done correctly.

Lisa Hudson, Bass Drive – Mrs. Hudson asked what are the benefits for reconfiguring to a K-2, K-5 or 3-5 configuration. Mrs. Hudson supports neighborhood schools and less busing. Numbers are need for busing. Reconfigure so you can still have walkers for K-2 or 3-5 configuration. She supports the high school campus idea and would like it kept at Enfield High.

Ben Chayes, Diamond Drive – Mr. Chayes would like transparency regarding the subcommittee's decisions. We all know change is needed. The devil is in the details. A 6-8 grade configuration concerns Mr. Chayes. A separate wing is needed for the 6th graders. Staff outside the building is needed. More information is needed. We transition the incoming 7th graders. We have not started this process yet for the incoming 6th graders. Daycare is needed and busing to daycares is needed.

Len Grabon, Broadbrook Road – Mr. Grabon heard stories about how bad JFK was but it is not true. The staff can handle the rough students. Enfield has about the only 7 & 8 grade configuration in the State. He is the PTO president at JFK and he will work with the principal to make sure the 6th graders do not miss out on any events. Mr. Grabon urged subcommittee members to listen to Dr. Gallacher's plan to bring 50% of the 6th graders to JFK for September 2010. Alcorn has a racial imbalance and moving the 6th graders will help with this. A 6-8 model will be great.

Carrie Barnes, South Meadow Lane – Mrs. Barnes feels we need one large plan and the plan is not in place yet. Mrs. Barnes likes the neighborhood school concept. We need to know what the benefits are for a k-2 or 3-5 grade configuration? What are the busing costs? We need to know what the educational or financial reasons are? What will be the savings to close a school? Mrs. Barnes believes the Town Council is pushing the Board to close a school. Elections are not until next November.

Gretchen Ide, Fairview Avenue – Mrs. Ide stated everyone loves their home school. Mrs. Ide thanked subcommittee members for what they are doing. Mrs. Ide would like the entire grade 6 class moved to JFK in September 2011, full day kindergarten and sister school concepts. Considerable though of education needs to be first and foremost. Mrs. Ide urged subcommittee members to keep parents informed.

Amanda Chase, Terrace Circle – Mrs. Chase is a taxpayer, parent and former teacher. Last year we started this process and were unprepared. She came here tonight expecting more. The community needs the data that was provided to the subcommittee members. It should be available on the website. A 0% budget is difficult for the BOE. Childcare is lacking and is difficult to find in Enfield. Mrs. Chase urged subcommittee members to listen to the professionals plans and do not rush. Community members expect more from the Board and Town Council.

Jake Sullivan, Spier Avenue – Mr. Sullivan is in grade 5 at Enfield Street Elementary School. He urged subcommittee members to not move 6th graders to JFK next year. We will miss out of a lot of important events we have been waiting for.

Gina Sullivan, Spier Avenue – Mrs. Sullivan agrees with the changes but the time frame has her concerned. Education will be compromised for 6th graders going to JFK. This would be easier to accept if we had more time. All 6th graders should go at the same time. This is

another process being put in place without looking at it completely. If we collected all the delinquent taxes owed the town (\$2 million), maybe the schools would not take such a hit.

Leena Mack, North Maple Street – Mrs. Mack thanked subcommittee members for involving the principals. Mrs. Mack asked why the small schools are being targeted? Mayor Kaupin stated reorganization is needed and you need the most classroom space to do this effectively. Larger schools have more classroom space.

Mrs. Mack feels more thought needs to go in to the decision of small schools vs. big schools. Chairman Stokes stated no one will debate smaller isn't better. Mrs. Mack would like a large school closed instead of 2 small schools. Chairman Stokes stated a lot of budget cuts are needed.

Mrs. Mack would like to know what is going to happen. Chairman Stokes stated the Board of Education will adopt a plan for reorganization. We have taken down your comments. The Board will start their budget talks and we will ask Dr. Gallacher for his professional opinion on the budget.

Mrs. Mack has faith in Mr. Neville and is ok with moving the sixth graders to JFK. The timeline is unfair. Parents, students and PTO's need to know what will happen sooner rather than later.

Taylor Bowley, North Maple Street – Ms. Bowley is a student at JFK and feels confident having the sixth graders come to JFK. She would like subcommittee members to wait and bring all the 6th graders at the same time.

Angela Bowley, North Maple Street – Mrs. Bowley favors the high school campus concept. She moved around a lot as a child and knows what it is like to change schools frequently. Mrs. Bowley likes neighborhood schools. A 6-8 middle school is a good idea. Mrs. Bowley does not like a 7-9 school concept. Mrs. Bowley urged subcommittee members to slow down and think about what you are doing. Busing students all over town is not in the best interest of the students.

Kathy Thomson, Duff Drive – Mrs. Thomson thanked the TC for saving the Crossing Guards. Mrs. Thomson is against closing a high school. We need to bring back nursing and culinary programs and start trade programs in our high schools. Mrs. Thomson stated numbers are not declining and we need to take this slowly. Mrs. Thomson encourages parent volunteers and care groups. She encourages everyone to get involved and run for the Town Council and Board of Education.

Frank Wood, Glendale Road – Mr. Wood pleaded with subcommittee members to take a deep breath and slow down. What you are about to do is a big deal. Mr. Wood asked them to give the superintendent and administration a chance to develop a well thought out plan. Education must be the number one priority.

Perry DeFazio, Glenn Road – Mr. DeFazio stated the planning process and details are needed. Lack of project planning is apparent. Not enough information has been provided to the community. The past BOE Budget Subcommittee was shocked at the lack of details. This is an emotional issue. How can the BOE/TC make an informed decision without the details? More information is needed. Mr. DeFazio stated subcommittee members are in a tough spot.

Kathy Parrow, Thompson Court – Mrs. Parrow likes the campus style high school and the 6-8 middle school is a good concept. She is the PTO Treasury Secretary at Alcorn and needs to know what to do with the money if Alcorn is closed. Mrs. Parrow urged subcommittee

members to take your time and would prefer they wait until 2011 before moving forward with the plans.

SECOND ROUND AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:

Heather LeBlanc, Susan Circle – Mrs. Leblanc thanked subcommittee members for the community conversation. The Board asked where the majority wanted to graduate from and you listened to them. Mrs. Leblanc urged subcommittee members to take the time to make your decisions.

Keith Winans, Enfield Street – Mr. Winans stated this is a huge opportunity of Enfield. You can make a legacy for Enfield but not if you make hasty decisions. Some decisions made in the past have not been made for the best and were made hastily. Think about the future and what might happen. This was discussed last year. We need to see your plan and your ideas for the future.

Mary Scutt, Willard Drive – Mrs. Scutt is on board with the reconfiguration plans but does not want to start it in September 2010. We need a plan in place to prepare the students. Most parents do not have a clue of an idea of what is going on. Please hold off until 2011. Children need to know what will be happening. We need to prepare them about the changes.

Nikki Price, Enfield Street – Mrs. Price is in favor of reconfiguration. Redistricting would be folly if not done first. Mrs. Price would like this to start in 2011.

Wendy Fontaine, Enfield Street – Mrs. Fontaine would like to know why this isn't taking the entire year to do this. Why are we rushing? Chairman Stokes explained about the learning curve with new BOE & TC members every two years with elections. We started the process last term with the old Board and are continuing the process with the new Board and Council members.

Mayor Kaupin stated the Town Council was not involved with the plan in the past. This term, Board and Council Leadership meet and it was unanimous to make changes. It was not planned to do this in 6 weeks. This is a long term engagement. The Town owns the buildings and we are responsible for the custodians in the buildings. This is why we are both here tonight discussing this with the community.

Mrs. Fontaine asked if this can be pulled off by 2010? Mayor Kaupin stated based on feedback to close an elementary from the administration, it is doable. Community members may feel this is short notice.

Mrs. Fontaine asked how will we save money by changing the grade configuration? Chairman Stokes stated this is where we listen to our administrators. What is more educationally sound, a PK-2 or 3-5 configuration?

Mrs. Fontaine stated we will be busing students all over town. Chairman Stokes stated the PK-2 & 3-5 grade configurations would not be done in 2010. We will continue the process and will have other community conversations so parents will know what is happening.

Mrs. Fontaine asked if a school closes like Stowe, where will the students go? Chairman Stokes stated the administration will make these decisions. We still need to address the racial imbalance at Alcorn.

Lisa Bergman, Circle Drive – Mrs. Bergman stated that she did her homework before moving to Enfield. Now her kids might need to go to another school. She is in favor of neighborhood schools. Neighborhood schools give students security and consistency that a K-2 and 3-5

configuration can not give students. She is in favor of using older students to help mentor the younger students. Teachers make connections with students and carry that connection throughout the years. They keep an eye out for the students. Mrs. Bergman urged subcommittee members to keep neighborhood schools.

Tom Walsh, Rosanne Street – Mr. Walsh is a product of the Enfield Public Schools and each school he attended has since been closed. Mr. Walsh also believes we may be rushing. Something should have been done last year. Mr. Walsh stated we have nine elementary schools, send them to one middle school and then divide them up to become cross town rivals. Mr. Walsh is in favor on the EHS campus style. He is not in favor of taxes going up but feels giving our students a better education is a good idea. Mr. Walsh suggests using Fermi for a middle school and JFK can be used for elementary grades. Mr. Walsh would like to move them all at once and do the reorganization correctly.

Tina Leblanc, David Street – Mrs. Leblanc asked if the teachers felt they could do this for 2010? Mayor Kaupin stated the subcommittee asked for proposals. Chairman Stokes stated we asked the superintendent for a recommendation. Chairman Stokes stated the administrators provided a proposal but would like to wait. The administration can relocate students from one school and 50% of the sixth grades in September 2010. We do not feel that we can move all sixth graders to JFK until 2011.

Dr. Gallacher stated that Mr. Neville has made a plan to take 50% of the sixth graders in September 2010. If we don't do something, we will keep making cuts to the existing programs.

Mrs. Leblanc stated there is a huge support behind you but if you wait until the 2011 start date you will gain community support. Mrs. Leblanc is in favor of the sister school concept.

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches stated if we do nothing for September 2010, will parents be ok with larger class sizes, eliminating the TLC program and extending walking distances? We have been thinking about alternative measures.

Mrs. Leblanc responded that sometimes you need to choose the lesser of two evils and larger class sizes might be needed. Mrs. Leblanc stated that she has nothing to look at and detailed information is needed.

Jessica Duga, Cottage Road, - Mrs. Duga asked who will pay for moving the grade 6 students. Mayor Kaupin stated the Town has the funds and will pay for most of it. Mrs. Duga stated the school can not afford to take any additional cuts.

Mrs. Duga asked if by closing a school and moving students to JFK will cause us to lose Title I funds? Dr. Gallacher stated that we have 3 Title I schools and the costs will vary from school to school. We still need to make cuts to the budget.

Sue Braun, Light Street – Mrs. Braun is a bus driver and drives the students to JFK. She always keeps the incoming 7th graders on the bus the first day of school so they can see who is on the bus. It helps them with some of the anxiety. She knows for a fact, the 6th & 7th graders will bond quickly since they will both be new to JFK. Mrs. Braun hopes the subcommittee members wait to do this until 2011. This will also help with student anxiety. They need to know what to expect.

Carrie Barnes, South Meadow Lane – Mrs. Barnes asked for clarification regarding the \$800K Excess Cost Grant. Mayor Kaupin and Chairman Stokes explained the process to Mrs. Barnes. Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches stated if we are short on funds for special education costs, we will ask for the money. Chairman Stokes also stated if there is a deficit, we will request the funds.

Ms. Hall further stated that the Board never knows if we have budgeted enough for SPED costs.

Mrs. Barnes is in favor of sister school concept for educational purposes not financial reasons. Mrs. Barnes would like to see more detail information that includes cost effectiveness.

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches explained that we need to balance quality education in a fiscally responsible manner. We do not want the restructuring to hurt education. Balance is needed. Education is our primary focus. If we consolidate classes and balance numbers, walkers will be at every building. Overall, there may be some small increases for buses.

Josh Hamre, New King Street – Mr. Hamre asked on behalf of Sharon Wolf, can we afford to offer breakfast at the schools the Alcorn students will be sent to. If Alcorn School is closed, ERfC will not be available for the students before and after school. We will also lose the Alcorn Library that is named after Amy Romano.

Amanda Chase, Terrace Circle – Mrs. Chase asked what is the plan? Chairman Stokes stated we have been planning from the start and have a conceptual plan to look at one high school and what will be implemented for 2010.

Mrs. Chase asked if a decision will be made on Tuesday? Chairman Stokes stated that each Board member will need to make that decision.

Mrs. Chase asked if we have looked at past models like when we closed Alcorn School. Dr. Gallacher stated that was a bit different because Alcorn was condemned. We have discussed this with the Administration.

Nikki Price, Enfield Street – Mrs. Price asked how the communities thoughts will come into play? The subcommittee is moving too quickly. You need to redistrict first. Chairman Stokes stated when the conversation is over, the subcommittee will reconvene and this will be discussed.

Maureen Brennan, Sandpiper Road – Mrs. Brennan asked about Chairman Stokes systemic change action plan that was presented. More community conversations are needed. The lines of communication need to be opened up. This conversation seemed to be thrown together quickly. Chairman Stokes stated the conversation was not thrown together and the systemic action plan he presented was not voted on.

Mrs. Brennan stated the public needs more detailed information. We need to see the pros & cons. More information will help with the transition. Mrs. Brennan is ok with moving grade 6 to the middle school if it is done correctly. We have a chance for potential savings and program enhancements. Additional sports are needed if we combine high schools. We can make our intramural leagues larger. Money should equate to education enhancements. The funds saved should be reinvested in the schools.

Ross Davis, Iroquois Drive – Mr. Davis would like the subcommittee members to post on-line the pros & cons for redistricting. Let the community know what you will be doing.

Debbie L'ecuyer, Rocket Run – Mrs. L'ecuyer stated the hardest transition for her growing up was middle school. She would like to move all the grade 6 students at the same time and is in favor of one high school.

Mrs. L'ecuyer asked if the CREC Public Safety Academy can go into one of the other high schools. Dr. Gallacher stated this is something that is still being looked into. CREC is planning to be in a new building for 2013.

Dr. Gallacher stated we are still looking at magnet participation numbers for next year. Magnet tuition is a big concern. The CREC Public Safety Academy would like to eventually have around 750 students.

Tina Leblanc, David Street – Mrs. Leblanc stated she is the PTO President at Stowe and they also are wondering what to do with funds and should they plan to recognize the grade 5 students. Mrs. Leblanc is in favor of neighborhood schools.

Mayor Kaupin thanked community members for coming and for their comments. Mayor Kaupin stated that subcommittee members will reconvene the TC/BOE Strategic Plan meeting after a brief recess.

Community Conversation stood adjourned at 11:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary