

**MBSS Replacement - Neighbourhood Learning Centre (NLC)
Advisory Committee Meeting #4
Monday, June 11, 2012**

Minutes

In Attendance:

Chris Johns, Chair, MBSS School Building Replacement Committee
Trina Ayling, Trustee
Donna Brady Fields, United Way
Tanis Shedden, United Way
Bill Bennett, MLA
Jennifer Osmar, MLA's Office
Debbie Therrien, DPAC
Lana Kirk, Chamber of Commerce
Wayne Stetski, City of Cranbrook
Sandra Cave, Key City Theatre Society
Jacey Proudfoot, Cranbrook Family Connections
Mallory Balfour, Student, MBSS
Sandra Davis, Cranbrook Family Connections, Mt Baker PAC
Jennifer Krotz, Columbia Basin Trust
Patrick LeBlanc – KCT
Al Nutini, RCMP
Scott Holt, Acting Co-Principal, MBSS
Brenda Tyson, Acting Co-Principal, MBSS
Rob Norum, Secretary-Treasurer, SD5
Bill Gook, Superintendent
Gail Rousseau, Executive Assistant, Recording Secretary

Chair Chris Johns asked MLA Bill Bennett for an update of the NLC and the replacement of Mt. Baker Secondary School and to find out what more we can do to move this replacement project up the ladder for approval.

Bill Bennett asked the members of the Advisory Committee what their expectations are, not only about the timing of the replacement but what is it that they want to accomplish, regarding an NLC approach to school replacement?

Comments from the Committee members were as follows:

- Opportunity to make this a hub center
- Place for community to meet
- Agencies will be more centralized
- Do not want to see it become another social services institution

- focus on more positive attributes a community brings; need to make it truly a community spirit; focus on health of positive assets in our children; the only focus should not be those 10-15% kids who are struggling
- Mr. Bennett noted that a new NLC is a way for organizations not to duplicate what they do already but to take 920 students who come here 5 days a week and integrate them into our community (region) and give them an opportunity to become connected with all groups involved
- need to decide Key City Theatre's (KCT's) future; need advance notice
- use classrooms to support conferences

Mr. Bennett stated that the NLC is a collaborative symbiotic process. The Board of Education is in charge of moving this project forward and he is not aware that the Board has taken a firm decision on whether or not the KCT is part of the NLC concept. The focus of the NLC needs to be decided i.e., what programs, services etc. are going to be part of this concept and it needs to be determined in consultation with the community. Negotiations need to take place between the Key City Theatre Society and the Board of Education. The provincial government does not get involved in negotiations. He was concerned about the lack of clarity and the uncertainty of the future of KCT. He is not opposed to having the KCT attached but they need to bring their own money to make that happen. To date, he has not seen evidence that the Theatre Society is trying to make that happen. This is a 50m dollar project and the Society really needs to get a vision of its own about what it wants to do. Is it ready to go out on its own?

Patrick LeBlanc, Key City Theatre advised the group that the Theatre is trying to raise money to fund a study. All funding requests to date have been denied. Difficult for organizations to commit with no timeline for NLC; need a concrete structure to approach organizations for funding. They want to see the best economic impact this kind of project will have on the City before funding is considered.

Mr. Bennett went on to say that in all other communities that now have an NLC, they have gone out on their own to create vision with little help from the province. It is up to the Board to find ways to gather the evidence needed for this project. He outlined the provincial funding priorities for this year which included seismic upgrades and new schools in Surrey because of the hundreds of thousands of people moving in (they currently have over 600 portables). Mt. Baker falls into the category of straight school replacement. Mt. Baker has a great reputation for educating their students which was evident in Minister Abbott's tour and the Ministry is aware of what schools need to be replaced. As all investment and capital money is borrowed money, the province needs to be responsible to BC taxpayers. The capital budget will be used for straight school replacement and Mt. Baker will be near the top.

Chair Chris Johns mentioned that a 2 page summary of all the work that has been done so far is on the SD5 website for anyone new attending this meeting.

As far as he can see, we have done everything we can to obtain approval for the NLC at Mt. Baker and asked Bill Bennett what can be done further to move this project ahead.

Mr. Bennett advised that numerous school districts have done as much if not more pre-work when obtaining a NLC for their community. He supports the project and the government does not have to be convinced that it is needed.

Superintendent Gook mentioned that he didn't think SD5 has really decided what the NLC will focus on. To him, this is the biggest stumbling block and coupled with that, it is hard to make decisions when we don't know what the Key City Theatre wants to do.

Trustee Ayling asked if other schools had a focus of programs etc. in place first or did they wait for an announcement of funding and then start planning? Mr. Bennett answered that it would be easy to find out the answer to that question by calling them and asking. It was noted that other schools were called previously and consultation with other school districts was done by Mr. Stolte which is in Mr. Stolte's report on the website.

Concerns from the group were:

- need to sit down and meet with the Key City Theatre Society as soon as possible
- community unsure of what the NLC will look like at this point; further decisions need to be made
- the province will need to know what the specific vision is for our NLC or they won't know how much money to fund
- students/kids don't feel part of this community; need to have bigger student voice; need to reach all student groups; engage them earlier at either middle school or elementary school; need to have reports from students on what has been done so far
- need to heighten and keep the interest up in the community i.e., advertising
- don't want politics to get in the way of this project

The meeting adjourned at 12:35 p.m.