

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday, April 1, 2013
Cary Memorial Building
Estabrook Room
1605 Massachusetts Avenue

Present: Dr. Paul Ash, Superintendent, Margaret Coppe, School Committee Chair; Alessandro Alessandrini, Vice Chair; Members Bonnie Brodner, Jessie Steigerwald and Mary Ann Stewart; and Sam Alpert, Student Representative

The Meeting Minutes were taken by Jean Curran, Recording Secretary

The Meeting convened at 6:33 p.m.

I. Call to Order and Welcome

The Chair called the meeting to order and invited public comment.

There were no public comments.

II. Members' Reports / Members' Concerns

Bonnie Brodner announced that the SEPAC Parent Advisory Committee along with Linda Chase, Director of Student Services and Diane Pelletier Interim Director of Special Education will present the results of the SEPAC Parent Survey on Thursday, April 4, 2013 from 7:30-9:00 p.m. in the Lexington High School Media Room (Room 147).

Mary Ann Stewart announced a new group called PureFusion Percussion will be rehearsing this weekend April 6 and 7 at the Diamond Middle School. It is open to members of the community to watch their rehearsal between noon and 6:00 P.M.

Jessie Steigerwald announced that she and Margaret Coppe will be meeting with Peter Kelley and Joe Pato, members of the Board of Selectmen (BOS) to discuss the timing of the long range plans and enrollment issues concerning the schools. The meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 2 at 10:30 a.m. The Master Planning Committee will meet on Wednesday.

Alessandro Alessandrini questioned why a member of the Board of Selectmen is interested in enrollment. Mr. Alessandrini expressed his view that this is a part of the master plan and that enrollment is a school issue. The BOS should be aware of our expertise on new buildings and that Ms. Steigerwald should make that clear during the meeting.

Margaret Coppe was reminded by Dr. Ash that there is a need to have an Executive Committee meeting and inquired if the members of the Committee were available either Thursday, April 11 or Tuesday, April 23 to meet for an Executive Session.

Members responded that they are all available on April 23 at 7:30 p.m. for an Executive Session.

IV. Agenda

1. Campaign to Raise Awareness of the Connection between Media and Violence

Daniel I. Palant, MD, Lexington resident and pediatrician presented to the Committee a Campaign to Raise Awareness between Media and Violence. After the tragedy at the Sandy Hook Elementary

School in Newtown, Connecticut, Dr. Palant read an article in the Hartford Courant about a boy who started a “violent video turn-in” campaign. Dr. Palant reached out to that family in Newtown and he has now begun the process of introducing a similar program here in Lexington. Dr. Palant shared his extensive research on this topic with the Committee in which he found a correlation between violent media exposure and aggressive and violent behavior in children and young adults. He is working, with the support of Dr. Michael Rich of the Center for Media and Child Health at Children’s Hospital, the Lexington Police Department, the Lexington Interfaith Clergy Association, State Representative Jay Kaufman and Lexington Retailers to make people aware of the known effects of violent media on children and young adults. Dr. Palant shared that he had spoken with Alessandro Alessandrini and Margaret Coppe and they are supportive of this awareness campaign. He thanked the Committee for the opportunity to present this initiative. There were questions and comments from the Committee.

Motion to support the program to raise awareness of the relationship between violence in media and the effects on society, and to co-sponsor a community conversation to raise awareness and respond to this topic. (Steigerwald, Alessandrini) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

2. Discussion of Town Meeting Articles

Article 4 – Appropriate FY2014 Operating Budget. The Committee already voted their budget, so no action on this article was needed by the Committee.

Margaret Coppe shared that the Committee was formally notified this afternoon that Ms. McKenna is going to make a Motion to amend the school budget on Town Meeting Floor and the Committee will be asked our position on this amendment. There was discussion by the Committee and they decided not to support this Motion. The Committee appreciates Ms. McKenna’s idea and generosity, but does not feel that this is the best way to move forward.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street asked Committee members if they would commit to spend the money on an FTE for elementary foreign language if Town Meeting were to support this Amendment. The Committee members replied they would not.

Motion to Oppose Amendment to Article 4 (Steigerwald, Brodner) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

Article 13 – Appropriate For School Capital Projects and Equipment. Ms. Stewart indicated that she had prepared a statement which the Committee unanimously approved.

Article 8 – Appropriate the FY2014 Community Preservation Committee Operating Budget and CPA Project. The Committee is in favor of Article 8(f) – Park and Playground Improvements \$147,500; Article 8(g) – Park Improvements – Athletic Fields \$65,000; Article 8(h) – Lincoln Park Field Improvements - \$150,000 (plus \$186,750 from Recreation Fund Retained Earnings and \$228,250 General Fund Debt); and Article (n) – ACROSS Lexington Pedestrian/Bicycle Route System \$5,000 (plus \$875 from the Tax Levy). Jessie Steigerwald will speak to this Article.

Motion to Approve Articles 8(f) – Park and Playground Improvements \$147,500; Article 8(g) – Park Improvements – Athletic Fields \$65,000; Article 8(h) – Lincoln Park Field Improvements - \$150,000 (plus \$186,750 from Recreation Fund Retained Earnings and \$228,250 General Fund Debt); and Article (n) – ACROSS Lexington Pedestrian/Bicycle Route System \$5,000 (plus \$875 from the Tax Levy) (Steigerwald, Stewart) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

Article 9(b) Lincoln Park Field Improvements. The Committee discussed whether to speaking on this Article. Ms. Stewart agreed to speak on this Article.

Motion to Approve Article 9(b) Lincoln Park Field Improvements (Stewart, Brodner) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

Article 10 – Appropriate for Municipal Capital Projects and Equipment. The Committee decided to revisit Article 10 if needed.

Article 14 – Appropriate for Public Facilities Capital Projects. The Committee discussed Article 14, Section B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K and L. These items have already been voted on by the Committee and Margaret Coppe will speak on this Article.

3. Recommended Policy on Minimum Class Size

Alessandro Alessandrini shared that he had sent the Committee materials he had obtained from the Brookline Public Schools regarding minimum class size language

Ms. Coppe appreciated Phyllis Neufeld, President Lexington Education Association’s (LEA) comments on wording on this policy and the LEA’s concerns regarding ELL Class Size, Class, Program and Section Size. There were questions and comments from the Committee.

Andrei Radulescu-Banu, 86 Cedar Street, asked if the Committee was going to approve this policy tonight.

There was further discussion regarding minimum class size and mentioned that is more directed towards the high school and Mr. Alessandrini will send an email to the Committee with the Brookline language.

4. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of February 2, 2013

Motion to Approve School Committee Minutes of February 2, 2013 (Steigerwald, Stewart) The Minutes were Approved (4-0-1) Brodner Abstained

The Chair moved to recess and reconvene on the floor of Town Meeting at 7:28 p.m.

Documents: Meeting Agenda; 2013 Town Warrant; Letter dated March 9, 2013 from Daniel I. Plant, MD to Dr. Paul Ash re campaign to raise awareness of the connection of Media and Violence; Motion to Amend Article 4 and Motion to Amend Article 20 by Dawn McKenna, Precinct 6; Draft Policy: Minimum Class Size – Lexington High School; Lexington School Committee Meeting Minutes of February 2, 2013

Voted by the School Committee April 30, 2013