

The Board of Education of the Borough of North Caldwell, in the County of Essex, New Jersey, convened in a Public Forum on May 31, 2017, in the Grandview School Cafeteria, Hamilton Drive East, North Caldwell, NJ, at 7:04 p.m.

Mr. Michael Halik, Business Administrator, indicated that in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, notice of this meeting had been properly advertised and the agenda had been posted at the appropriate locations.

Roll call by the Business Administrator:

Present: Mrs. Jann Skelton  
Mr. Robert Projansky, President  
Mrs. Valerie Buccino, Vice President  
Mrs. Mary Mokris  
Mrs. Mindy Opper

Absent: None

Also Present: Dr. Linda Freda, Superintendent  
Mr. Michael Halik, Business Administrator / Board Secretary  
Mr. Chris Checchetto, Principal  
Mr. Michael Stefanelli, Principal  
Dr. Richard Gripp – Demographer  
Mr. Allen Barnett, Architect  
Mr. Anthony Solomini, Bond Counsel  
Ms. Sherry Tracey, Phoenix Advisors

**BOARD PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

Mr. Projansky provided a little bit of background for those in attendance at a public board meeting for the first time. He stated a Board goal for the last several years was some variation on importance of long term strategic planning. The Board wanted to see five (5), ten (10), fifteen (15) or even twenty (20) years down the road.

They have worked with the administration and our architects to assess likely needs over the next decade or more and ranked priorities. Faced with aging buildings, overutilization of existing space, security considerations and population growth, the demographic study done a few years ago, tracked and then updated last year, showed significant changes with an additional 100 students by the 2021-2022 school year. All of this adds up to a situation not of our design that needs to be addressed in some way. We can either do nothing, and potentially change the character of the district, or by spending a not insignificant amount of money, maintain what we have. We have been

discussing our options for months at every Board meeting and we thank those of you who came and provided input. While all of our meetings are open to the public and provide an opportunity for public input, we decided to hold special community forums of which this is the second.

Our purpose today is to provide an update on what we have been doing since the last forum. Given questions about the demographic study at last forum, we have a presentation from Dr. Richard Gripp, our demographer, that will discuss everything from methodology of study to impact of construction that may not have been taken into account. We have Mr. Allen Barnett, our architect, to once again review our options with some further detail. He will talk further about design, timeline and other issues. We intend to get your feedback and answer questions before we make a decision.

Along the way, we have met with representatives from the Borough – Mayor Alessi, Councilman Raymond, Borough Engineer Zichelli, Police Chief Deuer and Borough Attorney Paris for the purpose of learning more about development in the Borough (reviewing a map of all development) and shared timelines and options.

There did not appear to be a lot of building space left other than Greenbrook's 100 acres, which is still a wild card as no one knows what the future of the country club is. We discussed the history of the Hilltop, the dispute with K. Hovnanian, and about the current declaratory judgment that would establish our fair housing requirements, if and when settled, could result in immunity from builder remedy suits for ten (10 years). He thanked the Borough for terrific information sharing.

In addition to the normal informal discussions, the Board agreed to set up regular quarterly meetings which will be helpful to us in sending out information about this meeting. As far as communications go, we have prepared a FAQ that will be posted today, prepared a survey for the school community (going out in coming days), and implemented a communication plan to get notice of this meeting to the community. We have met with the fire department, to ensure no issues with our design options, and stated they had no issues with access to the buildings. We will be providing feedback that we expect to take into account as we get into a more detailed design phase and discussing operating expenses regarding timing.

Cost estimates do not take into account the additional required operational and staff costs associated with additional classes and building operations. We know there will be additional costs in this regard, but we can't estimate until we settle on a design. We anticipate, these costs cannot be absorbed within the existing budget, the referendum will include a second request for voter approval of the additional cost. However, that aspect will be made public well before any vote.

Our meetings are now the place to get information and provide input. We've reconfigured meetings to put this early in the agenda and provide for more meaningful feedback. Here are the scheduled meeting dates: Wednesday, June 14<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday, June 27<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday, July 11<sup>th</sup>, Monday, July 31<sup>st</sup>, Tuesday, August 15<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>. This will likely be the last community open forum before we make a decision to move forward.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

None

After the presentation by Dr. Gripp, Demographer, there was a question and answer session.

**PUBLIC RECOGNITION**

Jodie Lerner, 4 Coventry Lane - Inquired about building capacity and how it would effect enrollment and class sizes.

Robyn Spritzer, 32 Fox Run - Asked if the pre-K population has been increasing. She also asked about restrictions on affordable housing and who can move in.

Myra Sokol, 33 Willow Brook Drive - Wanted to know if we factored in private school students in our counts.

Janice Katz, 39 Willow Brook Drive - Questioned enrollment patterns after the new homes are built and the fluctuations in class size.

Jocelyn Kramer, 47 Hamilton Drive East - Inquired about private school enrollment and asked if the increases in enrollment are due to affordable housing.

Wendy Brosse, 58 Beachmont Terrace - Asked how low income housing affectes housing yield numbers.

At this time, Mr. Allen Barnett, Architect, gave a presentation on the options to date, after which the public had the following questions:

Andrew Brosnick, 22 Cambridge Drive - Asked if a tax increase will affect demographics; i.e., seniors moving out. Also, do we think it will accelerate home sales?

Ronna Scheckman, 11 Maple Drive - Wanted to know why option 3 has three (3) class rooms renovated at Grandview, and asked if Gould would be connected.

Dale Lazarovitch, 57 Evergreen Drive - Asked about the Gould gym placement and safety by the sidewalk. She suggested asking the police department if they saw any

issues. She stated we may out tax ourselves and do we need air conditioning? She stated if the air conditioning was a medical necessity, and if so, please let the community know. She also asked if the students would be in school during the construction progress and how it will be controlled?

George Chen, 2 Maple Drive – Wanted to know how the tax increase for the referendum and new budget operating costs would affect things going forward on a yearly basis.

Wendy Brosse, 58 Beachmont Terrace – Asked how much single unit air conditioners would cost and what it would cost to run them? She asked about the Gould windows, how much it would cost to blast for the new gym at Gould. She talked about costs of adding an elevator to build up.

Jocelyn Kramer, 47 Hamilton Drive, East – Stated current air conditioning units are too loud for children with sensory issues; however, it is necessary for extended school year students and students with special needs. Inquired about the operating costs going forward and asked if we are building so we can put second floors on the buildings in the future. She also asked how many preschool classrooms are at Grandview, would we hire one or two contractors to do the work, and how many voters were necessary to pass the referendum.

Jennifer Quinn, 29 Ferndale Road – Thanked the Board for publicizing the meeting. She then asked if the construction would likely be done in the time frame set. She had questions on the operational costs and wanted to know what happens if voters did not approve. She then asked about moving more students to the Gould building and its effects on traffic. She also asked if the Greenbrook County Club was going to be developed.

Janice Katz, 39 Willowbrook – Asked what a “man trap” is and how does it work? She also wanted to know how security would work if students are in school during construction and what the operational costs and how debt service aid worked.

As there was no further business to discuss, the Board adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Halik  
Business Administrator / Board Secretary