

SUMMARY OF PINELLAS SCHOOLS COLLABORATIVE MEETING OF JANUARY 7, 2009

The meeting was held on Wednesday, January 7, 2009, in the Planning Department Conference Room. Those in attendance were:

Members Present:

Susan Latvala	Pinellas County (Chairman)
Gigi Arntzen	City of Largo
George Cretekos	City of Clearwater
Doug Mullis	Citizen Representative
Bill Dudley	City of St. Petersburg
Jerry Mullins	PSTA/Pinellas Park
Carol Cook	Pinellas County School Board
Julie Ward Bujalski	City of Dunedin
Nadine Nickeson	City of Safety Harbor
Steve Kochick	City of Madeira Beach
Michael Bessette	Pinellas County Schools

Members Absent:

Suzanne Vale	City of Oldsmar
Peter Dalacos	City of Tarpon Springs
John Counts	City of Seminole
Mary Stull	City of Gulfport
Mike Finnerty	City of St. Pete Beach

Others Present:

Dave Sadowsky	Pinellas County Attorney's Office
Steve Fairchild	Pinellas County School District
Mike Burke	Pinellas County School District
Marshall Touchton	Pinellas County School District
Sandra Herman	City of Clearwater
Tom Washburn	Pinellas County Public Works
Robert Davis	Pinellas County Public Works
Bob Bray	City of Pinellas Park
Rick Eggers	City of Pinellas Park
David Chase	City of Pinellas Park
Paul Geisz	City of St. Petersburg
Chelsea Ross	Pinellas County Planning Department
Liz Freeman	Pinellas County Planning Department
Gordon Beardslee	Pinellas County Planning Department
Gina Harvey	Pinellas County Planning Department/MPO
Sarah Ward	Pinellas County Planning Department/MPO
Carolyn Kuntz	MPO/Recorder

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Latvala called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

II. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 3, 2008 MEETING MINUTES

By consensus, the minutes were approved as presented.

III. PROPOSED SCHOOL CLOSINGS/CONSOLIDATIONS AND SCHOOL CONCURRENCY

Copies of maps regarding the school closings/consolidation for elementary and middle schools were distributed. Marshall Touchton noted decisions have not yet been finalized; however, all decisions will be made with consideration for school concurrency. School closings will not cause

another school to run out of student seats. The District and State are anticipating a decline of 1,800 students next fall.

- Elementary School Concurrency Area A – closure of schools will leave a seat balance of 3,615 student seats (includes fundamental and magnet program seats as part of the calculation) (utilizing 80%)
- Elementary School Concurrency Area B – no net affect, 2,604 student seats available (utilizing 82.6%)
- Elementary School Concurrency Area C – 1,268 student seats available (utilizing 83.5%) and
- Elementary School Concurrency Area D – 755 student seats available (utilizing 92.7%).

Some general discussion followed regarding the declining population, school closings and repurposing/consolidation, class size amendment. Ms. Cook stated they are asking people to contact their legislature seeking another year's reprieve since they now have to meet the class size requirements by 2010/11. There is a legislator considering proposing a bill stating the School Districts are in a state of emergency regarding education and allow an additional couple of years.

Councilman Cretelos noted a potential problem in Clearwater is the State criteria for providing a tax credit for affordable housing that the project has to be within one mile of a school. The affordable housing projects in the downtown areas were within a mile of North Ward Elementary but, with the closing of that school, the projects don't meet the criteria and won't receive a tax credit for affordable housing. Clearwater is asking the legislators to consider changing the legislation from one mile to two miles so the criteria would be met.

Mr. Touchton indicated there is enough capacity regarding the middle schools in all three concurrency areas so there isn't a concern.

Upon a request for an update on the development of the tracking system and a status of the jurisdictions that adopted the School Element and updated Land Development Regulations, Mr. Smith responded the Work Group is still working on the tracking system. An update will be provided at a future meeting. Clearwater won't be adopting their School Element until June. He noted the jurisdictions are in various stages of adoption. Chelsea Ross, Pinellas County Planning Department, added the next Work Group will be scheduled later this month. The County's BTS (Business Technology System) Department has completed the first phase of the tracking system and the second phase will be later this month. She is still working with a few local governments that have not adopted their Land Development Regulations.

Mr. Geisz asked if the school closings will require an amendment to the local jurisdiction's School Element since the maps will change. Mr. Smith responded it might possibly require an administrative amendment. Ms. Ross added they decided to wait until the fall to update the tables once they know which schools will close and then perform an analysis. This will probably coincide with the update of the local Capital Improvement Elements (CIEs) to reflect the Five Year Work Program.

III. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:34 a.m.