

Special School Committee Meeting
Use of Henry Lord Middle School Sub-Committee Meeting
August 5, 2013

Agenda:

Discussion: Use of Henry Lord Middle School - Ways in which the building can be utilized.

Roll Call: 5:30 p.m.

Mr. Andrade - Present

Mr. Martins - Present

Mr. Pavao - Present

Mr. Pavao called to order the meeting of the sub-committee on the use of the Henry Lord Middle School and asked that the record reflect that Tom Coogan was present at the meeting representing school administration awaiting the arrival of the superintendent.

Mr. Pavao:

Stated that part of the discussion would be about suggestions that were received from the public. He stated that he as well as other school committee members had received phone calls from parents as well as from public officials with suggestions on how to utilize the Henry Lord Middle School. Mr. Pavao asked that Mr. Martins read the suggestions that had been received to date.

Mr. Martins:

Stated that he would read the proposals in the order that they were received.

1. The city could turn this in to a win for the city by allowing Atlantis Charter School to purchase the building. Atlantis has the need to consolidate the upper and lower grades and to add high school grades. Almost all of the students at Atlantis are from Fall River and this proposal would be a shining example for parents, students, and educators working together for the good of our community. This is not a loss for the community, it could be a win.

2. Since it is a fairly new facility, is there any way it could be made in to affordable housing. I know that work would need to be done but it would be a huge benefit in the long run. Helping to ease the long wait for housing and helping to move people from run down apartments into new ones.

3. The FREA suggested that the Resiliency Prep School be located at the Henry Lord Building. They suggest that the program expands to include 7th and 8th grade students who meet the criteria to benefit from the RPS model. In the suggested model, the students from the Stone School would be absorbed into the RPS program at the Henry Lord site in addition to other students identified to benefit from the RPS model. The FREA also suggested the strengthening and expansion of a partnership between Durfee High School and Bristol Community College to provide the Fall River Public School students with the ability to earn college credits. The proximity of Durfee to BCC makes this partnership logical and practical. By locating the early college program at Durfee, students would still have the opportunity to participate in sports and the arts as well as other numerous enrichment programs that are already offered.

4. Establish a middle school alternative program and or expand the day school at Stone.

5. With the intensive rise of autism and other developmental issues, it would be great to use the former Henry Lord as a full inclusion school.

6. The first priority should be to maintain Henry Lord as a middle school in the South End. My idea would be a model for the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades. This would address large class sizes at the elementary level, focus resources to a younger more motivated age group, develop a strong curriculum geared to high expectations to students identifying their own learning potential. Then they will be prepared for what higher education options may offer. I see an option to rebuild Henry Lord in to a junior high school where second year students would be 5th, 6th and 7th and third year would be 6th, 7th, and 8th. Though college bound is a great buzz word, it negates the value of non career prep. Henry Lord could be a model mini Diman. Think of the job market options.

7. Could Henry Lord reopen as a middle school in the Fall River system but the school be managed by a private company? If a teacher wishes to work for this company they would do so under the companies terms, wages, benefits and so forth. Give the company a two year contract and see if they can turn this under performing school around. Have a committee from the city overseeing their performance. The committee could be made up of teachers, administration, school committee, and citizens.

Mr. Pavao asked that the record reflect that Mr. Maynard and Mr. Hart, members of the school committee are present at the meeting.

Mr. Pavao asked Mr. Maynard and Mr. Hart if either of them had received any suggestions and if so they could share them and they would be made part of the record.

Mr. Maynard:

Stated that he was just here to listen to the suggestions that were received and to decide if they were beneficial to the students of Henry Lord and the city of Fall River and he would take it from there.

Mr. Hart:

Agreed with what Mr. Maynard said.

Mr. Pavao:

Stated that prior to arriving at the meeting he received a phone call from a parent who recommended that we go back to the original proposal that was made earlier this year that Henry Lord go from PreK to 8th grade.

He stated that he received another call from a parent of a child at the Greene Elementary School asking if we could consider making the Henry Lord an additional elementary school thus taking the burden of additional students at those facilities and house it at Henry Lord with grades 2, 3, and 4.

He stated that he received one other call with the suggestion to move the RPS to Henry Lord effective this September.

Mr. Pavao asked Mr. Andrade if he had received any additional suggestions.

Mr. Andrade:

Stated that the only call that he received was someone asking if Henry Lord could be used to catch the overflow from some of the larger elementary schools specifically looking at grades 4 and 5.

Mr. Pavao asked Mr. Martins if he had recommendations that he had thought about.

Mr. Martins:

Stated that looking at the whole picture he feels that it would be appropriate for this school building to house grades 7 and 8 for all of the Henry Lord district students and any other students from other areas of the city who wish to attend to have full capacity occupancy. He would also like it to provide the services needed to ensure students achieve to their full potential and that we go from there with regards to having the students graduate from 7 to 8 and 8 to 9 as they go on their way to Durfee.

Mr. Pavao:

Stated that the plan of the sub committee was to take as many recommendations as possible and then forward the entire packet to the school committee as a whole at its next regular meeting and have the school committee as a whole determine what area

they would be interested in turning this school in to. Whether it be a Pre-K through 8, an RPS school, an inclusion school, or an addition elementary school.

He stated that all of the suggestions will be forward to all members of the school committee prior to the next regular meeting for their edification and studying and we will still be open to suggestions right up until that meeting which he believes is on August 21st. Anyone else who might want to submit suggestions could contact Mr. Martins, Mr. Andrade, of himself or go directly to the Fall River School Department Administration Building and ask for the secretary to the school committee. They would be willing to incorporate any suggestions between now and the regular school committee.

Mr. Pavao asked to take a five minute recess to see if anyone else showed up at the meeting so that he could give people the opportunity to come and make any suggestions that they might have.

Mr. Pavao made the motion to take a five minute recess at 5:45 and the motion was seconded by Mr. Martins.

The meeting was called back to order at 5:50 p.m.

Mr. Pavao:

Stated that during the break the sub committee members conversed with one another and two other recommendation came up that were not previously mentioned. Mr. Pavao stated that he received a recommendation via a telephone call to convert the Henry Lord Middle School into a Preschool/Kindergarten Center.

Mr. Martins:

Stated that he was approached by a parent while in the supermarket and told that they were the parent of a child attending the Watson Elementary School and that they do not have a playground. He suggested that the Henry Lord with its athletic fields available should house the students from the Watson Elementary.

Mr. Pavao:

Stated that as of this date, we have twelve recommendations and as he stated earlier, the committee would still be available to take further suggestions and would incorporate them into the packet that will be forwarded to the school committee as a whole for their deliberation and approval at the next regular meeting of the school committee.

Mr. Pavao asked Mr. Maynard and Mr. Hart if after hearing everything was there anything that either of them wished to contribute.

Mr. Maynard:

Stated that he would take it under consideration and if it is beneficial to the students of Fall River, he will approve it and if not he would shoot it down.

Mr. Hart did not have anything to contribute.

Mr. Pavao:

Stated that the meeting had been in session for about a half an hour and that no one from the general public had attended the meeting. Mr. Pavao asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Andrade made the motion to adjourn and Mr. Martins seconded the motion to conclude the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lori Midura, Administrative Assistant Human Resources