

# WHITNEY SCHOOL COUNCIL MINUTES

## General Council Meeting – November 18, 2014

### Agenda:

1. Motions to Approve Agenda & Past Meeting Minutes (September 23, 2014) – Marcia Moffat
2. Chair's Report – Jalyn Anderson and Marcia Moffat
3. Financial Review – Marcia Moffat
4. Principal's Report – Debbie Stern
5. Committee Reports
6. Other Business
7. Motion to Adjourn and Date for Next GCM – Marcia Moffat

**Attendees:** Patti-Ann Allen, Jalyn Anderson, Jane Edwards, Meric Koksal Kember, Marla Larock, Martha McClew, Marcia Moffat, Carol Nielsen, Andrew Pollock, Sandra Ross, Debbie Stern, Amy Westin, Alexis Wise.

**Absent:** Grace Asemota, Elizabeth Knox, Paul Pelton and Robin Porter.

Call to order: 7:05 pm.

### 1. Motions to Approve Agenda & Past Meeting Minutes (September 23, 2014): Marcia Moffat

MOTION: Be it resolved that the November 18, 2014 Agenda be Approved. Be it resolved that the minutes from the General Council Meeting of the Whitney School Council held September 23, 2014 be approved.

Moved by: Amy Westin; Seconded: Martha McClew; All in favour. CARRIED

### 2. Chair's Report: Jalyn Anderson and Marcia Moffat

#### • Parking: Jalyn Anderson

- Parking around Whitney is a serious issue and last year's safety concerns culminated in striking a Council Parking Committee to do three things:
  - draw attention to illegal parking and dangerous driving practices by Whitney Parents. Legal parking and good driving is the responsibility of valid licenses holders to manage themselves;
  - actually stop illegal parking; and
  - commission a traffic study with the Toronto Police Services. We are awaiting results.
- These three things were done and behaviour changed for a period of time.
- However, this needs to be a continuous effort as the traffic has become problematic again. The recent event that occurred a few weeks ago was not connected to congestion or traffic problems. It occurred outside drop off and pick up times. It did, however, remind us of the fragility of life and the need to be orderly and follow rules.
- A committee is being formed and Andy Filipiuk has agreed to chair it. If you are concerned, please join the committee to add your voice and time to the issue of safe arrivals and to those of us who are advocating safe and legal parking practices.
- Andrew Pollock raised the idea of a kiss and ride, where parent volunteers escort children from cars to the schoolyard.
- Before embarking on a new process, Patti-Ann Allen suggested watching the traffic during drop-off and pick-up, and seeing which adults (parents, nannies) are around the schoolyard during this time, as they may be able to help with whatever process is put in place.

# WHITNEY SCHOOL COUNCIL MINUTES

## General Council Meeting – November 18, 2014

- **Procedures for Advocacy: Jalyn Anderson**
  - Jalyn discussed the procedures for advocacy on issues. Key messaging that the role of the parent council is to advocate on behalf of parents and the student body.
  - If a parent has an issue they believe is important to address or discuss, please contact either of the Co-Chairs (Jalyn Anderson or Marcia Moffat) or Debbie Stern. You can phone or email us to outline the problem. The steps are to outline the problem statement, identify the appropriate stakeholders, strike a committee as needed, discuss alternatives, agree on a proposed resolution and implement it.
  
- **Inter-School Donations and TDSB Fundraising Policy: Marcia Moffat**
  - Marcia raised the recent Globe & Mail article on the large variation in the amount of money raised by parent councils for schools across the TDSB. There are 476 elementary schools in the TDSB and the article spoke to fundraising by John Ross Robertson and Jackman as compared to other schools that do not have the same affluent parent body.
  - Importantly, the primary responsibility of the Whitney School Council is to the student body at Whitney Public School. Our stated mission as a charity is to “improve student learning and school performance, and promote cooperation between the families of pupils and staff, at Whitney Junior Public School.”
  - In terms of funding of TDSB schools, it is a complex matter. The TDSB has a funding formula aligned to a “Learning Opportunities Index” that ranks each school according to need. Whitney is second from the bottom of this list, so receives less TDSB funding than other schools. The schools at the top of the index also receive support from supplements, grants and corporate donations. The middle ranking schools (numbers 201 – 350) have the greatest need as they have neither the additional support nor significant parent fundraising. You can find the index at [www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/AboutUs/Research/LOI2014.pdf](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/AboutUs/Research/LOI2014.pdf).
  - In the past, our Charter stipulated 15% of the Main Event silent auction proceeds were allocated to external support. The school council voted to remove this from its bylaws a few years ago. It had become challenging to find schools who would accept the money. It would be helpful to be guided by the TDSB, but the TDSB does not give guidance here.
  - Our and the school’s approach over the past few years has been:
    - Focus on areas of giving where the children are involved and learn from it;
    - Select in-kind donations such as Rose Park Public School (tricycles), Jesse Ketchum (Kobo readers that were given to Whitney by Me-to-we);
    - Holiday charity selected by the students, such as Daily Bread, Chum City Christmas Wish
    - Terry Fox run
  
- **Holiday Charities**
  - Amy Westin and Meric Koksal have researched charities and narrowed the list to three options for the kids to vote on: Children’s Book Bank, Red Door and Eva’s Initiative. Students will vote for a charity at the December SPA assembly. In advance of the SPA Day, kids will research the charities on the list. During the 2 weeks after the SPA assembly, kids will collect items for donation. Part of objective is for the children to research and learn about these three charities, and to understand that people need basic essentials (not just toys).

# WHITNEY SCHOOL COUNCIL MINUTES

## General Council Meeting – November 18, 2014

- The group discussed how to establish a link to real people – depending on what the kids vote for and what is needed, there may be opportunities to connect students with recipients. Marla Larock gave the example of New Circles, where the kids have a tangible activity and interaction. The group also discussed the give back activities that teachers and students participated in last year (e.g., snow shoveling).

### 3. Financial Review – Marcia Moffat

- Spending to date over the current school year is in line with expectations.
- Update on purchases from spending votes:
  - iPads, iPad protective cases, iPad charging cart: all purchased and in place. Spent \$6,200 vs. the \$7,350 approved at the September spending vote. We shopped around and were able to source a charging cart and protective cases that met our technical specifications at better price points. Saved over \$1,000.
  - Computers: all purchased and in place. As detailed in the September 2014 spending vote, we were able to stretch our dollars here too. We upgraded 11 computers for \$2,700 (versus the 7 computers for \$3,100 that was approved at the February spending vote).
- Harvest Fest financial results:
  - Excellent participation across the school.
  - Net revenue after expenses of \$2,600, as compared to \$1,500 the prior year.

### 4. Principal's Report – Debbie Stern

- Report cards went home and parent teacher interviews have had lots of positive feedback. The progress report cards is around learning skills minus the marks, and has been quite successful. Report cards in February will include grades and final report cards will go out in June.
- School Improvement Plan is mandated by the TDSB and includes:
  - Literacy: Focus on moving students from Level 3 (60% currently) to Level 4 (20% currently). More focus on making connections between content and other information outlets.
  - Numeracy: Focus on problem solving;
  - Path Ways (Transitional Students): Focus on moving the Level 1 and 2 students up;
  - Community, Health & Well-being: Continued focus on SPA days, peer mentors, etc.
- Mind up curriculum: Working on mindfulness AND potential anxiety. Helping the kids talk about it and how to be aware, and how to calm down. Good conversations are continuing.
- Integrated technology and brightlinks: Teachers are training on this and are using it in their classrooms.
- Safe and caring schools committee: Deals with bullying, code of conduct, parking, security. This committee will meet in two weeks and has met three times since September

# WHITNEY SCHOOL COUNCIL MINUTES

## General Council Meeting – November 18, 2014

- There is a PA Day on December 5th
- The holiday concert is on December 9th at 7pm – thank you to Carmen Tang who has been working with the junior choir. The dress rehearsal is December 8th – grandparents, aunts and uncles are encouraged to attend the dress rehearsal as the concert itself gets very full. Amy Westin, Jalynd Anderson and Sally Armstrong are decorating the school for the concert.
- Gini Gray will retire at the end of December. She will return at the beginning of December and will join us for the concert. Debbie is looking for a long-term occasional teacher to replace her from January to June, and then will be hiring for a permanent teacher to start in September.

### 5. Committee Reports

#### • **Choir: Marcia Moffat**

- There are 36 students participating in this year's Junior Choir. There are 5 more practices before the dress rehearsal and the kids are excited to sing at the concert. Carmen Tang has found the choir shirts in the music room and she will coordinate with the pianist for rehearsal. Deirdre Fulton has been running the practices and the choristers have responded to her quite well.
- Ms. Fulton will not be here for the remaining practices and Carmen will be running these. Ms. Fulton can be at the rehearsal and the concert itself.

#### • **Lunch Programs & After Four: Marcia Moffat**

- The Fall programs are going well and the committee is planning for the Winter sessions, which will run from late Jan through to March break. This Fall, there have been 8 lunch time classes. Glee was resurrected when the school choir was initially put on hold.
- Approximately 70 children are active in classes.
- Tried to run Junior French but truly no interest. Chess, Lego and Clay were huge hits again. Interest in guitar, scrapbooking and painting were consistent. Planning for the winter programs has begun.
- A few parents mentioned that Mooredale's schedule for next semester is up and expressed interest in seeing the Whitney lunch schedule soon so they can plan. In terms of the Mooredale schedule, questions and suggestions should be directed to Mooredale.
- Some parents expressed interest in lunch programs for younger children (JK/SK/Gr. 1). Marcia agreed to ask Diana Parsons and Janice Wismer about what is feasible here, recognizing that the logistics of younger kids around during lunch hour (escorting them from lunch to the program, etc) is more complex than for the older grades.

#### • **Annual Give: Marcia Moffat**

- Paper invitations going out in backpacks on Monday. Thank you to Jane and Jeannie for making them look great!
- Information will also be sent out through class parents and Whitney Word.
- Campaign runs from mid-November to end of January. The goal is to raise \$20,000 of our \$67,000 annual budget. We have four areas of fundraising: Harvest fest, pizza lunches, Annual Give, and Main Event. Last year, our participation rate was 43%. Whatever we raise through the Annual Give

# WHITNEY SCHOOL COUNCIL MINUTES

## General Council Meeting – November 18, 2014

will reduce what we need to raise through the Main Event, which is at the end of the year. We are not looking to raise more than we need.

- Our \$67,000 annual budget equates to \$240 per student and donors get a tax receipt for the full amount. Great deal!
- Please help us in raising awareness among the parent body of the enrichment that our students receive, and encourage donations.

- **Playground: Marcia Moffat**

- Rope climber: In place and has passed inspection. Instructive classes for safe and proper usage to be held by Mr. Wittenberg during gym class prior to opening to wide use. Then, it will go into the recess rotation schedule.
- Basketball standards: Installed. Rims will be removed nightly, on weekends and through the summer to minimize vandalism and noise for neighbours.
- Baseball backstop: Work is slated to begin soon.
- Wooden planters in the Kindergarten garden: Awaiting update from the TDSB.
- Broader Kindergarten playground: Just under \$30,000 remaining, which we intend to deploy to improve the Kindergarten playground. We are awaiting responses from the TDSB.
- The Playground Committee was enthusiastically recognized by all present for their outstanding efforts to date on moving this challenging project to fruition.

### 6. Other Business – Jalyn Anderson

- **Volunteer requests:**

- Library
- Art Room
- Parent volunteer who is lawyer who is familiar with Charitable Entities
- Parking committee volunteers
- We will send these volunteer requests out through the class parents and in the Whitney Word to get the broader parent body involved.

### 7. Motion to Adjourn and Date for next GCM

Adjournment: 8:02 pm. Motion to Adjourn. Moved by: Marcia Moffat.

Next meeting: Tuesday, February 10th, 2015 – 7 pm to 8 pm.