



City of Seattle

Seattle Department of Neighborhoods

Bernie Matsuno, Director

**Olympic Hills Elementary
School Design Departure
Committee**

Members

Steve Beadle
Karen Costarella
Nancy Cabbage
Chuck Dickey
Gary Goven
Anne Hilman
Annie Meadows
Lucy Morello
Tomoki Noguchi
Carlin Pressnall

Ex-Officio Members

Steve Sheppard – DON
DON Holly Godard – DPD

**Olympic Hills Elementary Development Standards
Departure Advisory Committee**

Meeting #1

Meeting Notes

December 8, 2014

Members Present:

Karen Costarella
Steve Beadle
Tomoki Noguchi
Gary Goven
Ann Hilman
Annie Meadows
Lucy Morello
Nancy Cabbage
Carlin Pressnall

Staff Present

Steve Sheppard (DON)
Holly Godard (DPD)

Others Present

See Attendance Sheet

I. Opening of Meeting and Introductions:

The meeting was opened by Steve Sheppard from the City of Seattle, Major Institutions and Schools Program. Mr. Sheppard welcomed all in attendance and noted that he would facilitate the meeting tonight and there are handout packets available for tonight's meeting. Brief introductions followed.

II. Brief Description of the Process:

Mr. Sheppard stated that this process is governed by the Seattle Municipal Code Section 23.68 which specifies how the meeting is run. Mr. Sheppard noted that Seattle does not have a school zone; instead, the City allows schools in all zones, subject to the development standards (zoning provisions) of the underlying zone. Since most schools are in residential neighborhoods and are zoned "single family", this can present challenges. The schools are not single family homes and do not normally meet the underlying zoning requirements. Thus, the Land Use Code contains provisions that allow the Seattle School District to request exemption from

various zoning provisions. They may request exemptions or “departures” from many of the provision of the code.

The Committee is meeting tonight for the purpose of developing a recommendation concerning the School District’s requested departures for exemptions to several provisions of the Seattle Municipal Code related to land use. The process for reviewing and approving the District’s requests, includes setting up a Committee composed of eight members- a person of the neighborhood that resides within 600 ft. of the site, two representatives at the general neighborhood that does not to be residing within the 600 ft. of the site, two people who represents the parents of the students of the school, a representative from the Seattle School district, and a representative at-large who is involved with the school district and with the school’s city-wide education issues.

The Committee receives information on the departures being requested from the Seattle School District and its consultants, I takes public testimony; and then discusses the requested departures. The Committee may do one of the following: 1) recommend granting the departures as requested; 2) recommend approving the departures but with either modifications or specific conditions, or 3) recommend denial of the departures. Mr. Sheppard noted that any conditions identified must be clearly related to the requested departure and enforceable on the District.

Mr. Sheppard emphasized that the Committee’s decision tonight are recommendations only. Their recommendations will be put into a report forwarded to the director of DPD (Department of Planning and Development) who will issue the decision. The decision is appealable both to the Hearing Examiner and from the Hearing Examiner to the Superior Court because the type of decision involves changing the Land Use law.

The Committee may develop recommendations at this meeting, or if either time does not allow, or if there is additional public testimony desired or additional information needed, the Committee may hold up to two additional meetings. If the Committee concludes, they have enough information from the school district and no further benefit from having any public testimonies or public meetings; the Committee can determine to move forward at the end of this meeting in establishing their general recommendations; in that case this would be the only public meeting/hearing.

III. Presentation on Departures Being Requested:

Mr. Brad Tong introduced himself as the School District’s construction manager. Mr. Tong mentioned that he has been with prior community meetings regarding the school design and informed the group that tonight’s meeting is a City sponsored meeting.

Mr. Tong introduced, Ms. Lucy Morello, Seattle School District’s Sr. Project Manager; Mr. Richard Best, Director of Planning, Todd McBryan from Heffron Transportation; and Mr. Michael McGavock and Mr. Mitch Kent from McGranahan Architects.

Mr. Tong provided noted that the existing school enrollment is about 297 students in a 38,000 sq. ft. building on a 6.5 acre site. 23 parking spaces are presently provided.

Mr. Best noted the 2013 levy included funds to replace the existing facility with a new school that is approximately 90,000 sq. ft. to accommodate 660 students. The project team worked with the School District, has previously hosted two meetings concerning the design.

Mr. Tong stated that the architects will present the design and project schedule. There will be outside improvements including curbs, gutters and sidewalks along all the perimeters of the school property that hits public streets along 20th avenue, 133rd street, and a short segment of 23rd avenue. The estimated project budget is \$41.9 million. The estimated occupancy of the new school will be September 2017.

A diagram was presented showing the design based on the School district's standards that include a learning community, library, commons and a gym, an outdoor play area and a 1 acre minimum of grass and gardens.

Mr. Tong introduced Mr. Kent from McGranahan Architects to summarize the departures being requested.

Mr. Kent provided information on the departures as follows:

Building height

Under the Seattle Municipal code, a residential area like this neighborhood is limited to building a maximum height of 35 ft. plus 15 ft. pitched roof with a mechanical equipment enclosure above 35 ft. The District is requesting an additional 5 feet to accommodate an enclosed mechanical penthouse for both aesthetic reasons (a less institutional view from the neighborhood, promote the life and maintenance of mechanical equipment...

Parking count

Under the Seattle Municipal code, the required parking count and it is based on assembly space, determined for every 80 sq. ft. of room provide parking for 1 car. The cafeteria and gymnasium space if combined together has an area of 9,992 sq. ft. divided by 80 and the code requires 125 parking spaces for event parking that occurs about 2 or 3 times a year.

The proposed child care center also requires about 11 parking spaces that serves the staff working there and pick up and drop offs. Thus total parking required without a departure would be 136 parking spots.

The District is requesting reducing that requirement to 82 permanent spaces on site that are located on 3 zones. The District would also design the hard surface play area to be used for large events. This action should greatly mitigate the impact from these infrequent large events. He also noted that the traffic report served to highlight traffic counts 2 days in the spring time to determine how much on-street parking is available around the school. It was determined that there is a parking supply of 219 spots that are available for parking. None-the Less, The School District is mindful of neighborhood concerns regarding parking and is taking the actions noted here to accommodate parking on site for all current needs, and with use of the playfield for most large events.

Bus loading and unloading

Busses currently load and unload on the street. The code requires that when a new school is built or an existing school substantially remodeled that an off-street bus loading and unloading area be provided. Bus loading is allowed to continue on street if the following conditions are met: 1) boundary on site is not expanded; 2) student capacity not being expanded for more than 25%, and 3) current bus loading and unloading is on street. While the situation appears to be within a gray area, the increased enrollment appears to require a departure to continue the existing situation.

The District is proposing that buss loading and unloading continue along 20th Avenue NE. with new wide sidewalk and an additional curb zone restricted only to bus zone. The key component is the pickup and drop off was pulled off from the street and will bring them on the site, in one way and separate from the bus way and not across the street.

IV. Committee Clarifying Questions: (0:33:32)

The floor was opened to Committee clarifying questions.

Mr. Tomoki Noguchi asked what the width of the sidewalks and more details on the loading and unloading zone. Mr. Kent responded that the bus zone it is 8 ft. wide and the new sidewalks to the current SDOT standards of 6 ft. with planting strip between and the planting strip is about 5 ft.

Members asked how access to the overflow spots would be controlled. Mr. Kent showed a diagram that illustrates the main parking lot where the staff will park, and the public will come pick up and drop off with controlled access through the gates at the rear of that lot. He noted that these gates would be locked 99% of the time and opened only during the large events. The School district is proposing 82 parking spaces and requesting for a departure of 54, but if there are any big events, it will be used to help reduced the impact to the neighborhood.

A question was raised about where will the extra teachers will park based on the 2017 planning enrollment. Mr. Todd McBryan from Heffron Transportation responded that the current plan takes the increase in enrollment and staffing into account. A large proportion of staff currently park on the street... About 30 staff presently do so. With the increased parking being proposed on site, this will decrease to 4 to 15. This will improve street parking conditions in the neighborhood.

Mr. Noguchi raised a question about soccer games on the field. A response was made that the fields are used by the Seattle Parks Department and that the plan is to reduce the amount of fields that are available for the community that is not part of the school. The expected use of the field will be less because of a slight and small configuration and a shorter field.

Mr. Noguchi asked if the weekend soccer games were taken into consideration to accommodate parking and another question was raised regarding overflow of spaces that are available for weekend soccer.

Mr. Kent responded that these questions are for site based management and it is best that Ms. Morello and Mr. Best are the best people to ask these questions. The District asked to have a series of gates to limit the amount and able to control weekend access and after hours. Ms. Morello and Mr. Best did confirm that the field are available for after hours for gym and soccer club, if there are any.

V. Public Comments and Questions

The floor was opened for public comments and questions.

Clarifying questions from the public.

Comments from Peter Van? Mr. Van? asked a question about the square footage of the overflow parking. A response was made that it is about an acre of parking; there are soft play areas that are available and a few basketball hoops that do not count and it will be up to the District on how they want to operate the site.

Comments from Susan P: Susan asked a question if there will be on street parking along 133rd, 23rd, and 130th on the sidewalk. A response was made that the current development standards, SDOT requires curb sidewalk and gutter which allow parallel parking on the street during normal hours and no restrictions. With direct relation to bus loading and unloading zones, when completed, the extension from 133rd through 23rd will have street parking on one side.

Mr. Tong mentioned that the bus load area on 20th avenue on the weekends where there are no bus loading will be available for parking.

Comments from Dirk Simmons: Mr. Simmons asked about the demolition schedule.

Mr. Tong mentioned that there are 2 phases of the construction process with demolition and rough grading on target for late summer around the August and September timeframe and a full construction on March 2016 and wrap up on May of 2017.

Mr. Simmons commented that assuming there will be no regular roads and there will be no way to park on the other side of the road on 130th, will there be wider road and curb cuts and sidewalk improvements.

A response was made that curb cuts along 130th south east corner where the curb sidewalk and gutter are, the next curb cut will be related to the daycare side.

A question was raised if 133rd will be extended. A response was made that yes, it will be extended. The School District worked hard for community feedback to focus on saving the School District some money to improve all edges.

A question was raised about how to park on the curb cuts. A response was made that traffic control through sidewalks and streets. SDOT establishes the curb lines based on utilities and traffic patterns, safety features that determines the best curb line.

A question was raised about input from the community early on at the school and public meetings regarding the level of service.

Presentation from Mr. McBryan began at 0:55:53 about a comment/question from an individual from the public.

Mr. McBryan mentioned that they did study the operations of the school site, conducted analysis when the school is in session including actual video cameras posted on a number of units looking at 20th and along 130th to capture all vehicles and pedestrian traffic, and used that information for the traffic studies. Mr. McBryan commented that in order to study traffic evaluation, the City uses level of services and tested the way it was supposed to be, including uncontrolled pedestrians, etc. Based on all of these analysis, the overall level of service is A, but have identified traffic speed as a specific issue.

Mr. McBryan commented recommendations to identify and mitigate adverse impacts are reviewed by a safety Committee comprised of the school, SDOT and members of the Community. This Committee will meet and address walk routes, cross walk locations, traffic controls, where to install all way stop signs as the school design is near completion. Other recommendations include establishing a Traffic Management Plan for the school to educate parents regarding drop offs, access routes and bus ridership.

Mr. McBryan mentioned that on the 133rd left section, SDOT and SPU will make improvements with a safe curb walk and gutter.

The floor was opened for public general comments:

Comments from Chris Jackins: Mr. Jackins provided handouts to the Committee and expressed his questions and concerns about the school. Mr. Jackins mentioned that the information presented by the School District is insufficient and that the impacts to the neighborhood will be a larger issue. He also mentioned that the neighborhood deserves more information regarding the required City codes; and he wished that the School District provided handouts for the neighborhood to review early in the meeting.

A comment was made if the sidewalks on both side of 133rd will be improved. Mr. Sheppard responded that the code requires street improvements on one side that is directed by SDOT. A condition can be added on the departure request under SEPA to improve the gutters on the school side. The School Safety Committee will keep on working with the City about safe routes for the children.

A comment from the public was made regarding the number of parking for pre-school, parents and staff coming in and dropping off their kids and the individual mentioned that she do not see any correlation between the proposed staff parking and more staff walking in the neighborhood to go to

school. She noted she lives a block away from concern and she was concern about the safety because the street gets very dark at night.

A comment from the public was made about concerns for 65 parking spaces in the neighborhood.

A question was raised about how the children arrive the school and where the front door is. Mr. Kent responded that bus loading comes in the main entrance in the commons, and arriving parents goes right in front of the school building. There will be several ways where folks arrive at the school; there will be a central entrance and daycare entrance.

A comment was made about concerns regarding teacher's parking on a safe location during weekends. There is a short distance for teacher's entrance in the general commons area and it is the only place teachers can park on the weekends. The School District is aware and strict on having weekend access at the school.

A question was raised whether the daycare enrollment are included in the total student count and if the HeadStart/pre-school programs are counted as well. There was no information provided as a response.

A question was made if the daycare entrance is on 133rd and if they can just walk in. A response was made that the entrance will be right next door to the director's office, but will not be a full time entrance.

A comment was made by an individual person where she described that she cannot go in and out of the driveway due to pedestrian congestion and that she now parks on the street. She was concerned that the pedestrians are not following directions and it blocks her driveway.

VI. Committee Deliberations:

Mr. Sheppard began to open the discussions to Committee deliberations. Mr. Sheppard mentioned that the city understands the value schools in our neighborhood; granting school districts whatever they wish; however, the impacts of granting those changes don't fall broadly, but narrowly on people who lives in certain area, which is why there are criteria for committee membership and notifications.

The Committee is here to look at not whether you like the school in general; but look at specific things the code tells you to evaluate in the departure. The Committee needs to look at the relationship, and evaluate the surrounding areas, the character of the areas, edges, use and height, etc.; the design of the structure and its impacts on housing and open space and traffic and noise, as you look at the need for the departure; is it physically required to grant increase height, lot coverage in order to get the proper design of the school; those are the criteria this Committee needs to look at. Mr. Sheppard also mentioned to bring their own knowledge and expertise, and look at the relationship of the school to the surrounding areas, but also emphasized that this Committee is not the decision making body.

Mr. Sheppard asked the Committee if they have enough information to vote on the departure. If additional information is required and if the Committee is not ready to vote on the departures, they can hold an additional meeting to get more information.

Majority of the Committee members discussed and agreed that departure requests for building height and parking are minor while the requests for bus loading and unloading need further discussions.

Mr. Govan commented that he would prefer to hold an additional meeting so he can discuss the issues with his near neighbors since any work done in the school is a huge investment for the neighborhood.

Mr. Sheppard began to open discussions to Committee deliberations on departures in the following order: #1 (building height); #2 (bus loading and unloading); #3 (parking).

a. Building Height

Ms. Annie Meadows asked a question regarding solar panels in the future and if later on in the process that these solar panels will be incorporated. A response was made the building is ideal for solar panels and the gymnasium will be the first building to start.

A motion was made to grant the building height departure without conditions; it was seconded. **The question was called by polling of the Committee. Votes were as follows:**

Karen Costarella	Yes
Steve Beadle	Yes
Tomoki Noguchi	Yes
Gary Goven	Yes
Anne Hilman	Yes
Annie Meadows	Yes
Lucy Morello	Yes
Carlin Pressnall	Yes

A quorum being present and the majority of those present having voted in the affirmative, the motion passed.

b. Bus loading and unloading

The Committee discussed about having a planting strip, and keeping the trees and landscape for the street view a reasonable compromise. Mr. Noguchi recommended to add a condition for bus loading and unloading.

Mr. Sheppard summarized the condition for the departure as: 1) to explore options for tree pits and other ways to get landscaping within the paved area and wider sidewalks.

c. Parking

The Committee decided to discuss this departure at the next meeting.

A comment was made to continue further discussion at the next meeting for parking and bus loading and unloading as these are tied to traffic and transportation issues.

Mr. Sheppard cautioned the Committee that they cannot add condition departures on transportation improvements made within the neighborhood, and the code does not allow it. Issues can be raised in the report to the DPD (Department of Planning and Development) as part of the final report.

Mr. Sheppard reminded that Committee that a doodle poll survey will be sent out to determine the next meeting after January 1st and continue the discussion on the outstanding departure and do the votes.

VII. Adjournment:

No further business being before the Committee the meeting was adjourned.