



CITY COUNCIL MINUTES SPECIAL JOINT MEETING WITH MISD BOARD APRIL 7, 2016

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Mayor Bruce Bassett called the Joint Meeting with the Mercer Island School District Board to order at 5:05 pm in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 9611 SE 36th Street, Mercer Island, Washington.

Mayor Bruce Bassett, Deputy Mayor Debbie Bertlin, and Councilmembers Dan Grausz, Wendy Weiker, David Wisenteiner, and Benson Wong (arrived 5:09 pm) were present. Councilmember Sanderson was absent.

School Board President Ralph Jorgenson, Vice-President David D'Souza and Directors Adair Dingle, Tracy Drinkwater, and Dave Myerson were present.

Mayor Bassett and President Jorgenson welcomed the Council, Board and staff.

SPECIAL BUSINESS

2014 Bond Projects

MISD's construction consultant, Brandy Fox of CPM, presented an overview and update of the projects, as attached to the agenda, including photographs, and expressed appreciation for the City's support. The projects are on time and within budget. Progress continues with the rebuilding and expansion of Islander Middle School, and site work on the detention pond is expected in late summer. Construction of the new Northwood Elementary school should be complete in the next few months. Recent highlights include the installation of solar panels, a green roof, and the gym floor. Frontage work on SE 40th will start over spring break.

Discontinued Propane Bus/Vehicle Pilot Program

Superintendent Plano and CFO/COO Mack summarized the joint effort by MISD and the City to initiate a pilot program for propane-fueled buses and vehicles. After reviewing the permitting process for propane tanks and the increased setback requirements for the safety of students, staff, and community members, it appears that neither MISD, nor the City, would be able to receive the necessary permits to properly site a fueling facility of the necessary capacity on either of their properties.

Bus Stop-Arm Violations and Cameras

Superintendent Plano summarized this safety issue and outlined a potential solution used by other districts, as described in the agenda. MISD is witnessing an increased number, about one to two per day, of incidents where drivers pass a school bus which is loading or unloading students, despite having its red lights blinking and its stop-arm extended, creating an unsafe environment for students crossing the street. The District is considering using services provided by American Traffic Solutions (ATS). The Board is asking the City to adopt an ordinance allowing the processing such traffic violations, including using bus cameras to identify infractions. The City Council is aware of this safety issue, which was discussed by its Public Safety Committee last year, and has scheduled this matter for its August meeting.

Discussion followed about implementation of the system, including execution of an interlocal agreement between the City and MISD, time for public awareness and education, time for internal testing or a grace/warning period, pricing by ATS and King County, and whether the City would consider this matter in June rather than August. Individual Councilmembers indicated their opposition to a grace/warning period for enforcing traffic citations resulting from this system. To allow more time for internal testing and public awareness/education, Interim City Manager Lancaster will see if the City Council can consider this matter at its June meeting instead of waiting until August. All members of both bodies expressed support for this new program.

Diversity Initiative

Superintendent Plano, referencing changes in the demographics of the Mercer Island community, reflected on MISD's systems-level changes with regard to diversity, including the Board's adoption last August of a policy regarding diversity, inclusiveness, and equity. He reviewed the District's commitment to building and sustaining a diverse and inclusive school community by highlighting the Superintendent's Diversity Advisory Committee (DAC) and its Charter, the School Diversity Action Teams, the recent staff and community presentations by Dr. Pedro Noguera, and the fall welcome event for new families. Superintendent Plano commented about the difference between equity and equality, and used an example such as giving certain students a running start or more time to succeed in school endeavors. He also expressed appreciation for Police Chief Holmes's participation and support on the DAC.

Councilmember Weiker summarized the City's efforts in this regard, including the April 20 event, Ending Racism Ceremony: A Traveling Art Exhibit at City Hall promoting racial equity and social justice, and three upcoming talks through the King County Library System. Some discussion followed and individual Councilmembers commended the Board on its policy action.

Dedication of Northwood Elementary

Superintendent Plano announced that the ribbon cutting and dedication ceremony for the new Northwood Elementary school will be the morning of Saturday, June 18, 2016. He noted that students will have field trips to see the new school and there will be additional open houses for citizens to come and walk through.

MISD's 75th Anniversary

Superintendent Plano spoke about the District's upcoming 75th anniversary in September. Chair Jorgenson spoke about adding the anniversary emblem to District letterhead and that this could be an opportunity to recognize PTAs and supporters of school bonds. The Board asked Councilmembers to share, over the next couple of months, any other ideas about how to commemorate this milestone.

OTHER BUSINESS

Councilmember Wisenteiner asked the Board if there are any concerns with the forthcoming changes to the Town Center Visioning and Development Code, especially as it relates to changes in the number of people living in the Town Center. Interim City Manager Lancaster commented that the next Joint Commission meeting will be April 12, and the Joint Commission will present its proposal for the Town Center to the City Council in May.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Bruce Bassett adjourned the Joint Meeting at 6:20 pm.

Bruce Bassett, Mayor

Attest:

Allison Spietz, City Clerk