

# **Swanson PTA: Meeting Minutes**

October 18, 2016

7:00 – 8:15pm

The Swanson PTA met on October 18, 2016 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. and covered the following:

1) Madelon Brennan, PTA President, shared several updates, including:

-Directory deadline is approaching, October 26

-The PTA successfully launched the online spirit wear store, \$800 in online sales in first week

-Encourage people to sign up for health and hearing screenings on Thursday and Friday.

-The Anchor newsletter is available online, encourage people to read it.

-November 15 is the next PTA meeting.

2) PTA Business

a) Anne Henrich, PTA Treasurer, provided a treasurer report, including:

-Membership has reached a record level with over 300 PTA family members.

-Audit for the 2015/2016 books is complete, passed with flying colors, books were in great shape so auditor charged less; also had to complete audit from the prior year.

-Welcome reception expenses were higher than we expected, bought more food and beverages than originally estimated when developing the budget.

-Handmade Arlington on track to meet budget.

b) Carri Berenson provided an update on fundraising:

-Membership numbers are not where we want \$2,816 versus budget of \$4,000

-Currently just \$500 short of annual \$20k goal for the No Stress Fundraiser

-The goal is to increase number of people who have signed up for grocery cards, Sarah Goddell will push on recruitment and has set up Google form where people can enter their name and phone numbers and be automatically enrolled.

3) Bridget Loft, Principal, provided the following report:

-Tomorrow is costume day and early release

-Thursday is blackout day, and Friday is spirit day

-Drama and yearbook group is sponsoring a freak Friday fright party on Friday evening with movie and dance off.

-ATS interventions is two weeks into first rotation and a new one will begin end of November, children are working well with intervention teachers.

-On election day, Nov. 8, there will be a skeletal staff at school, Nov. 11 is also a school holiday for Veterans Day.

-Just finishing Girls Ultimate Season, next week begins Boy's Ultimate Season and they are looking for a volunteer coach.

-Six weeks into school year, the Seven Seas (re-locatables) are working well, kids making it within the 4-minute passing time and have transitioned well; there is a plan for addressing ice on ramps when weather begins getting cold.

4) James Lander, APS School Board Member and the Swanson liaison, served as the featured guest and provided the following update on the high school boundary refinement process:

-Provided handouts on the process around the school boundary discussion; he is a new liaison to Swanson but has been working with other schools during his seven years on the Board (his term ends December 2017); school system is evolving with new Board members and new parents; he encouraged more parents to volunteer in the school system. He took questions from the room.

Q: A question was raised about siblings and what happens when new boundaries are drawn

Q: A question was raised about trailers and concerns about children being late to class and getting injured because of scheduling and having to go from the farthest trailer to inside and upstairs every other class

James outlined that projections and analysis didn't allow the school district to project and plan for facility needs. Over three years there was double than normal growth that put an unexpected need for additional resources for schools. The challenge is there is a facilities group that talks about community growth overall, but population with school aged children hasn't increased (still 20%) but the overall county population has continued growing. Most of the growth has been in the Washington & Lee boundary area, where the population has shown the fastest growth; the second biggest area has been Wakefield; the slowest growth has been in the Yorktown district for high school. Due to growth in the W&L boundary, Swanson and Williamsburg has tried to absorb the growth; it has been a challenge because there is no place to expand. There is currently a plan that includes adding a new middle school and reconsidering the boundaries. They are trying to make the adjustment as quickly as possible. Swanson is 1200 students and Williamsburg is 1300. They are trying to ensure families don't get moved more than one time within a school program (i.e. only moved once within elementary) and that families stay together.

Q: It is disingenuous to say the school board was caught off guard, when there were meetings in 2011 where they were projecting overcrowding, so why the late response. Also frustration that the process for boundaries starting in October needs to be finished by December; it also feels unfair for 8<sup>th</sup> graders who are already thinking about where they will go to school.

James said he is confident the sibling preference is something they will enact and enable it as a waiver. This has been the case in previous boundary conversations, and he thinks it will be the same moving forward.

With regard to the boundary process, James referred to the sheet that outlines a current boundary process that takes effect in September 2017 is to move 100 children a year over four years. It will relocate 400 students from Washington & Lee to another school.

The population growth specifically within the Washington & Lee boundaries is what has caused the boundary refinement process. The issue is not the IB program, the concern is the specific boundaries. The school board has proposed adding an additional 300 seats at Yorktown and Wakefield. Yorktown can easily absorb the 100 new students a year because of the school's slow growth.

Q: How is the criteria prioritized for boundary refinement?

There are six things in the criteria including proximity, sustainability, demographics, etc. – they are not weighted but all are taken into consideration when the decision is made. The way James Lander (not necessarily speaking for the school board overall) thinks about it is how to refine boundaries while taking all criteria into account. He

recommends to look at the planning units between Yorktown and Washington & Lee because it causes the least disruption; but, he said they may also look at the planning units between Wakefield and Washington & Lee. Wakefield is growing much faster than Yorktown, so it is harder to move students to that school without disruption.

Q: Clarity was sought around whether Washington & Lee students will be moved into Wakefield and Yorktown, or if all students could just go to Yorktown.

James said that it has not been decided if they will split 50 students into each school or all students into a specific school.

Q: A parent raised that the online tool forces the movement of students from Washington & Lee into Wakefield.

Q: A parent raised that there are parents who would opt into Yorktown if given the choice. Why aren't parents being given the option to voluntarily shift their children?

James said if parents feel like being moved is a negative thing, it will be taken into consideration. He emphasized the goal is to move 100 students. The boundaries will be moved regardless of whether or not parents voluntarily opt-out of Washington & Lee. It is too hard to accurately project how many parents will voluntarily decide to move their children. The boundary process is because of the overcrowding at Washington & Lee, regardless of students who have opted-out.

Q: Please explain the thinking behind moving people who walk to W&L and forcing them to take a bus to Yorktown.

James clarified they haven't come to a recommendation, but they got to the proposed planning units map out of a desire for the school board to be transparent about every unit under consideration so that families could have a discussion about it. A recommendation has not been made yet; the same concerns the parent raised about walkability will continue to be debated by the school board as part of the recommendation.

Q: If Stratford opens in 2019, what will happen with middle school boundaries and how will it be impacted with the current high school boundary process.

The middle school boundary process will proceed the high school boundary process. The Board made a decision to provide immediate relief to Washington & Lee with the 400 students.

Q: Is this process informing a larger move in the future where even more students will be moved in a larger boundary adjustment?

James said yes, there will be a larger boundary readjustment in the future.

Q: The other thing we heard is that walkers moved out of W&L, those homes will be moved back into the W&L district in the future to make schools walkable to their neighborhoods when W&L has more capacity. She is concerned about walkers being put on a bus.

James said he wanted to make a promise that the decision hasn't been made, and he said her projections aren't taking into consideration all of the things that the school board will take into account when making boundary decisions. He knows that walkability is very important to everyone at every school.

The Swanson PTA meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.