

West End Elementary School Naming Committee Meeting
1701 N. Beauregard St.
November 8, 2017
6:30 p.m.

Minutes

Committee Chair Cindy Anderson called the West End Elementary School Naming Committee Meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

West End Elementary Naming Committee members who were present included: Chair Anderson, Carlos Alfaro, Janese Bechtol, Karen Dunkley, Jerry File, Jim Henson, Blanche Mays Maness, J-Lynn Van Pelt and Kristen Weber. Committee members Keenan Cooper and Imran Gill were not present.

Attendees included Jennifer Abbruzzese, Clerk of the Board and Policy Liaison, and Helen Lloyd, ACPS Director of Communications.

1. Welcome, Introductions and Committee Roster

Chair Anderson welcomed the Naming Committee to its first meeting and thanked them for volunteering their time. Members then introduced themselves.

2. School Board Policy BCE: FOIA Provisions

Ms. Abbruzzese reviewed *Policy BCE: School Board Committees*, specifically its provision that as a School Board ad hoc committee, the Naming Committee is bound by the meeting and notice requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (VFOIA). Any gathering of at least three members of the committee to discuss business constitutes a meeting, which must be open to the public. Notice, agendas, and all meeting materials must be posted to the public at least three business days in advance of the meeting.

3. School Board Policy FF: New School Facility Naming Process Overview

Ms. Abbruzzese reviewed *Policy FF: Public Dedication of Facilities*, which tasks the committee with determining the framework, process, and schedule for community engagement around naming the new West End Elementary School. The committee will solicit recommendations from boards, commissions, community groups, etc. throughout Alexandria City, as well as from ACPS parents, students, staff and Alexandria City community members. The committee will forward at least three naming recommendations to the School Board in early February 2018, but the final authority for naming the new school lies with the School Board.

Committee members also discussed the potential for multiple interpretations of Policy FF's section I. paragraph B., which states that:

“New school facilities **may be named** after Presidents of the United States, Virginia historical figures, or specific persons, businesses, or corporations that have made a significant and extraordinary contribution to the City of Alexandria in terms of education, public service, or involvement in civic or cultural activities over an extended period of time. Appropriate names **may also include** places or events in history that are related to the school facility or its location.”

Committee members discussed that the above provision could be interpreted to limit naming recommendations to **only** those subjects listed above, or that it could merely be listing possibilities to be considered alongside additional, unnamed subjects.

4. **Group Discussion – Framework and Timeline:**

- **Outreach/Methods of Communication**

Ms. Lloyd reviewed the planned ACPS methods and modes of communication to both notify the community about the process and timeline for naming the new school, and to elicit naming recommendations from them. In addition to those included in the meeting materials, committee members discussed adding:

- Local media (Ms. Lloyd stated that the local media pull their information from ACPS Express postings.)
- FACE Center & parent liaisons
- A broad, group email list re: the school naming effort
- Video options for community outreach
- Faith-based communities
- Realtors
- Recreation Centers (posters)
- Libraries (posters)
- Student feedback, possibly through classroom activities
- Local museums

- **Naming Recommendations: Online Form**

Chair Anderson and Ms. Abbruzzese presented the committee with a draft of the online naming recommendation form, and committee members suggested revisions. The form will be posted on the ACPS website in English, Spanish, Arabic and Amharic. One recommended name will be submitted per online form.

In addition, a paper version will be sent home in all ACPS elementary students' backpacks for parents/guardians to fill out (in the parents'/guardians' preferred language of English, Spanish, Arabic or Amharic). The form will be printed on the reverse side of a letter explaining the process for naming the new school and the submission deadline of January 3, 2018. Multiple naming recommendations will be accepted per paper form.

- **Naming Recommendations: Community Organization Request Letter**

Chair Anderson and Ms. Lloyd presented the committee with a draft of the community organization naming recommendation letter, and committee members suggested revisions. The letter will be sent to the chairpersons of all Alexandria City boards and commissions, as well as to groups such as PTAs, PTAC, ACPS partner organizations, City Council, the School Board, civic associations, preschool directors, the Chamber of Commerce, RPCA, ARHA, the City of Alexandria Communications Office to post on the City website, as well as to existing ACPS email lists, the Family and Community Engagement Center (FACE), and faith-based communities within the City of Alexandria. The naming recommendation form will be included on the back of the letter.

Committee members also suggested that a focused community outreach effort be started with the management and residents of the apartment buildings and neighborhoods where any students residing there will be attending the new school.

- **Determination of Naming Recommendations Open Period**

Chair Anderson proposed that due to the timeline for Board approval of a name, that the open period for naming recommendations be November 13, 2017 – January 3, 2018. The committee agreed.

- **Committee Meeting Schedule**

Chair Anderson presented the committee with the draft schedule included in the meeting materials. The committee proposed that future meetings be held at Ramsay Elementary (or John Adams Elementary), as current students from those schools will form the initial class at the new elementary school. In addition, the committee moved the November 15, 2017 meeting to November 29, 2017.

5. Next Steps and Preparation for Upcoming Committee Meeting

Committee members requested that in addition to any naming recommendations received, that staff provide the following materials at the next meeting:

- Attendance zone maps for the new elementary school; and
- Demographic and enrollment data for students projected to attend the new elementary school.

Members also expressed an interest in researching the Native American history around the new elementary school site, as well as the Winkler family land donation.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

The next meeting of the West End Elementary School Naming Committee will be November 29, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. in the William Ramsay Elementary School Media Center.

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