

Vision 20/20

10/28/08 Committee Meeting Notes



Attendees: Mark Pepera, Cathy Axcell, Kim Mather, Sherman Bishop, Annette Caraulia, Nancy Schill, Steve Schill, Julie McCallister, Mike Medoro, Del Younglas, Dave Puffer, Jeff Williams, Jon Dregalla, Duane Miller, Melisa Yeoman, Andrew Mangels, Chris Milowicki, Galen Schuerlein, Kristen Muthig, Brian Gottfried, Bill Baddour, Harry Applegate

Committee Purpose: To develop a clear, well-planned vision for providing and maintaining facilities that will support the Westlake City School's mission to educate for excellence.

Welcome: Dr. Keenan. Group filled out note cards on themselves. Introductions.

Reviewed mission: Alive and real here in Westlake. Surveys from community realize we need a learning environment/facilities that support academic achievement. Spent time on forums focusing on data.

Tentative meeting agendas:

- Oct. 28: frame problem and review existing data, review contents of binder, discussion on wants v. needs (space, programming, bricks and mortar).
- Meeting 2 (Nov. 11): finish discussion points (wants v. needs). Review of neighboring communities. Overview of options we've looked at, concentrating on top four plans. Cost implications for options. Narrowing list of options. Identify data needed to advance.
- Meeting 3 (Nov. 18): Small group work. Group discussion. Ranking of options. Identify needed data.
- Meeting 4 (Dec. 2): Lesko presentation.
- Meeting 5 (Dec. 9): Discussion of priorities, top two plans.
- Meeting 6 (Date to be determined): Prepare final recommendations for the Board of Education.

District finances: We use general fund budget to pay for capital needs, salaries and general school needs. We don't have a permanent improvement levy stream, which maintains facilities. Capital needs paid out of general fund, our most flexible account.

Facilities data: Best approach is to use data instead of dealing with emotions and opinions. Facilities study in 2001-02 by OSFC. Land-use study by Lesko Architecture. Internal data provided historical data. Enrollment projections about populations.

Facilities issues: Bottom line is we have overcrowding issues and basic structural construction/systems issues. Overcrowding – facilities built for around 3,700 students, we have around 4,000 students. Each building over capacity except for one. Real issue is, are we going to get down to capacity or are we going to grow? We're going to stay at around 4,000 kids, based on professional studies.

Facility Data: 2001-02, \$53 million to \$54 million is range of three master plans from OSFC. They said we were 80,000 square feet short and \$42 million behind to meet those standards. When Lesko redid study, we were up to \$66 million without additional square footage. We added 300 students since OSFC original study. Now OSFC plans range from \$74 million to \$126 million. They accounted for all-day kindergarten in our buildings. From 2001-08, a 57% increase in costs (increased minimum standards, labor and materials). If we wait to take advantage of 5% from OSFC, it will be 2017. We may be able to take advantage of getting that 5% credit by 2017 instead of waiting.

What has been done?

- January – Board of Education moved meeting locations to school buildings so tours could be offered.
- Spring – Lesko completes OSFC replication study. Volunteer facilities committee formed to address and review district's facility needs.
- Summer – In-depth community stakeholder interviews. Telephone and online surveys of community and staff regarding perceptions of the schools and facilities.
- Fall – Board of Education meetings continued at buildings to offer facility tours. Three community forums held to gain perspective from a wider audience. Vision 20/20 committee formed.

Feedback from the focus group validated the need to address the issue. Communications and forums all started with group's input.

We asked the community should we address this issue by going for funds before or after an operating issue (this spring or next fall)? Doing it any later would impact an operating issue we're trying to stretch to 2012. Asked if we should use large-scale, incremental, patching approach? Neighborhood schools v. grade level configurations? Priorities?

Forums: Pleased with our performance. Felt process needed to start immediately. Need to address ASAP with a good plan that is cost effective and efficient. Preference is large scale and incremental, don't patch and wait until after 2012. High school is highest priority, but safety, overcrowding, energy efficiency also are important.

Values: teachers, instruction, safety, technology. Maintaining the excellence we have. People clear about going with grade level configurations if it is cost effective and more efficient.

Vision 20/20: Plan, look forward, create a vision.

Review of binders.

Non-Public Enrollment: About 30% of our residents attend non-public schools. We have not seen a huge fluctuation. Any significant general economic decline could affect non-public enrollment patterns and something to consider. Latest enrollment projection shows we'll stick around 4,000 students through 2017.

Discussion:

Any consideration about new schools attracting those non-public students? We have seen waves in the past. It could spike. If peoples' taxes are raised to support new facilities, we need to consider we'll have people come back. Difficult to predict numbers.

Annette Caraulia facilitating: What do we want from our schools and what is a want v. need regarding space, programming for the 21st Century Learning, bricks and mortar?

Addressing overall space needs:

- *Provide space for projected enrollment and provide plan for expansion if/when needed?*
 - Pros:
 - If we do it based on state standards to current enrollment, cost will be less and if enrollment goes up by a few hundred, we'll be able to accommodate it in the classroom until we have to use space allotted for expansion. (starting at LBMS, have core classes above 30 students in multiple classes). Is classroom size a good indicator? (space needs aren't just kids per class).
 - If you build it, they will come.
 - Cons:
 - If wait for enrollment to go up to expand, back at the starting block.
 - Data in the past has been off, can't rely solely on it.
 - How far back does the enrollment data go? (no accurate historical data; look at transportation of non-public). Can you make a correlation between spikes in enrollment based on economic downturns? (Go back under Transportation/Treasurer and find enrollment data).
 - Why are we 3x the state average for non-public enrollment? (Proximity of private schools, wealth, tradition, regional).
 - CAC looked at what would cause a shift from private to public, might be historical documents in CAC files.
 - Component in Lesko study for additional costs and minimum standards – would have to increase number of classrooms for students we have. If increase classrooms, will decompress # of kids in classrooms.
 - If you build it they will come.
 - More expensive to add on. Can you build the shell and use as storage, then add classrooms later? Buildings sometimes created as a wing by adding classrooms as needed. Make sure architect designs to add classrooms at ends of wings to deal with short-term growth.

- Planning for capacity makes sense, but don't buy that a large slice of 30% will come back. Clientele going there for other reasons, not the condition of the buildings. Leap to say going to pull a large percentage. Parents sending kids to non-public schools will make sacrifices to keep them there even in a bad economy. Plan for projected enrollment and a bit higher.
 - We also have a 5-6 and 7-8 school. Economy a negative factor. Brand new buildings become a positive. Are there similar communities that have a similar makeup to give us information on what happened when they built new? Was there a jump? (Rocky River, Bay Village, Avon Lake). None of districts around us in our socioeconomic group have done this on the scale we're looking. They were inner city and state came in and paid for it. Schools in video were taking one school at a time rather than entire district.
 - What are special needs numbers in lower grades? That puts squeezes on buildings because of space needs dictated by needs. If populations are growing, need to accommodate for that in a plan. (Get data of growth over last 10 years in special education students). Once students in Westlake, tend to stay here because private schools don't offer what they need.
- *Provide space for a slight increase above projections?*
 - Con: Suspect we won't get support from community by saying we'll have an influx of non-public or people who aren't here yet?
 - Pro: Overall cheaper to do a little bit now. If build it, probably fill it up. If go with first option, how long until putting desks in the hallway again? I've worked in buildings with additions that caused more problems than it solved – leaks, foundation problems, etc. Rather have it built to size first go around rather than matching seams.
 - Con: It is possible to build too much more than what you need. Rocky River did that not too far in past history. Built a lot of elementary schools, now no longer need and either sold or used for other purposes. From taxpayer perspective, not good.
 - Pro: If get about 300 extra kids, 25 per grade. By doing that, build a shell and if you need allow for it. Looking at just a slight increase by 5% shift in non-public school attendance.
 - Comment - Special needs shouldn't be considered because we already have them. (Did a special needs survey, 10-year history. Seeing explosion in population in schools. Inherently have an increase in that population).
 - Other end of spectrum is gifted population. A forgotten group. At higher levels don't require additional space, pulled out of classrooms at elementary level due to lack of space. Issue to consider how we handle these children. What are their requirements? Physical space not as great as special needs.
 - Shouldn't we look at costs? We don't have unlimited funds.
- *Provide space for existing enrollment and leave flexibility to expand later?*

Flip charts with critical importance, should have (but not critical), might be nice:

- Art
- Music
- Technology
- Small group learning/tutoring
- Conferencing with parents/meeting rooms
- Large group flexible areas for STEM
- Athletic areas with physical education
- Interactive technology in classrooms
- Extended learning opportunities
- Individual lab, ID program, black box room
- WINGS/gifted, world language

Wrap-up: Placed dots and will retrieve information requested.

NOTE CARD INFORMATION:

Harry W. Applegate Jr. – 44 years in Westlake. Senior citizen, siblings attended Westlake Schools, children attended schools, nieces and nephews attended schools. Perspective of long-time resident, with no children in the system.

Cathy Axcell – 9 years in Westlake. Perspective of parent and community member. I served as co-chair for 2006 successful levy campaign and have knowledge regarding what the community will tolerate. Serve now as PTA Council President and have two children, daughter a sophomore at WHS, son a 7th grader at LBMS.

Bill Baddour – 18 years in Westlake. Strategic planning, facility master planning. I have/had three children go through the Westlake City School system.

Annette Caraulia – in Westlake 2 years. Organization development-change management (special needs). Facilitation expertise-change management. Three children in school -- 10, 8, special needs, and 5 (St. Bernadette's).

Jon Dregalla – 19 years in Westlake. I am a civil engineer working in the commercial and institution construction area. I have been involved in about 30 school construction projects in the last 15 years. I am eager to share the construction experience and technical skills to the committee, plus knowledge of several other districts in developing their plans. Have two daughters that have graduated from WCS.

Brian Gottfried – 3 years in school system, lifelong resident. Student. Strong understanding of current high school system.

Andrew Mangels – 2 years in Westlake. As director of Porter Public Library I share many of the problems, challenges and concerns that face the school district. I believe I have excellent space planning skills. I also have over 12 years of experience working in a tax supported organization and I am aware of the concerns in planning in this environment. I have three children in the Westlake City School District, so I am particularly concerned about the outcome of the process.

Kim Mather – 5 years residing in Westlake. Perspective of parent of current 2nd grader (Holly Lane) and kindergartner (Dover – due to overflow from Holly Lane) and three-year-old soon to be in school. They have many years left in the district. A parent and taxpayer's review of the system; discussion and problem solving within discussion. Kids love the schools. Bought specifically in Westlake for the community and schools.

Julie McCallister – 10 years in Westlake. Parent point of view, taxpayer point of view, involved in schools, many friends in other communities so I know the pros/cons of what they feel about those schools. Common sense!

Michael Medoro – 10 years in Westlake. Perspective of parent of three children graduated or in the Westlake School District. Children are old enough to not necessarily take advantage of any new/improved schools. Small business owner in Westlake.

Duane Miller – lived in Westlake 17 years, taught in Westlake 32 years. Parent, teacher, citizen. Optimism, "can do" attitude, teacher perspective.

Chris Milowicki – lived and worked in Westlake for 19 years. Parent of current 6th grader at Parkside and concerned resident. Worked in residential construction for past 20 years at our family company, C.J. Tom Builders Inc.

Nancy Schill – lifelong Westlake resident (40 years). Also business owners in Westlake, passionate about the importance of a successful school system. I attended the same school buildings with the exception of LBMS that our two kids have attended. Our schools need major changes. I hope to bring a fresh perspective to this process. I have experience as a business owner in construction and building maintenance. Our oldest graduated from WHS in 2008. Our son is in 9th grade at WHS.

Stephen Schill – lifelong Westlake resident (46 years). I own architecture and building company and understand financial implications of design on construction. Financial perspective on construction. One of our children is a WHS graduate and one is at the high school.

Jeff Williams – 10 years in Westlake. Perspective of a tax-paying homeowner, free thinker, concerned resident without kids in the system. Enthusiastic participation, open mind, fresh ideas.

Melisa Yeoman – 8 years in Westlake. Being the mother for four boys, I bring the perspective of being a parent of children in almost all of the Westlake School buildings and also the perspective of an active PTA member for the past eight years, including president of PTA Council last year. I hope to bring to this process an open and objective mind along with my knowledge and experience from business, education, politics and leadership roles in various organizations.

Del Younglas – 35-ish year in Westlake. WHS graduate, long-time community member, family history of nearly 70 years in Westlake, small business owner. Open mind, ability to see all aspects, points of view.

Dan Keenan – in Westlake two years. Education administration, Superintendent of schools, parent of two boys. Assure a plan that enables our mission to be fulfilled.

Mark Pepera – 9 years as a Westlake employee. School administration and finance. Information and school perspective.

Dave Puffer – 2 years in Westlake. District Director of Business Affairs. Expertise in school facilities management, building projects.

****** Next meeting, Tuesday, Nov. 11, 6pm, Board of Education ******