

PUBLIC HEARING AT)
FAIRMOUNT PARK REGARDING) Date: 6/26/06
CLOSURE/CONSOLIDATION)
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A hearing was held in the above-captioned matter beginning at the hour of 6:33 p.m. on Monday, June 26, 2006, at 3800 Southwest Findlay Street; Seattle, Washington, 98126-2845.

REPORTED BY: Thad Byrd, CCR

SEATTLE DEPOSITION REPORTERS
600 University Street, Suite 320
Seattle, Washington 98101 PH: (206) 622-6661

22 is recommended at this time for closure.

23 The hearing format has some really basic rules I
24 want to tell you about. We're taking testimony in the
25 order of those who signed up starting with the people who

1 signed up by telephone, and I believe there are two, and
2 then followed by people who have signed up as they've
3 walked in.

4 And at this time, I think we have a total of four
5 or five more who have signed in, so a total of about seven
6 speakers right now.

7 If you choose to speak tonight, you can still go
8 back and sign up. And when we get to the end of this
9 list, I'd be very happy to call on anyone else. However,
10 we are going to have certain limits.

11 We have a three-minute limit per speaker. We ask
12 that you respect that time frame, so that we respect each
13 other's time. And we will have no more than 40 speakers
14 in all. Right now that doesn't look like it'll be a
15 problem, but we don't know between now and the end of our
16 testimony.

17 The hearing tonight is for public testimony only.
18 There may be issues, there may be questions, and we are
19 not responding to those issues or those questions. We are
20 collecting your thoughts, your views about specifically
21 the closure of the Fairmount Park building.

22 There may be some type of response to your
23 questions or your issues in the superintendent's final
24 report. I don't know. It is the superintendent's final
25 recommendation, but tonight there will not be any

1 responses.

2 When you come up to speak when your name is
3 called -- I'll say who's scheduled to speak followed by
4 someone, so the next person should be ready. When you
5 come up, if you're speaking as an individual, I would ask
6 you to say your name and spell your name if it's anything
7 other than the very most obvious, please.

8 We do have the meeting recorded tonight by a
9 court reporter, so everything is recorded verbatim as you
10 say it.

11 Also, tonight if you are here representing a
12 specific organization, I ask that you identify that
13 organization, provide an address or contact information,
14 and provide your own name, and that way we will know how
15 to reach you if we have any questions.

16 So with that, I am going to call the first
17 speaker, and also let you know who's up second. I would
18 call Susan Kliever from Fairmount Park. The next speaker
19 will be Elizabeth McCullough.

20 THE WITNESS: My name is Susan Kliever,
21 and that's K-L-I-E-W-E-R. I'm speaking tonight to

22 represent Fairmount Park staff, which is actually
23 representing Fairmount Park children. And we were quite
24 concerned when the original CAC recommendation was for
25 closure of Fairmount Park and High Point, because it

1 didn't seem like a well thought out plan representing the
2 students or our community, so I really want to talk about
3 that.

4 I understand from what Irene just said, I'm not
5 supposed to talk about the merger.

6 MS. STEWART: You can talk about the
7 merger that affects Fairmount Park.

8 THE WITNESS: Great, thanks. So the
9 merger is a positive solution for our Fairmount Park
10 community. We were just shocked, really shocked and taken
11 aback when both schools were scheduled to be closed and
12 Pathfinder moved into the High Point building, because
13 this school's been serving this community since 1964, and
14 it's been a vital part of this community.

15 And tonight there are four of my current
16 colleagues here, plus one who served here for many, many
17 years. And it kind of represents the family feeling of
18 this building, and it'll be sad for this building to be
19 closed.

20 But since this is all about the students and
21 what's best for the students, it's very exciting that

22 they'll get to move with their friends to a nearby school
23 and probably a part of the staff, so there'll be some
24 familiarity.

25 All the research says that students who are

1 already highly impacted don't do well if impacted more,
2 such as the closing of our building. So we're excited
3 about the possibilities of merging with High Point, and
4 that the merger would provide more resources for both the
5 High Point students and the Fairmount Park students.

6 Additionally, there's been a lot of work in the
7 Seattle Public Schools in the last few years around issues
8 of equity. Glen Singleton of Courageous Conversations
9 talks about the importance of relationships, and that
10 being the underlying key -- I'm a little nervous --
11 underlying key framework for students to have real
12 achievement, real learning to happen.

13 So the fact that our students can maintain their
14 relationships with their peers and their teaching staff
15 while moving over to High Point, and the High Point
16 students still receiving their same familiarity and
17 structure, is just a great way to go versus closing our
18 building and having our students disbursed to many, many
19 schools. Thank you.

20 MS. STEWART: Thank you, Susan.

21 The second speaker is Elizabeth McCullough

22 speaking on Fairmount Park. You know who you all are.
23 Never mind on that. Elizabeth McCullough followed by
24 Chris Jackins.

25 Is Elizabeth here? Elizabeth McCullough? All

1 right. We'll move to Chris Jackins followed by Brett
2 Jelinck.

3 MR. JACKINS: My name is Chris Jackins.
4 I am representing the Seattle Committee to Save Schools,
5 Box 84063, Seattle, 98124.

6 I oppose the closure of Fairmount Park Elementary
7 School. Seven points: No. 1, the district should not be
8 closing any schools. The fundamental assumptions of the
9 process are incorrect. Money is not the issue. The
10 district has chosen to use budget issues to put school
11 closures on the table.

12 No. 2, the district has a long-term
13 responsibility to local communities. School closures are
14 the death of neighborhood schools.

15 No. 3, the district has frightened schools into
16 issuing supposedly voluntary merger proposals to try to
17 avoid something worse for their students and staff. These
18 proposals are no more voluntary than the territorial
19 changes in Europe which preceded World War II.

20 No. 4, the Community Advisory Committee
21 recommended closing Fairmount Park, yet their final report

22 offered no supporting data.

23 No. 5, the School Board provided criteria for
24 evaluating schools for potential closure. The Community
25 Advisory Committee gave family satisfaction the second

1 highest ranking. In terms of first choice assignments of
2 students, Fairmount Park had a higher positive ranking
3 than four other schools in West Seattle, which were not
4 targeted for closure.

5 No. 6, on June 21st the School Board adopted an
6 action which waived a portion of the School District's
7 requirements for public notification of the hearings to
8 allow less than seven days' notice in local newspapers.

9 The action took place after the district was out
10 of compliance with Board Policy H01.00. Even with this
11 waiver, the District appears to be out of compliance with
12 public notification requirements for Fairmount Park.

13 Two consecutive weeks' notice are required. The
14 June 7th notice was incorrect. A corrected notice was
15 published on June 14th, and no local notice appeared on
16 June 21st.

17 No. 7, my group has consulted attorneys who are
18 willing to represent communities who are affected by
19 school closures, and we would be happy to put interested
20 parties in touch with these attorneys.

21 Please do not close Fairmount Park or any other

22 schools. Thank you.

23 MS. STEWART: Thanks, Chris. The next
24 speaker is Brett Jelinck followed by Lori Reinhardt.

25 MR. JELINCK: All right. My name is

1 Brett Jelinck. That's J-E-L-I-N-C-K. I was a tutor here
2 for the last year. I worked here for about 10 and a half
3 months working one on one with kids as a literacy tutor.

4 And here I am, school's out. I'm not working
5 here anymore, but I was really, you know, a part of this
6 community in this last year, if that's any indication of
7 how special the program at Fairmount Park is.

8 And it really is special because it is a small
9 school. It does have low enrollment, but that also means
10 that there's more interaction with the children. You have
11 closer bonds. All the teachers know what's up with all
12 the kids, and no one slips through the cracks.

13 I just want to put that out there to begin,
14 because I support the proposal to merge Fairmount Park and
15 High Point. And the reason for this is it does keep --
16 it'll keep all the teachers together and the students
17 together for the most part as they move and integrate with
18 High Point, creating one program out of what has been two.

19 And this is important because working one on one
20 with kids, you know, my official job is an academic one.
21 I'm supposed to increase reading scores, but really I

22 formed a connection with these kids. And I know what's
23 going in their lives, and I can see how their personal
24 lives, their home lives really impact their academic
25 performance.

1 And that's the real issue when looking at low
2 income schools like Fairmount Park as well as High Point,
3 and chucking those programs and just scattering the kids
4 around local schools is not going to help them at all.
5 It's going to destroy the community that they have.

6 And so I support the proposal. And when you
7 compare High Point and Fairmount Park, they're a similar
8 demographic, and geographically they're really close. It
9 makes sense.

10 And also I would like to offer a critique of the
11 process for the whole school closures. I feel that it has
12 really pitted schools against each other, and this has
13 manifested itself in different ways.

14 If the School District really wants to make
15 changes and feels that school closures need to be a part
16 of that, it needs to be on a school by school basis, not
17 throwing out a random number of schools to close, and then
18 putting a committee together to say, "All right, we're
19 going to close these schools out of that random number."
20 It doesn't make sense. Take it by a school by school
21 basis so that schools don't end up getting pitted against

22 each other. That's all I have to say.

23 MS. STEWART: Thanks, Brett.

24 I am going to pause for just a moment here. I
25 want to make an introduction. We've been joined by Carla

1 Santorno. Carla, why don't you stand up. Carla is
2 Seattle Public Schools new Chief Academic Officer, and
3 it's wonderful to have her here tonight.

4 I hope that following the hearing you will go
5 over and introduce yourselves and meet Carla. She's been
6 terrific. She happens to live right now in West Seattle,
7 and we're happy to have her here. Thank you.

8 The next speaker is Lori Reinhardt followed by
9 George Tibbits.

10 SPEAKER: Hi, I'm Lori Reinhardt,
11 R-E-I-N-H-A-R-D-T, and I really appreciate the previous
12 speaker's comment because I'm here representing Pathfinder
13 School, which is one of the schools that's been in
14 controversy in the most recent recommendations of the CAC.

15 Pathfinder is very supportive of the merger with
16 Fairmount and High Point. We have also recently had an
17 opportunity, but that has displaced Pathfinder once again,
18 and that's looking for a permanent home, seeing that
19 Geonese Hill School is slated to close at the end of next
20 year.

21 So in pursuit of looking for a viable facility

22 for our thriving program, we recommend -- well, we are in
23 the process of looking for solutions and a facility that
24 would house our program, our KA alternative ed. program.

25 The initial recommendation to move to Boren, the

1 District -- I really appreciate the School Board and the
2 District hearing our concerns around that, and that it's
3 not a viable solution.

4 We've been invited recently to tour two other
5 schools that are slated to close, Fairmount being one of
6 them. And we toured the school last Friday, and I was one
7 of the people on our team that was able to come and tour
8 Fairmount.

9 Fairmount is a very welcoming, friendly school.
10 It's a great environment. We really enjoyed it and
11 appreciated it. Our final report will be coming out this
12 week in terms of the suitability for Fairmount for the
13 Pathfinder community, but the preliminary findings is
14 there just are not enough teaching stations to house our
15 current program as we are right now without the
16 possibility of even growing our program.

17 So we're not exactly sure how to fit a square peg
18 into a round hole, but it is a lovely facility. And
19 again, Pathfinder is alternative education for all of West
20 Seattle, and we are encouraging everybody to work together
21 and to come to the table to sort out how we can best all

22 survive and not to pit ourselves against one another.

23 MS. STEWART: Thank you. The last
24 speaker signed up on my sheet -- and I would encourage
25 anyone else who would like to speak to sign up back at the

1 table, and I'll collect any more names before we're done
2 and hear from you, but the last person on my sheet is
3 George Tibbits.

4 MR. TIBBITS: First of all, I'd like to
5 thank you for having the opportunity to hear from us.
6 That's very good. As you know there's a lot of strong
7 opinion about this, and I think it's good to air the ideas
8 of everybody in a good public forum. I'm a parent of a
9 Pathfinder student, but I'm also a taxpayer here in the
10 city of Seattle.

11 I've been over here a couple of times to
12 Fairmount, and I have to say that I don't see why this
13 school is being closed. I hear you people say that you
14 have a wonderful program. I can't speak to that, but, you
15 know, I look around here, and I see kids' art work, and I
16 see signs that this place is loved.

17 First of all, I took a brief look at the guide
18 done for the closings. I noticed that this school, for
19 instance, has an educational adequacy of 3.4. This
20 compares to the Boren side of 3.8, with 5 being worse, 1
21 being good.

22 This building's condition of 2.6 compared to a
23 building condition at Boren of 3.3, pardon my math, but 7
24 points -- you know, .7 percent better than Boren.

25 Overall condition, this is a 3, and Boren is 3.6.

1 In all cases on your own measures this is a better school
2 than Boren.

3 You look at utility costs. This costs much less
4 to heat, cool, keep up than Boren does.

5 Custodial costs are below Boren costs, and just
6 looking at it, I don't see things in this school like
7 sewer pipes running down the hallways. I don't see
8 rewiring all over the place. I don't see cracks in the
9 walls. I don't see as over in Pathfinder where teachers
10 are in danger of putting their foot through rotten floors.

11 I see a splendid little courtyard out here. On a
12 95-degree day, I'm not stifled in this cafeteria. There
13 are two gymnasiums at this school. Why is this school
14 being closed, in addition to being next to a splendid park
15 where I imagine kids can run?

16 If the goal is indeed to reduce the capacity in
17 the School District, that we're running about 20 percent
18 higher, I don't see why you don't use the capacity in an
19 excellent building like this, a building with a lot more
20 life in it, than shunning people over to a huge
21 overcapacity school like Boren. To me it just doesn't

22 make financial sense or taxpayer sense.

23 Again, I want to say and add to Lori's comments
24 that we don't want to pit schools against schools in
25 Seattle. That's not education. That's just hatred. But

1 we have an interest in our school as you do, too. There's
2 a right answer here, but the answer is not what we have at
3 the moment. Thank you very much.

4 MS. STEWART: Thank you.

5 Have we had any additional speakers sign up?
6 Again, if anyone else would like to sign up to speak,
7 don't be shy. We're all West Seattleites, I think.

8 MS. BUTLER-WALL: No, we're not.

9 MS. STEWART: Excuse me, President
10 Butler-Wall. Eventually everyone's a West Seattleite.

11 And so our next speaker is Terry Simpson; am I
12 reading that correctly?

13 MR. SIMPSON: Yes. I'll pass to the
14 other person. I think I need a couple more moments.

15 MS. STEWART: And then the next speaker
16 is Susan -- didn't we already hear from Susan?

17 MS. KLIEWER: Yes, but I think the --
18 could I speak again, this time for my personal instead of
19 for the school?

20 MS. STEWART: No, I'm sorry. That was a
21 good try.

22 Terry, I can give you minute if you want another
23 minute.

24 MS. KLIEWER: Actually, I was told at
25 other meetings people signed up and gave their minutes to

1 somebody who was willing to speak.

2 MS. STEWART: Again, if anyone would
3 like to speak, I encourage you to let me know right now.
4 You can give your minutes to anybody you want to give them
5 to if they're willing to speak.

6 MS. KLIEWER: She wanted to give me her
7 minutes.

8 MS. STEWART: You would like to speak?

9 MS. BUTLER-WALL: She wants to give her
10 minutes to Susan.

11 MS. STEWART: No, it doesn't work that
12 way. It works the other way. A person who's signed up
13 concedes their time to someone who has not yet spoken.

14 MS. KLIEWER: But this is a public
15 meeting, so I don't understand why I can't speak a second
16 time, especially in the lack of having 40 people signed
17 up.

18 MS. STEWART: Because those were the
19 rules that we established for each of the hearings each of
20 the three nights throughout the city. If when the meeting
21 is done you would like to speak with everyone in the room,

22 and they want to stay and listen, there's no reason why
23 you can't do that. That would be fine.

24 Is there anyone else who would like to speak
25 before we call our final speaker? We have had a few

1 people join us. So I'm just repeating again, if anyone
2 would like to speak, now is the time.

3 We are waiting for Mr. Simpson to join us. And,
4 again, if anyone has any comments who has not spoken
5 already after Terry is done, please let me know. You
6 could even just walk up, and let me know and tell me your
7 name at that time.

8 MR. SIMPSON: I think an overview of
9 what I have to say or the reaction that I have to this
10 whole process is that there really are two ways to think
11 about budget, what to do with budgets and budget
12 shortfalls.

13 And one is that you can shrink. You can pull in,
14 you can shrink, you can squeeze people into -- you know,
15 what's happening now is that they're shrinking the number
16 of students they have right now into the available
17 classrooms, and 26 students per classroom. That's what's
18 in their figures.

19 One of the things I'd like to remind folks is
20 that I think it was I-728 was passed by 78 percent of the
21 voters and mandated a K4 classroom size of 18.

22 So, in other words, one of the things I'd like to
23 know from the School Board is have they looked at the
24 class sizes that they're dealing with, with the building
25 capacities that they need, and figured out how many

1 classrooms and how many square footage of buildings they
2 need at 18? Because I honestly think Seattle is growing.
3 It's prospering.

4 Everything's improving in Seattle, and at some
5 point the voters are going to demand that we have that
6 kind of class size, because it's been proven that that's
7 the best way for minorities to improve their WASL test.
8 That's the best way for all sorts of educational things to
9 happen, is to lower the class sizes and increase the
10 number of faculty per student.

11 Now, one of the things that we're doing by
12 embedding this 26 students per class per classroom teacher
13 is what happens in five years when the voters finally put
14 their money where their mouth is? War, because we are
15 actually receiving some of that money, and they say we
16 demand 18 students per class.

17 That's what's going to happen, I think, is the
18 Seattle Public Schools -- I mean, I've had kids in Schmidt
19 Park. I've had kids in Lafayette. Both of those schools
20 are absolutely capacity. There's no way you can squeeze
21 another classroom, so what's going to happen overall in

22 West Seattle?

23 Okay. Another point on the floor that I have is
24 remember it costs \$100,000 to close a school and move a
25 school. That's according to your figures. It costs

1 roughly that.

2 Two things that I also found in looking at your
3 web site is that there's an upward tick. We're now
4 capturing 64 percent of the available students. That's
5 from 56 percent just eight years ago.

6 In my opinion, as housing costs go up and people
7 have less money to put into private school, more and more
8 of them are going to be turning their attention to public
9 schools.

10 We're going to see that 64 percent go up to 66,
11 68, 70 percent. What's that going to do for the money?

12 Another one that's interesting in your graph were
13 more are sticking with the public schools. That's gone up
14 steadily as well, surprisingly according to your own
15 figures.

16 And the last point I want to make is there's
17 incredible growth in West Seattle. How many people know
18 that there are -- not to be too crude, but there's a lot
19 of old people who live in a really good bunch of houses in
20 this city. And as they pass, they're going to be replaced
21 by people with kids in the next 10 years. That's happened

22 the last 11 years I've lived in West Seattle, and
23 townhouses are going up everywhere. So this is not the
24 time to be shrinking this particular area. Thank you.

25 MS. STEWART: Thank you.

1 Has anyone else signed up to speak? Has anyone
2 else in the audience, who's not already spoken, chosen to
3 speak? Would you like to come forward now?

4 I do want to say a few things about dates before
5 we close. I want to remind you that the superintendent
6 made these recommendations, and he will make his final
7 recommendations at the beginning of July.

8 It was announced today that instead of July 3rd,
9 it will be July 5th, so that we've got the holiday, and
10 the Monday of the holiday weekend is not a really good
11 days for news and not a good day to get that final report
12 out.

13 July 5th, that actually gives us a couple extra
14 days to receive more input from the public, so I think
15 that that's a good thing. So July 5th the
16 superintendent's final recommendation is announced, and
17 there is a School Board meeting that night. It's opened
18 to the public as all School Board meetings are. It's at
19 6:00 at the John Stanford Center, which is located in the
20 Soto area at Third and Lander.

21 On July 12th there is a special School Board

22 meeting with the introduction of the final recommendation,
23 and what that means is the introduction of the Board
24 action regarding the final recommendation, and again in a
25 public meeting starting at 6:00 p.m. at the Stanford

1 Center.

2 On July 18th there is a tentative site-based
3 hearing at Rainier View Elementary School, which is in
4 southeast Seattle, and this was added to the hearings that
5 we have tonight to look at a possible merger of two
6 schools in that area.

7 On July 19th there is a public hearing on the
8 final recommendation. Again, that's at John Stanford
9 Center at Third and Lander at 6:00 p.m.

10 And then on July 26th, which is a Wednesday
11 night, a special School Board meeting, and the School
12 Board will vote that night on the board action, which will
13 encompass the superintendent's final recommendation and
14 perhaps some changes between that point and when the Board
15 votes. We don't know yet, but that's the night of the
16 final vote. That's the vote that makes the difference.
17 That's the vote that brings the action about.

18 These are closures and consolidations for the
19 school year that begins in the fall of 2007, not this
20 fall.

21 Ms. Harris?

22 MS. HARRIS: There's been some talk
23 about additional closures and a secondary process this
24 next year. Is there anything defined at this point to
25 educate us?

1 MS. STEWART: There has been some talk,
2 but no action has been taken, certainly not by the Board.
3 The superintendent did refer to that at a meeting last
4 week, and we have no processed information and no timeline
5 at this time.

6 With that, I am calling the hearing to an end.
7 Thank you all very much for coming.

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(Whereupon the hearing

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adjourned at 7:04 p.m.)

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Fairmount Park Public Hearing; 6/26/06

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1 STATE OF WASHINGTON)

2) ss.

3 COUNTY OF SNOHOMISH)

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5 I, the undersigned Notary Public in and for the
6 State of Washington, do hereby certify:

7 That the foregoing proceedings held on the date
8 indicated on the caption sheet were reported
9 stenographically by me and thereafter reduced to
10 typewriting under my direction;

11 I further certify that the transcription of the
12 hearing is true and correct to the best of my ability.

13 Signed this day of
14 , 2006.

15

16

17

18

19 Notary Public in and for the
20 State of Washington, residing
21 at Edmonds.

22

My Commission expires 4/29/09.

23

CCR No. 2052

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Fairmount Park Public Hearing; 6/26/06

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