

Board of Education

Ellington, Connecticut

April 23, 2019

A special meeting of the Ellington Board of Education was held on Tuesday, April 23, 2019 in the Board of Education Conference Room in the School Administration Building.

Present were: Mr. Blanchette and Young; Ms. Kiff-Judson, Dzen, Nord, Kupferschmid and Picard-Wambolt; Dr. Scott Nicol, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Brian Hendrickson, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction; Mr. Brian Greenleaf, Director of Finance and Operations; Ms. Melinda Ferry, Board of Selectmen and Liaison to the Board of Education; and Ms. Lisa Houlihan, Town Planner.

Also attending were Mr. Jim Barrett, Mr. John Tindall-Gibson and Dr. Arthur Wagman from DRA Architects.

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Ms. Kiff-Judson, Chairperson.

Agenda Items:

1. Continued discussion of Facilities Study
 - Brian Greenleaf reminded the Board that DRA was commissioned to accomplish three objectives: aging facilities, growing demographics, vision for academic programs.
 - Dr. Wagman from DRA discussed the following with regards to the facilities study and projected student enrollment:
 - History of increasing enrollments
 - Registrations for next school year
 - NESDEC's study and Dr. Wagman's agreement on substantial student growth
 - Cohort survival method tracks grade to grade to see how many are retained
 - Cohort survival method is based upon the past, and assumes the same will apply going forward
 - Dr. Wagman met with people from the town including Lisa Houlihan the Town Planner
 - Statistical material from US Census, real estate development, number of bedrooms are critical in projecting students for the next 10 years

- Dr. Wagman addressed crumbling foundations and stated it was not an issue that could be found in any reports. He looked at historic data. He knows there are a substantial number of homes with crumbling foundations, but there isn't an indication of an impact on the market in Ellington as of yet. Aside from the people directly affected it doesn't seem that it will be a huge issue for the growth of the town.
- A study from the research arm of UCONN shows a major increase in Ellington population.

Ms. Nord commented that people are not looking at houses with crumbling foundations. There are three in her area and is still not sure what the impact of the crumbling foundation issue will have on the area.

Ms. Houlihan commented that it is too early to tell the impact of the crumbling foundation issue. She mentioned Ellington's main years of growth 1983-2015 were during the period of crumbling foundations.

Ms. Houlihan stated the land use office was impacted by the 2008 recession. Overall, she doesn't think the population growth will stall. She went on to provide a general overview of available properties in Ellington and the possible parameters of development.

Ms. Houlihan stated that 900 acres development rights have been sold off by landowners, however they retain the right to build two homes on those land trusts.

Ms. Picard-Wambolt inquired about the relative straight line of student growth over the past decade. Mr. Greenleaf theorized that this was due to the 2008 recession and that over a 20 year period the growth was approximately 20%.

Mr. Young stated that we have good data on kids born today and trying to predict five years out is more difficult. He feels that it is reasonable to project a capacity problem to some degree in the next five years with student enrollment.

Dr. Nicol reminded the Board we had 31 students return from magnet schools this school year. And while it is not a trend yet, we should continue to monitor. He also stated that Center School has 65 students already registered for kindergarten which means we will need to hire another teacher. Yet, as of now, we do not have a classroom for the extra section. Dr. Nicol also stated that the administration applied the school enrollment policy to move 15 students out of Windermere last year relocating them to Crystal Lake and Center. He stated the hope is to continue to disperse students who newly enroll in the district fairly evenly across all three elementary schools.

Ms. Dzen asked Mr. Wagman if he spoke to realtors. He stated that he did, and they reported that the market has been steady. Mr. Wagman stated the Zillow on-line realtor website reports the Ellington market as hot. Ms. Dzen stated that she had spoken to three realtors. They reported the market has been steady but not hot.

Ms. Kiff-Judson asked for Board members positions on the student enrollment projections. Mr. Blanchette thinks that the enrollment will increase higher than NESDEC which is around 200 additional students in the next decade. Ms. Nord felt that it would be in the middle between NESDEC (200) and Dr. Wagman's report (500).

Overall, the Board felt the student enrollment would increase. Yet, the total amount varied amongst the Board members.

Motion: The board acknowledges that student enrollment over next five to ten years will likely increase based upon two demographic studies. Increasing enrollment, coupled with the aging infrastructure, will result in the need to undertake building project(s).

1st. M. Young 2nd. M. Kupferschmid

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

The Board decided to meet in the near future to discuss options on how to proceed now that there is consensus on the problem.

The Board eventually hopes to meet with the Boards of Finance and Selectmen, and the Permanent Building Committee to discuss the matter further.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7:54 p.m.

1st. K. Picard-Wambolt 2nd. L. Nord

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kris Picard-Wambolt
Secretary