City-School Liaison Committee

Minutes of Meeting
Thursday, October 11, 2012

Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center
Aldermanic Library, 2100 Ridge Avenue, Evanston

Committee Members Present:
   District 65: Superintendent Hardy Murphy, Jerome Summers
   District 202: Superintendent Eric Witherspoon, Deborah Graham
   City of Evanston: Alderman Mark Tendam, Alderman Jane Grover, City Manager Wally Bobkiewicz

Others Present: Sam Pettineo, Chief Richard Eddington, Suzette Robinson, Doug Gaynor, Bob Dorneker, Kate Todd

Alderman Grover called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm and introductions were made. The minutes of the May 17, 2012 were approved as presented.

Assistant Director of Parks Recreation and Community Services Bob Dorneker provided an update on the City’s youth and young adult programs. He noted that 169 youth were employed in the Mayor’s Summer Youth Employment Program over the past summer, many age 14. He discussed the “Building Career Pathways to Sustainable Employment” pilot program for Evanston youth ages 18-26. This is a joint program with the Youth Job Center of Evanston. The City is also partnering with Y.O.U. (Youth Organization Umbrella) in a federally funded street outreach program for at-risk youth. This grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will enable the City, Y.O.U., Youth Job Center and the YWCA Evanston/Northshore to create a coordinated street outreach program to connect at-risk youth with existing educational and employment programs. He also noted that many of the successful summer programs will continue through the fall and winter months. A luncheon for young women and a program for young men are coming up soon. City staff will be going to schools to further explain available recreation programs. Upon being asked what do “outreach workers” do, staff replied that they educate youth on and off the streets about employment or educational opportunities, address personal issues/problems, and bring kids together.

City Manager Wally Bobkiewicz initiated the discussion of safety issues. He noted that the Mayor held an anti-violence community meeting last week in response to Dajae Coleman’s death which was very well attended. The Mayor is working on the ideas and proposals that came out of that meeting. A follow up anti-violence meeting will be scheduled. The next Dialogue on Race My Evanston, My Neighbors is scheduled for October 25. In addition, the Mayor meets regularly with two student groups.
Chief Eddington talked about the gun buy-back proposal. He said that he will be meeting with Carolyn Murray, a resident who is spearheading this. Former Deputy Chief Demetrious Cook has been involved in an effort on the south side. The Chief wants to look at various programs and pitfalls in order to tailor a program to fit Evanston, which can take place hopefully before the Thanksgiving holiday. $10,000 has been pledged by Northwestern University, along with several more thousands of dollars from other organizations. He wants to offer enough money to make it desirable to turn in more lethal weapons. The Chief briefly discussed other gun related incidents. Superintendent Murphy asked for the Chief’s recommendation regarding notification to parents for incidents such as “stranger danger.” The Chief suggested that communication should have more about the offender, less about the victim. He will have Commander Parrott contact the school's PIOs with templates for press releases, etc.

City Manager Bobkiewicz thanked Superintendent Murphy and the District 65 staff for school safety efforts at the start of the school year. Public Works Director Suzette Robinson gave an update on further Safe Routes to School efforts. The City has funding to replace sidewalks, make sidewalk improvements, improve signage and striping. The funding includes an education component which will go directly to the schools for an awareness campaign. Some improvements include push buttons with flashing lights at 8 designated school crossings where no stoplight exists. There will be two new traffic lights on Church, and there will be more streetlights from Mason Park to Veolia. It was mentioned that Evanston is dark by comparison with Chicago. Director Robinson replied that the trees make lighting trickier. The City is piloting a program to lower street lights in some areas for improved pedestrian lighting. They are also looking at pedestrian lighting around ETHS. The Light Walks at Northwestern focused on pedestrian lighting.

A discussion of installing Bluelights near ETHS followed. Some residents may not want them if it identifies their neighborhood as “unsafe.” It was suggested that staff talk with Aldermen Holmes and Braithwaite regarding ideas and locations.

Director Robinson distributed information regarding the City’s Right of Way (ROW) requirements and fees and Storm Water regulations. Essentially the City is concerned that future construction and improvements might adversely impact the City’s combined sewer system. City Manager Bobkiewicz suggested that, if the schools would like the City Council to make special consideration regarding ROW fees and Storm Water regulations for school related construction projects, the schools should bring forward a proposal for City Council to consider.

A discussion of the upcoming local elections followed. The Mayor and all aldermen are up for election. There are 8 candidates running in each school district for the 4 open seats on both school boards. The Public Service Challenge is coming up. There will be another “Evanston Day in Springfield” on March 13, 2013.

A question was asked about the units going up at Emerson and Ashland. Manager Bobkiewicz explained that are called Emerson Square, part of the City’s $18 million
Neighborhood Stabilization Program 2 (NSP2) grant. He offered to send information about the project to the group.

Upcoming City School Liaison Committee meetings are scheduled as follows:
    Thursday, February 28, 2013, 5:30 p.m. – ETHS
    Thursday, May 9, 2013, 5:30 p.m. – D65

Respectfully submitted by Kate Todd
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