

2013-14 Happy Valley/Lowell Attendance Area Committee

December 3, 2013 – Meeting #5 Minutes

1. Rob McElroy welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 3:33 p.m.
2. Rob presented the minutes from the November 19, 2013 meeting, and they were approved by the committee.
3. Ron explained that he tried to capture all of the concerns and suggestions that committee members were contributing, and took a look at additional areas:
 - South of Fairhaven Parkway
 - Willow Court (west side of Chuckanut drive)
 - 16th Street (west side of Chuckanut Drive)
 - General A and B difference (triangle near Fairhaven Middle School).

Steve Walker was able to put together a new map “Neighborhood Detail”, and Ron pointed out those areas on the map. In connection with the neighborhood detail map, Ron reviewed the “Projected Enrollment” handout that goes along with those areas (draft options A and B).

5. Ron indicated that Rae Anne Thon (Transportation Director) had determined that draft scenario B would not necessitate another bus. The question was asked whether that is because the students lived within the one mile radius of the school, or whether they would ride a bus already going to Lowell. Rae Anne indicated they would be bus riders, even though it would be within walking distance of Lowell (but not Happy Valley). Ron brought up the walking map for the committee to view.
4. Committee member Andy Robinson talked about the neighborhood walk-about that seven of the committee members participated in on Saturday, November 23, 2013. There was discussion about some of the different areas and observations that were made during the walk. Members of the committee are concerned about how parent support will be affected. Kate Baehr (Larrabee principal) stated that living within the identified triangle have been six Larrabee PTA Board members, three of which were PTA Presidents. A committee member noted that demographics have shifted a little bit over the years, and what may look like the best choice geographically would send the more affluent section of Larrabee’s current attendance area to Lowell, while sending the lower economic section to Happy Valley. A committee member noted that it is easier for kids to cross Fairhaven Parkway, and feels those students feel more connected to the neighborhood located to the north rather than the neighborhood to the east. Kim Brown asked if there are many kids who walk to Lowell, and Missy Ferguson indicated that many parents bring the students who live within walking distance, but there are also students who walk.

5. Ron noted that he is sensing that the committee is still wrestling with draft options A and B, and wonders if the committee should make any additional tweaks. Kim Brown raised the question of whether the committee should go forward with one or two recommended scenarios. Rob explained what the committee had discussed at the previous meeting regarding the number of scenarios to present. It was brought up that draft scenarios A and B are pretty similar, and it may not be the best option to propose two such similar scenarios. A committee member noted that it is important to give the Larrabee community input and choice, and if only one scenario is presented, they may feel that they have no opportunity for input. Ron asked the members to share their feelings about draft scenarios A and B, and the comments were:

- Likes the fact that draft option A seems to more evenly distribute parent involvement, which is more beneficial than the geographic line;
- If the “tweaks” are made, draft option A would be even better;
- With both scenarios, the Larrabee community may feel they didn’t get what they wanted. A committee member suggested if that comes up, the committee can explain why one scenario was chosen over another.
- Draft scenario A still has arbitrary boundaries that divides neighbors. Another member pointed out that there are always going to be neighbors who are divided by the attendance lines.
- A committee member stated she now feels that, after all of the processing by the committee, she would feel comfortable explaining the recommendations of the committee.

Rob asked for quick input from around the table. All but one member identified Draft Scenario A (with or without tweaks) as their top choice, with one member stating their top choice being Draft Scenario B.

6. Ron feels there is a strong consensus for Draft Scenario A, and asked the committee to talk about possible “tweaks”. Comments from the committee included:

- The bus would not pick up on Chuckanut or 16th.
- There is not a sidewalk on all sections of Chuckanut.

7. There was more discussion about bus routes with the different options. Everyone on the committee feels going forward with Draft Scenario A is the best option, and to take input about tweaks from the Larrabee community.

8. Rob asked Tanya to talk about process and next steps. Tanya passed out a draft timeline and communications plan. The next committee meeting is scheduled for December 17th. Tanya talked about that week being a busy time for families, with concerts and other family and school events. She believes this may make it difficult for families to attend a meeting on December 17th. Tanya recommended that the committee consider waiting until after winter break to host an input session, and to use the time between

now and then to gather feedback through a survey which could be available through winter break. Questions from the committee members included:

- Question: Is it the role of this committee to evaluate the feedback? Answer: Yes, this committee will be listening to the input of the stakeholders, and Tanya will support the committee during that process.
- Question: How would this change affect the committee's timeline? Answer: The committee must take feedback into consideration (feedback from Larrabee families, as well as Lowell and Happy Valley families).
- Question: Are there sample questions for the committee to work from? Answer: Tanya would suggest the committee provide a description of the work that has taken place thus far, including maps, and to ask some demographic questions (school, grade level). It is best to not ask for names and to keep the surveys anonymous. Keep in mind that most families will look at the changes from the viewpoint of how it will affect their own family. Some questions that might be helpful to the committee would be: (1) What do you like about this? (2) What concerns do you have? (3) What questions do you have? (4) How will my child get to school? Ranking criteria could be included (for instance, socio-economic is high on the committee's list of considerations, but is it important to families?).

Karen Tolliver suggested that some form of communication be sent to all three schools to give families an update as to what has happened so far, and what the timeline looks like.

Rob suggested a public meeting on Tuesday, January 14th, followed by a committee meeting on January 21st to look at survey results and review information gathered from the meeting. Ideally the committee would have feedback to Dr. Baker by the end of January. That feedback would include a written document prepared by the group, outlining the process, with the committee's recommendation at the end of the document. Tanya indicated that typically a writing group is formed to help with different portions of the recommendation.

There was some discussion about when the communication to families (including the maps and surveys) should go out. One committee member commented that it would be best to give families as much time as possible to process the information. Tanya requested that a small group of the committee members work with her to draft the message next week, followed by distribution to this committee for review. The information could then be sent to Happy Valley, Larrabee and Lowell during the week of December 16th-20th, with the survey remaining open until January 10th or 14th. The committee could possibly meet with families at Larrabee on January 9th at 6:30 (following the facilities meeting). The committee would then meet on January 21st, hopefully to make a decision regarding a recommendation to Dr. Baker.

Tanya asked for volunteers to work with her next week with messaging. Rachel, Andy, Ron, Rob, Kerri, Heidi, and Kim volunteered. The question was asked when the message

would be sent to families (perhaps Friday folders). Tanya would not recommend the messaging be sent out on the last Friday before winter break.

The next meeting will be the community meeting on January 9th. Committee members should email Ron or Rob if interested in playing a role at the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:07 pm.