

MINUTES

Windham Ridge Parent Advisory Council

January 6th, 2014 | 6:30-8:30pm

Attendance

Liz Novatsidis
Starr Mills
Véronique O'Malley
Doug Chester
Kelly Giesen
Mukesh Gautam
Esther Boivin
Amir Mirshahi
Julie Romanovich
Houda Alassad (absent)
Kristina Barybina
Vivian Aitas
Preeti Kumar (absent)
Corrie McBain (school trustee)
Salma Satchu (TDSB parent guest)

Welcome

Agenda approved.

Carnival date:

This year's carnival set for February 13th, 2015. Event is organized by Nancy Séguin, who will contact Julie regarding number of volunteers required for the day.

End of year event:

Suggestions requested for this year's End of Year event. We have \$4000 budget set aside for this event. Last year's 10th anniversary event was a huge success with Birds of Prey demonstration, making and flying of kites, and picnic lunch. Esther mentioned a special baseball day reserved for school trips where the entire school could attend a Blue Jays game. This idea was met with much enthusiasm however the date of June 10 conflicts with Area Track & Field. **Esther offered to check with other sports teams such as the Marlies to see if they offer same type of event day.**

Council members to brainstorm other ideas for end of year event and council should have a decision by next meeting. (ALL)

School Capitol Improvement:

Council funded School Capitol Improvement project ideas: Council to come up with ideas on school improvement initiatives requiring funding. For example in previous years, school used moneys to get a scoreboard for the gymnasium.

Liz: suggested new basketball backboards

Véronique: suggested idea of a giant chalkboard on an exterior wall of the school for those kids who would like to draw during recess. This idea needs to be verified with Plan Services to see if it is even a possibility. Another suggestion was benches or tables outside in the field, under the trees where kids can play cards, chess, or other games. For example, stone chessboard tables like those seen in certain parks.

Starr: suggested cleaning up the yard would be a great initiative

Esther: suggested enlarging the sandpit for track & field. Would like to know if this request is funded by the board?

Véronique to check with caretakers to see what is required to enlarge this.

Council members to price some of these suggestions and/or come up with other suggestions for next meeting. (ALL)

Principal's Report

School Climate Report results:

77 people completed the report from last spring. 11 from intermediate level, 30 from the junior level, and 36 from the primary level. Overall positive responses. Some areas of concern were School Environment, Student Behaviour & Consequences, and Student support.

Véronique expressed concern with parent responses to communication over time. There was a request for increased communication preferably via email. Now that school has implemented regular communication online and electronically, there is a large request for traditional communication paths equally in terms of phone calls with teachers and paper newsletters. Often difficult to please everyone. Conclusion however is that parents enjoy continued communication with school.

In terms of Student Support, there were a couple of students who left the school over the Christmas break at the intermediate Grade 6 level. Parents expressed concern that the students' needs were not met academically. There has already been a request to push the school board for evaluation of a fair share in staffing specifically in terms of supporting students with special needs in FI schools.

School Improvement plan to be compiled with some results from the climate report. Student support amendments are already in the plan.

There was discussion of how this information should be shared with parents. Most of the report will be provided to parents through the school board, suggestion to possibly highlight the areas of concern to parents of our school via the Friday newsletter.

Corrie to mention the lack of comments area to the board and how comments would be helpful to expand on the responses with detail.

Treasurer Report

Mukesh wanted clarification regarding QSP numbers. Vivian explained that there is a \$4105 cheque forthcoming to the school. Suggestion from Liz to hold \$700-1000 in case of a chargeback invoice from QSP as in the previous year even though QSP invoice states amount owing at \$0.

Amir: no expenses for Cyberbully speaker evening!

Mukesh: There is roughly \$6100 available to us now, minus \$4000 for year end event + upcoming pizza and QSP = approximately \$17,000 available.

Teacher's Report

Esther: Chess club is requesting more chess sets for the very popular club. Needing 10 more at about \$14 each. *Council voted to supply \$175 (incl. tax) for the purchase of these sets: all in favour*

Upon topic of student clubs, Vivian mentions that Lego sets are needed for Lego club. *Council discussed and voted in favour to provide Houda with \$300 to purchase necessary sets.* **Vivian to contact Houda to let her know.**

Esther: At staff meeting, teachers are looking forward to Scientist in the Classroom that starts soon for some grades. Many teachers have expressed a willingness to go on overnight trips and staff will be conducting survey of all teachers on interest in future overnight trips.

Esther to inform Mme Cowan that her \$300 budget for the science lab is still untouched.

Committee Updates

Education – Technology Workshop:

Amir – Cyberbullying was a success. Good turnout- about 32-35 people.

Upcoming Pro Grant topic: How Gender differences influence learning & behaviour. Speaker Michael Reist already contacted and ready. Fee details to be discussed with speaker.

Council decided on May, 14, 2015 as the date for this workshop. \$1000 grant provided by board. However, this year we need to pay for the event and the board will reimburse school.

Fundraising – QSP / Direct Donations:

Vivian–

QSP: \$8117 profit in magazine sales; \$3200 in direct donations; \$4105 still to come.

Magazine sales were lower than last year but with Direct donations much higher, the profit was similar.

Vivian – some moms at pizza lunch suggested looking into an additional lunch day such as Hot dog lunches.

Vivian to explore this after second round of pizza lunch numbers come in. Concerns: Do hot dogs meet healthy school requirements?

Volunteers & Yearbook & Mural:

Julie: Mural was initially quoted at \$2000. After a second thorough walk through of the space, artist Lindsay Davies has come up with a new quote of \$2500 plus HST bringing the total for this initiative to \$2825. *Council voted and approved this new amount.* Artist will provide all paint and coating. Scaffolding is no longer required. Lindsay is ready start: January 19, 2015.

Yearbook: Sales to start in February with a message going out prior to that in the Friday announcements. Option to purchase online as well as with paper order form. **Julie to find out if cheques/money go directly to Jostens and they work out the cost and sales differences at the end of production or if the school collects the funds and pays Jostens a printing cost. ?**

Student Programs:

Houda – absent tonight. She is busy already planning second round of student programs.

Communications/Council Website Updates:

Preeti – absent tonight. She is busy cleaning up the council email account. So far removing spam and junk mail has taken 3 weeks.

School Grants:

Kristina:

Many grants are initiative-driven. They focus on environment, music, or sciences for example. Working off of the staff wish list, Kristina reviewed the following:

Toyota Evergreen Foundation – an environmental grant; application is lengthy but worth an attempt. We can incorporate Mr. Cipollone’s friendship garden idea as well as any improvements we would like regarding the school yard. Deadline is February 27, 2015. **Plan needs to explain how children would be involved – this portion will be passed on to Mr. Cipollone. (Kristina/Mr. Cipollone)**

Véronique to acquire property survey map from caretakers.

Industry Canada provides government funded computers for schools. Application asks for specific hardware details. Kristina to verify if this organization provides funds or the actual equipment. If it is not funds, the school cannot accept computer equipment that is board-provided.

Honda Foundation – another environmental program but would require a solid idea for a plan to apply.

Environmental Earth Angels – assists in planning and managing of a school tree planting event. Trees are provided as well as local media coverage.

S’Cool Life Fund – a Toronto foundation that supports DREAMS – Drama, Recreation, Extra-curricular, Arts, Music, or Sports. Asked for 14 Electronic keyboards but they require a charitable donation number. **Kristina/Kelly to look into acquiring a charitable donation number from the board.**

Green Apple School Program – School has received this grant in the past. Kristina came up with the project idea of having students submit a healthy recipe and selecting some to compile a Healthy Kids recipe book. It was mentioned that if the same project from previous years could be submitted (with small tweaks), then there would be no need to undertake a brand new project to get this grant. **Kristina to get in touch with Anahita.**

New Business

Council approves \$600 for the You’re the Chef program that will run once again for the grade 8s this year.

Next Meeting

Tuesday, February 3rd, 2015