

**MINUTES OF THE October 21, 2021
MEETING OF THE
WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
ZONING ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

October 21, 2021

1. Opening Items

1.01 Call to Order

The meeting of the Zoning Advisory Committee was called to order at 5:31 p.m. The meeting was conducted at Verdi Elementary School located at 250 Bridge St. in Verdi, Nevada.

1.02 Roll Call

Committee Members Polly Boardman, Caylin Campbell, Kristen DeHaan, Kristie Essa, Christine Hull, Araceli Martinez, Tyler Rogers, Lauren Rushing, and Brooke Snyder were present. Committee Members Natalie Ghysels, Amy Howe, and Adriana Publico were absent. Staff Liaison, Lauren Ford, and staff were also present.

2. Items for Presentation, Discussion, and/or Possible Action

2.01 Introduction of New Members to the Zoning Advisory Committee

Caylin Campbell introduced new committee members Kristen DeHaan, Tyler Rogers, Lauren Rushing, and Brooke Snyder.

2.02 Discussion and Possible Action to Select a Chair of the Zoning Advisory Committee for a Term Ending June 30, 2022, from the Current Membership: Natalie Ghysels, Polly Boardman, Kristen DeHaan, Tyler Rogers, Araceli Martinez, Christine Hull, Kristie Essa, Lauren Rushing, Caylin Campbell, Adriana Publico, Amy Howe, and Brooke Snyder (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION)

Ms. Boardman nominated Ms. Hull to be the Chair of the Zoning Advisory Committee (ZAC).

Pablo Nava Duran gave public comment. Mr. Duran told the committee his top four choices for the ZAC Chair were Araceli Martinez, Polly Boardman, Adriana Publico, and Christine Hull.

Mr. Rogers asked if the committee members could introduce themselves before taking a vote, and they did so. Caylin Campbell is a science teacher at Desert Skies Middle School, was the Vice Chair of the committee last year, and has been serving on the committee for a year. Lauren Rushing moved to Reno from the Midwest and is a new committee member. Polly Boardman represents Sparks and has been on committee for five years. Brooke Snyder is a Human Resources technician at the Washoe County School District and is new to the committee. Araceli Martinez works for the University Nevada – Reno and has been on the committee for three years. Tyler Rogers, a new committee member representing District D, works in software sales and has a daughter who will be attending school in the District. His wife is a teacher at AACT. Kristin DeHaan, a new committee member residing in District C, is a social resource teacher at Drake elementary school and has two children that graduated from AACT. Kristie Essa, a nurse practitioner, attended WSCD schools, has a daughter attending school in the District, and has been on the committee for a year. Christine Hull was a classroom educator in the District for fifteen years, is a District parent, serves on the state’s Blue Ribbon Commission, and is an advocate for education and zoning.

It was moved by Ms. Boardman and seconded by Ms. Rushing that **the Zoning Advisory Committee appoints Christine Hull as Chair of the Zoning Advisory Committee for a term ending June 30, 2022.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: Pass (Yea: Polly Boardman, Caylin Campbell, Kristen DeHaan, Kristie Essa, Christine Hull, Araceli Martinez, Tyler Rogers, Lauren Rushing, and Brooke Snyder) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

2.03 Discussion and Possible Action to Select a Vice-Chair of the Zoning Advisory Committee for a Term Ending June 30, 2022, from the Current Membership: Natalie Ghysels, Polly Boardman, Kristen DeHaan, Tyler Rogers, Araceli Martinez, Christine Hull, Kristie Essa, Lauren Rushing, Caylin Campbell, Adriana Publico, Amy Howe, and Brooke Snyder (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION)

Ms. Campbell told the committee that she served as the Vice-Chair previously and was willing to continue in that capacity unless another committee member wanted to serve. Ms. Campbell explained the activities of the Vice-Chair are to take the roll call at committee meetings, edit meeting minutes, discuss agenda items with the Chair before meetings, and generally aid the Chair. Mr. Rogers nominated himself to be the Vice-Chair.

Pablo Nava Duran gave public comment. Mr. Duran congratulated Christine Hull on being selected Chair of the ZAC. He recommended Araceli Martinez for Vice-Chair of the ZAC.

It was moved by Mr. Rogers and seconded by Ms. Essa that **the Zoning Advisory Committee appoints Tyler Rogers as Vice-Chair of the Zoning Advisory**

Committee for a term ending June 30, 2022. The result of the vote was Unanimous: Pass (Yea: Polly Boardman, Caylin Campbell, Kristen DeHaan, Kristie Essa, Christine Hull, Araceli Martinez, Tyler Rogers, Lauren Rushing, and Brooke Snyder) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

2.04 Possible Action to Approve the Minutes of the April 15, 2021, Zoning Advisory Committee Meeting

It was moved by Ms. Campbell and seconded by Ms. Boardman that **the Zoning Advisory Committee approves the minutes of the April 15, 2021 Zoning Advisory Committee meeting.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: Pass (Yea: Polly Boardman, Caylin Campbell, Kristen DeHaan, Kristie Essa, Christine Hull, Araceli Martinez, Tyler Rogers, Lauren Rushing, and Brooke Snyder) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

2.05 Presentation from The Washoe County School District Office of General Counsel on Nevada Open Meeting Law (Nevada Revised Statutes 241) Requirements for Public Bodies

Neil Rombardo, Chief General Counsel, gave a presentation on Open Meeting Law (OML). He told the committee members if they have concerns about OML to contact Lauren Ford, Staff Liaison. The Open Meeting Law NRS 241 specifies that any time a public body wants to take action or deliberate a decision it must be done openly. An action is a majority of a quorum of a public body. He explained that the ZAC has 13 members, a quorum is 7 members, and a vote of 4 is needed to pass an item. If there is not a quorum of 7 members a meeting cannot be held. Deliberations are discussions that lead to an action. A meeting is a gathering of members of a public body at which a quorum is present to deliberate toward a decision or to take action on any matter over which the public body has supervision, control, jurisdiction or advisory power. Deliberations and actions must be done at an open meeting that is agendized and posted for the public. In the school district, "public bodies" as defined by Nevada OML includes the Board of Trustees and all subcommittees of the Board. He cautioned that the easiest way to violate OML is through serial communications such as text messages when one committee member texts another and then that committee member texts another, and so on, until a "rolling quorum" has been reached on a text stream. Mr. Rombardo strongly advised that emails be sent to Ms. Ford and not the entire committee and cautioned if a committee member does respond to an email sent to the entire committee to be sure not to "reply all" when responding. He further recommended they do not reply to the sender but allow Ms. Ford or Mr. Searcy to reply.

Mr. Rogers asked about the role of the ZAC Chair in responding to the public comment on behalf of the committee. Mr. Rombardo replied that in the case of subcommittees staff (Lauren Ford and Adam Searcy) respond to public comment but may work with the

committee Chair for a response if necessary. If a committee member does respond directly to a member of the public, the Staff Liaison should be copied.

Mr. Rombardo explained committee members may lobby each other for votes in one-to-one meetings but can't discuss the results of the meeting with other members. He cautioned that if they are going to send an email to the entire committee, they should be blind-copied, and the Staff Liaison should be copied as well to avoid violations of OML. Meetings may be held via telephone, video conference, in-person, or a hybrid of these methods. A social or school function in which there is no deliberation is not considered a meeting. He cautioned that any discussion leading to consensus via text or email is a violation of OML.

The presentation then turned to the topic of ethics. He told committee members that if they feel like they have a personal conflict of interest and should abstain from a vote to contact the Staff Liaison who will then consult with the Chief General Counsel to advise the committee member on how to proceed. In most cases a disclosure of a possible conflict is sufficient, and the committee member will still get to vote.

Mr. Rombardo described the legal requirements for conducting a meeting. For every meeting, a public notice must be created and posted three working days before stating the time and location of the meeting, a list of locations where the notice has been posted, the name and contact of the person to obtain support material from and where it may be obtained, and an agenda. Agenda items must be clear and complete, and the Chief General Counsel reviews every agenda. The law requires a general public comment period before adjournment. The WCSD also takes public comment on each action item where members of the public are allowed three minutes to comment specifically on the item. During the general public comment period the public may comment on items not listed on the agenda and the comment must relate to zoning for this committee. Mr. Rombardo noted that specific people may not be discussed at a meeting unless they are noticed properly. He explained the "Golden Rule of the Open Meeting Law" is if a public body is not sure whether an act should be done in the open, it should always perform that act at a properly noticed open meeting to avoid any OML violations.

Ms. Essa asked if it would be allowable for a committee member to send out meeting materials directly if a member of the public requested them. Mr. Rombardo suggested working with the Staff Liaison to have the materials sent.

Any communications amongst committee members and between committee members the Staff Liaison are considered public record according to the Public Records Act. Mr. Rombardo recommended that committee members that are not District employees get a dedicated email address used solely for ZAC business to avoid having to turn over their personal email in the case of a public records request.

Ms. Hull asked for clarification about interaction during public comment. Mr. Rombardo answered that they recommend committee members do not respond to public comment, although they are not prohibited from doing so. Back and forth interaction between members of the public and the committee can result in a dialogue about something that is not on the agenda which in turn becomes an OML violation. If there is any response to a public comment it should be done by the Chair and be quick and to the point.

Mr. Rogers asked about the ramifications of violating OML. Mr. Rombardo explained that OML violations can be misdemeanor offenses if intent is shown. More likely it would be a reprimand by the Attorney General's Office and would have to be corrected on the record.

Mr. Rombardo noted that this is not an action item and they do not have to take public comment on it. Taking public comment would be at the discretion of the Chair.

Pablo Nava Duran gave public comment. Mr. Duran encouraged the committee to follow OML. He asked about the relationship between social media and OML.

Mr. Rombardo responded to the public comment and advised committee members to be careful with their social media. If someone posts about a zoning issue and committee members comment or otherwise respond it could possibly result in an OML violation.

Ms. DeHaan asked if it would be allowable to post on social media that they are a member of the ZAC. Mr. Rombardo said that that would be acceptable but advised against communicating with the public on social media because it exposes their social media account to public record.

2.06 Information and Discussion of the Anticipated Cadence of Committee Work, Including the Potential Timeline for Rezoning Needs, During the 2021-22 School Year, Including Any Requests from the Board of Trustees

Lauren Ford, Staff Liaison and Lead and Area 4 Superintendent, spoke to the committee about the anticipated work and timeline for the ZAC. She explained that, as Staff Liaison, she meets regularly with Adam Searcy, Chief Facilities Management Officer, Randy Baxley, Zoning and Demographics, and Pete Etchart, Chief Operating Office. They also meet regularly with the Chair of the ZAC. This cadence/calendar of committee work was a collaboration of all of the above developed at the end of the last school year. The October meeting is generally an introductory meeting with an OML presentation and one information only zoning item, in this case the Verdi/Gomm rezoning. At the next meeting is when they would take action on the zoning item that was presented at the previous meeting. If the ZAC takes action, Ms. Ford, Mr. Searcy, and the ZAC Chair take the recommendation to the Board where the Board makes the final decision. It is in the

purview of the Board to accept the recommendation, change the recommendation, or send it back to the ZAC for reconsideration. At the next ZAC meeting in November, the committee will take action on the Verdi/Gomm rezoning and be given a presentation on a new elementary school in the Southeast Reno Area and impacts this will have on zoning. The December meeting will be an opportunity for more discussion on the new elementary school in the Southeast, or to possibly take action on it. The other meetings for the school year have been left open for consideration of zoning actions as necessary.

Mr. Rogers asked where ZAC members should direct questions they may have on a zoning item. Ms. Ford confirmed that questions should be directed to her to answer or relay to the appropriate staff.

Pablo Nava Duran gave public comment. Mr. Duran commented that it is a problem that Clayton Middle school is split with students going to Reno, McQueen, and Hug High Schools.

2.07 Information and Discussion Regarding Proposed Enrollment Zone Adjustments for the 2022-23 School Year Potentially Impacting Robert McQueen High School, Verdi Elementary School, Roy Gomm Elementary School, B.D. Billingham Middle School, Darrel Swope Middle School, and Reno High School

Adam Searcy, Chief Facilities Management Officer, gave a presentation outlining the proposed enrollment zone adjustments options impacting McQueen HS, Verdi ES, Roy Gomm ES, Billingham MS, Swope MS, and Reno HS. Committee Member Kristie Essa disclosed that her daughter attends Gomm ES. This area was considered by the ZAC in 2017 and the committee chose not to take action at that time. The current proposed adjustment is influenced by growth in the Verdi Elementary School area and a desire to create more logical and compact neighborhood-based school enrollment zones. It is also influenced by the addition to Swope Middle School and transportation distances. The furthest away area zoned for Verdi ES is 9 miles from Verdi ES and only 1.3 miles from Gomm ES. Students in this area are zoned for Billingham MS and Reno HS, while other students zoned for Verdi ES are zoned for Billingham MS and McQueen HS resulting in a split-feeder situation. Mr. Searcy explained a spreadsheet showing the existing capacities and enrollments and the projected enrollments of the schools involved. Portable classrooms are not considered in enrollment percentages because they are considered temporary. A variety of sources are used to try and project enrollments for coming years.

Mr. Rogers asked how the maximum capacity of a school is derived. Mr. Searcy explained that they use the total number of classrooms multiplied by the student/teacher ratios that vary for different grade levels. For example, with a 25 to 1 student/teacher ratio and 20 classrooms a school would have a maximum capacity of 500. Mr. Rogers asked how the enrollment percentage for these schools compare with schools across the District. Mr.

Searcy replied that these utilization rates/enrollment percentages are in line with District averages. The targeted ideal population of school would be in the 80% range.

Mr. Searcy noted that projected enrollments are also expected to change in 2022/2023 school year with the opening of the new Hug HS and the expansion of Swope MS with 6th grade students from Swope's feeder schools moving into Swope MS. This will directly impact Gomm ES that currently has grades K-6 and beginning in 2022/2023 school year will have grades K-5. The opening of the Debbie Smith Career and Technical Academy in 2023/2024 school year is also expected to reduce enrollments at McQueen HS and Reno HS.

Two scenarios were proposed for enrollment zone adjustments.

Scenario A-1 Impacts

- Moves 52 Verdi ES students to Gomm ES
- Moves 29 Billingshurst MS students to Swope MS

In this scenario the number of students moved corresponds very closely to the number of 6th graders at Gomm that will be moved up to Swope MS, so that the enrollment change at Gomm ES is nearly neutral. Verdi ES will see a decrease in enrollment creating some room for planned growth in the Verdi area. This neighborhood is currently zoned for Reno HS and this would not change.

Scenario A-2 Impacts

- Moves 82 Verdi ES students to Gomm ES
- Moves 42 Billingshurst MS to Swope MS
- Moves 15 McQueen HS students to Reno HS

In this scenario the high school boundary is moved to the end of the West 4th St. neighborhood. Mr. Searcy noted that this option would push the upper limit of enrollment for Gomm ES.

Tyler Rogers asked for some explanation about how scenarios are planned and enrollment zone lines are drawn. Mr. Searcy explained there are some core guiding principles that drive planning. This includes considering compact logical neighborhood boundaries, safety and accessibility issues, logical geographic barriers such as Interstate 80, and facility capacity and utilizations. Staff looks at a variety of different scenarios before presenting the best option to the ZAC. ZAC meetings generate questions and discussion that sometimes result in hybrid solutions and he noted that the public and committee members may have a better sense of the community. Mr. Taylor asked if there is any community involvement in the process before scenarios are presented to the ZAC. Mr. Searcy replied that Ms. Ford is in contact with the principals of the schools that are

impacted, as well as notifying impacted families, and connecting with families at PFA meetings.

Mr. Searcy told the committee that the students who are currently receiving transportation services will still receive transportation services in both scenarios. Even though some of these students would be inside the "walk zone" they would still be offered transportation because of the lack of safe crossing opportunities across 4th Street. There would be a net neutral impact on the transportation department with both scenarios that would just involve re-routing some buses. Ms. Essa asked if transportation for the middle schools would remain the same. Mr. Searcy clarified that elementary, middle, and high school students currently receiving transportation would be offered transportation in both scenarios. Ms. Essa asked for verification that Billinghurst MS students in the walk zone that are currently not receiving transportation would receive transportation to Swope MS. Mr. Searcy said he would confirm this, but he thinks those neighborhoods would receive transportation to Swope MS.

Mr. Searcy commented that scenario A-1 is more ideal from a facility utilization standpoint. Mr. Rogers asked why Westergard and Winnemucca elementary schools were not considered in these scenarios. Mr. Searcy explained that neither of those schools are overcrowded or under-utilized. Ms. Boardman commented that when the ZAC discussed this in 2017, they were concerned with potential overcrowding at Verdi ES with new neighborhoods and that hasn't seemed to happen. Mr. Searcy noted that there are more long-term options for Verdi ES than there are for Gomm ES. The Gomm campus is small with no option for expansion. The long-term options to deal with growth in the Verdi area are greater and there is room for expansion. Ms. Boardman noted that scenario A-2 leaves Verdi slightly under-utilized. Ms. Essa commented that Gomm ES takes on students for special programs and asked if those numbers are taken into consideration. Mr. Searcy answered that students in special programs are considered in the enrollment calculations and some of those programs have unique student/teacher ratios that are also factored into capacities. Variances are also taken into account. Mr. Rogers asked if there are many variance requests from students zoned for Verdi ES to go to Gomm ES. Mr. Searcy did not know the exact number of variances for Gomm ES, but the number of students attending Gomm ES on a variance are within the normal range of the rest of the schools in the District. Ms. Ford commented that for students from Verdi ES on a variance to Gomm ES parents have to provide their own transportation, and by rezoning them to Gomm ES they would have District transportation. Ms. Essa pointed out that pick-up and drop-off traffic at the Gomm campus is a big issue.

Mr. Searcy concluded that the goal for this agenda item is to potentially take action at the next ZAC meeting in November and for any changes to go into effect in 2022/2023 school year.

Nicole Chewjalearn gave public comment. Ms. Chewjalearn addressed option A-2 and the Mesa Park neighborhood. She told the committee that this area is in the walk zone for both Billingham MS and McQueen HS and option A-2 would be moving students to feeder schools that are farther away. With option A-1, those students are already zoned for Reno HS and there would be less impact.

3. Closing Items

3.01 Public Comment

There was no public comment at this time.

3.02 Announcement of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Zoning Advisory Committee would take place on Thursday, November 18, 2021.

3.03 Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to come before the members of the Committee, Chair Hull declared the meeting adjourned at 7:11 p.m.