



Washoe County School District Zoning Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

February 21, 2019

1. Opening Items

1.01 Call to Order

The meeting of the Zoning Advisory Committee was called to order at 5:34 p.m. at Pine Middle School, Cafeteria, 4800 Neil Road, Reno, Nevada.

1.02 Roll Call

Chair Beth Smith and committee members Christina Pearson, Polly Boardman, Lorraine Toole, Theresa Birchfield, Stephanie Hanna, Sierra Clark, Jennifer Peterson, Adam Carpenter and Jason Shipman were present at roll call. Araceli Martinez arrived at 5:38pm and Dana Galvin arrived at 6:04pm. Melissa Boesen was absent. Committee Liaison Dr. Paul LaMarca and staff was also present.

1.03 Public Comment

Chair Beth Smith briefly explained the Public Comment process.

Pablo Nava-Duran announced that he has both good news and bad news: the bad news was that Principal, Tom Brown has resigned. The good news is that WCSD purchased the land for a future high school at Wildcreek.

Kelly Roper spoke against the idea of Huffaker Elementary School being changed to a single-feeder school into Pine Middle School. She said she and many people in her small Huffaker Elementary neighborhood bought their homes intentionally so their children would attend Huffaker Elementary, Swope Middle School and then Reno High School.

1.04 Action to Adopt the Agenda

On motion by Polly Boardman, second by Theresa Birchfield, the Zoning Committee approved the agenda as presented (Yea: Beth Smith, Christina Pearson, Polly Boardman, Lorraine Toole, Araceli Martinez, Theresa Birchfield, Stephanie Hanna, Sierra Clark, Jennifer Peterson, Adam Carpenter and Jason Shipman. Final Resolution: Motion Carried 11-0)

2. Items for Discussion, Presentation and/or Action

2.01 Discussion and Possible Approval of the Minutes from the January 17, 2019 Zoning Advisory Committee Meeting

There was no discussion from the committee.

On motion by Polly Boardman, second by Jennifer Peterson, the Zoning Advisory Committee approved the minutes from the January 17, 2019 meeting. (Yea: Beth Smith, Christina Pearson, Polly Boardman, Lorraine Toole, Araceli Martinez, Theresa Birchfield, Stephanie Hanna, Sierra Clark, Jennifer Peterson, Adam Carpenter and Jason Shipman. Final Resolution: Motion Carried 11-0)

2.02 Discussion and Possible Action to recommend to the Board of Trustees that the school attendance zone for the new Arrowcreek Middle School, scheduled to open in Fall 2020, be established to include the portion of students at Edward L. Pine Middle School and Kendyl Depoali Middle School who attend or attended the feeder elementary schools of Ted Hunsberger Elementary School, Elizabeth Lenz Elementary School, and Pleasant Valley Elementary School.

Adam Searcy, Chief Capital Projects and Facilities Management Officer gave a presentation about the recommendation to change the school attendance zones for Hunsberger Elementary, Lenz Elementary and Pleasant Valley Elementary to be zoned for the new middle school in Arrowcreek.

Mr. Searcy discussed the current construction projects underway and how weather has impacted the groundbreaking of the new middle school in Arrowcreek, however, contracts are open to begin immediate construction once weather permits and the district is still hopeful the school will open in August 2020.

Adam Searcy showed slides of the existing elementary and middle school boundaries in the Arrowcreek region followed by a slide to further reflect the new proposed middle school boundaries for Hunsberger Elementary, Lenz Elementary and Pleasant Valley Elementary - all to be zoned for the new middle school in Arrowcreek rather than Pine Middle School or Depoali Middle School, as they are currently.

Adam Searcy discussed slides representing current and projected enrollment numbers for Hunsberger Elementary, Lenz Elementary and Pleasant Valley Elementary with the current zones compared to the proposed middle school zone changes. Adam Searcy

made mention that the numbers for 6th grade moving into middle school has been reflected in these projection numbers.

Adam Searcy provided an explanation for the initial, relatively low enrollment projection into the new middle school at Arrowcreek – as growth dictates in the South Meadows area, there are plans to build a new elementary school in the Rio Wrangler area, which then would result in a need to configure new zoning areas which could further result in schools such as Brown Elementary to be rezoned for the middle school in Arrowcreek. Adam Searcy clarified that these are all hypothetical situations.

Adam Searcy concluded the information with this action item by summarizing the recommendation for Hunsberger Elementary, Lenz Elementary and Pleasant Valley Elementary to be rezoned for the middle school in Arrowcreek beginning with the 2020-21 school year.

Chair Beth Smith asked when the District would be ready to make a commitment to future zoning and rezoning plans, in order for the community to be provided with several years notice to make educated decisions and have the knowledge of where their children may be attending school in the future.

Adam Searcy stated that they revisit zoning areas yearly in order to develop plans and provide information to the public with a year notice.

Chair Beth Smith asked what the ideal time frame is for the District to make zoning decisions before a school opens. Adam stated that the ideal time frame would be in the 3-year time frame.

Committee member Stephanie Hanna asked if Brown Elementary School was to be zoned for the new middle school in Arrowcreek in the 2025-26 school year, where would those students go to high school?

Adam Searcy stated that there is no action anticipated associated with high school zone adjustments, and speculation cannot be made at this point in time.

Dr. Paul LaMarca stated that if you have a child who is entering their last year at their current school which is being rezoned, they have the choice to remain at that school for one additional year. Requests for siblings can be made but are not guaranteed. There is also no transportation guaranteed for the grandfathered variance requests.

2.02 Public Comment

Cristy Lum stated her concern that Pleasant Valley Elementary school, currently zoned for Damonte Ranch High School, is being rezoned for the new middle school in Arrowcreek which will house students who will instead go to Galena High School.

Pablo Nava-Duran commented on others' concerns about having to go to the middle school in Arrowcreek rather than Pine Middle School or Depaoli Middle School when those schools are closer in proximity or are overcrowded.

Dave Keyes commented in favor of Brown Elementary school students being zoned for Galena High School rather than Damonte Ranch High School.

Candace Lowery expressed her concern that the District has not addressed the issue of where students zoned for the new middle school in Arrowcreek will attend high school.

Alison Isaia spoke to the issue of mixed students at particular schools and the disproportionate amount of "haves" and "have nots" amongst the student population.

Hillary Lopez stated her concerns about the diverse student population created when elementary schools such as Huffaker split feed into Swope Middle School or Pine Middle School, and again are split feeder schools between Galena High School or Damonte Ranch High School.

Kelly Roper spoke against the idea of students being zoned for a middle school that takes them away from the majority of students and friendships built at the elementary school level, as well as the high school piece where those same students then will then attend a high school not with the same students they were in middle school with.

Marcia Reed commented against students zoned in the Galena High School area attending Pine Middle School due to the unwanted student diversity at Pine Middle School.

Shannon Taylor questioned the enrollment numbers represented this evening for Pleasant Valley Elementary school and stated that a large majority of their students attend on variances due to overcrowding at surrounding schools. She believes those numbers will change considerably with the opening of Poulakidas Elementary and hopes that the middle school they get zoned for will correspond with the high school they will attend after.

Committee members continued to discuss the potential zoning changes and how that would impact high school attendance zones.

Committee member Theresa Birchfield stated her reservations of discussing middle school zoning without discussing their high school zoning first as well as keeping children zoned for schools in their neighborhood as well as being equitable. She requested more information on the impacts of high school enrollments based on the Arrowcreek middle school zoning changes.

Chair Beth Smith agreed with Theresa Birchfield's comments above, and reiterated the importance of having more concrete answers in regards to future high school zoning for families and less "what ifs."

Adam Searcy commented on the committee's concerns and said it would be a large task to determine high school zones, but he welcomed the committee's right and need to dig deeper into this issue and develop a few probable scenarios, if needed.

Chair Beth Smith suggested a possible motion from the committee to recommend zoning changes to the Board of Trustees for Hunsberger Elementary and Lenz Elementary, and then later evaluate the zoning of Pleasant Valley Elementary.

Committee member Theresa Birchfield spoke on behalf of the community, being that she is the representative for this district. She asked when a recommendation needs to be made to the WCSD Board of Trustees regarding Arrowcreek students.

Adam Searcy stated that a recommendation needs to be brought before the Board prior to the next fiscal year, at least two meetings prior to the end of June.

Committee member Theresa Birchfield suggested that the committee discuss the possibility of making a decision now regarding the middle school zoning for the three elementary schools with a caveat for Pleasant Valley Elementary School, particularly paying careful attention to their high school zoning.

Committee member Stephanie Hanna agreed with what both Adam Searcy and Theresa Birchfield stated, however, she expressed concern with including Pleasant Valley in the middle school zoning until they can make a decision on which high school they would attend.

Committee member Polly Boardman questioned the postponement of recommending Pleasant Valley students feed into Arrowcreek middle school. Her belief is that there is not a closer, more logical middle school for these students to attend.

WCSD Legal Counsel, Sara Montalvo, advised the committee that the agenda item being discussed is only for the middle school, therefore any motion for high schools or considerations for high schools would be outside of the agenda item for this meeting.

Chair Beth Smith asked for clarification on the possibility of making a motion now on the Hunsberger and Lenz zoning for Arrowcreek yet table the item for Pleasant Valley Elementary until next month's meeting, which could be its own agenda item.

Sara Montalvo verified that they could vote to table Pleasant Valley Elementary school discussion until the next committee meeting, but could not vote on any mentions of high schools.

Theresa Birchfield asked if appropriate to make a motion to recommend to the Board of Trustees about Hunsberger Elementary and Lenz Elementary be zoned to Arrowcreek but request more information regarding the Pleasant Valley high school zoning options.

Sara Montalvo stated that yes, the committee could request more information regarding Pleasant Valley Elementary within their motion.

On motion by Theresa Birchfield, second by Jennifer Peterson, the Zoning Advisory Committee recommends to the Board of Trustees that students who attend Hunsberger Elementary and Lenz Elementary be zoned for the new middle school in Arrowcreek, and that more information regarding Pleasant Valley Elementary be provided to the Committee before a recommendation is made.

(Yea: Beth Smith, Christina Pearson, Polly Boardman, Araceli Martinez, Theresa Birchfield, Stephanie Hanna, Sierra Clark, Jennifer Peterson, Adam Carpenter, Jason Shipman, and Dana Galvin. Nay: Lorraine Toole. Final Resolution: Motion Carried 11-1)

2.03 Discussion and Possible Action to recommend to the Board of Trustees a change to the Zoning Boundaries for Elizabeth Lenz Elementary School and Double Diamond Elementary School for the 2020-2021 School Year

Adam Searcy mentioned that a concern had been raised at a Board of Trustees meeting regarding the zoning boundaries for Lenz Elementary and Double Diamond Elementary, with regards to a particular apartment neighborhood located on the East side of Virginia Street, currently zoned for Double Diamond Elementary and Depaoli Middle School, be looked at more closely. WCSD staff took the suggestion into consideration, however after determining that Hwy 395 does not pose a safety issue for these students who are currently bussed to school and that none of the students from

this area are currently on variance to Lenz Elementary, it has been recommended that the District maintain the current zoning boundaries.

2.03 Public Comment

Pablo Nava-Duran made comment.

Dave Keyes made the suggestion that the students who live in the Alexander apartment complex be bussed to school regardless if they are zoned to attend Double Diamond Elementary School or Elizabeth Lenz Elementary. He also recommended that the District to provide advance notice to families on any zoning changes, effective 2020.

Dr. Paul LaMarca did clarify for the group that the zoning changes being discussed are in fact for the 2020-21 school year, so there is a one year advance notice to families.

The committee then opened up for discussion.

Committee member Christina Pearson stated her opinion that the highway is less of a factor of division than S. Virginia poses and recommended to keep the zoning "as is."

Committee member Stephanie Hanna agreed with Christina Pearson's statement and added that Lenz Elementary school is already overcrowded and that adding these extra students would only further the problem. She also mentioned that because none of the students in reference are currently on a variance to Lenz Elementary that shows that there really isn't a demand for it.

Chair Beth Smith agreed with both previous comments and also spoke to the guiding principles of the committee to try their best to keep zones clean and make the best logical sense and believes that the current line is a common sense one.

On motion by Jennifer Peterson, second by Christina Pearson, the Zoning Advisory Committee recommends to the Board of Trustees to leave the Zoning Boundaries for Elizabeth Lenz Elementary School and Double Diamond Elementary School for the 2020-2021 School Year "as is." (Yea: Beth Smith, Christina Pearson, Polly Boardman, Araceli Martinez, Theresa Birchfield, Stephanie Hanna, Sierra Clark, Jennifer Peterson, Adam Carpenter, Jason Shipman, Lorraine Toole and Dana Galvin. Final Resolution: Motion Carried 12-0)

2.04 Presentation and Discussion of the cascading effects stemming from the establishment of the Arrowcreek Middle School enrollment zone and its possible changes to the zones of Edward L. Pine Middle School, Kendyl Depoali Middle School, Darrel C. Swope Middle School, and Otis E. Vaughn Middle School, that could impact students who attend or attended the following elementary schools: Caughlin Ranch Elementary School, Roger Corbett Elementary School, Edwin Dodson Elementary School, Donner Springs Elementary School, Huffaker Elementary School, Echo Loder Elementary School, and Smithridge STEM Academy

Adam Searcy, Chief Capital Projects and Facilities Management Officer, gave a presentation about the potential cascading effects stemming from the establishment of the Arrowcreek middle school enrollment zone.

Adam Searcy discussed with the group how they plan to clean up the zoning areas of Dodson Elementary, Huffaker Elementary and Donner Springs Elementary with the opening of Arrowcreek Middle School and reconfiguring the middle school zones – as all three of these schools are currently split feeder schools.

Committee Member Sierra Clark asked Adam Searcy to clarify that students who attend special programs would not be required to move out of their schools. Adam Searcy verified that the students in special programs would not be required to leave their current schools and the numbers reflected on his slides do account for those students already.

Committee member Jennifer Peterson asked how the Swope numbers will be effected by the 6th Grade Movement later down the road.

Adam Searcy addressed that the 6th Grade Movements will be discussed later in the presentation as well as in future meetings.

Adam Searcy showed the committee before and after slides of proposed zoning line changes in the Moana and Airway Drive areas that would impact Corbett Elementary and Smithridge Elementary, Pine Middle School and Vaughn Middle school and would significantly clean up existing lines and balance out current student enrollments.

The committee then opened up for discussion.

Committee member Christina Pearson stated that this proposal does the exact opposite of a previously discussed zoning proposal, which would be rezoning students and having them cross a large thoroughfare to get to school. Students would not be walking, bus transportation would be provided.

Adam Searcy confirmed that Christina Pearson's comment is correct, but that the suggestion was made and therefore they needed to explore the option.

Chair Beth Smith asked if the committee would be trading out one thoroughfare for another by this, and Adam Searcy stated that in essence, yes – but that the change warranted presentation and that they really couldn't come up with a better solution to provide more capacity to Smithridge Elementary.

Committee member Sierra Clark wanted to make sure that it was safe to assume that students in this area would be bussed to school. Adam Searcy clarified that they would be.

Committee member Theresa Birchfield asked about a portion on Airway Drive and whether any students live there. Adam Searcy confirmed that there was nothing but airport property, no residents.

Adam Searcy summarized the above by stating that they are proposing to clean up split feeder schools such as Huffaker Elementary, Dodson Elementary and Donner Springs Elementary and to transfer a lot of that capacity from Arrowcreek middle school to Pine Middle school and also transferring that capacity to Swope and Vaughn to make some small adjustments to clean up this specific odd elementary school boundary.

Lastly, Adam Searcy went over another proposal rezoning from Caughlin Ranch Elementary to Huffaker Elementary and taking the students rezoned to Huffaker Elementary from Swope Middle School into Pine Middle School. There has been historic variances from this area into Huffaker Elementary. Adam Searcy showed a slide illustrating the proposed adjustments through this change.

Chair Beth Smith stated that she does agree with the cleanup in this area because it would be taking an already divided community into a unified community. She also stated that she likes the idea of eliminating split feeders which is a goal the committee has been working toward for a while.

2.04 Public Comment

Jennifer Budge spoke against the proposed idea of moving the students that live in Lakeridge Springs from Swope Middle School to Pine Middle School.

Brandi Olsen (read on behalf of Julia Lear) spoke against moving students currently zoned for Huffaker and Swope Middle School to Pine Middle School.

Julia Dyer spoke against moving students currently zoned for Huffaker and Swope Middle School to Pine Middle School.

Kelly Roper spoke regarding the grandfathering option which allows some students to stay at their zoned school for an additional year, and how this option does not benefit everyone.

Pablo Nava-Duran spoke in regards to zoning boundaries for Reno High School, Swope Middle School and Pine Middle School. He made mention of zoning for Corbett Elementary and Smithridge Elementary as well.

3. Closing Items

3.01 Announcement of Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, March 21, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. Location To Be Determined, but likely to be at Vaughn Middle School.

3.02 Public Comment

Pablo Nava-Duran spoke about the new high school at Wildcreek as well as split feeder schools being eliminated.

3.03 Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business, Chair Beth Smith, adjourned the meeting at 7:23 p.m.