

Willows Parent Advisory Committee BCSD61

Meeting Minutes November 18, 2020

Commencement 7:02 pm

Adjournment 7:44 pm

Executive in Attendance: Cindy Rodier (Chair), Karen Manders (Vice-chair/communications), Bronwen Sharpe (Past Chair), Brenna O'Connor (Principal), Dianne Chrétien (Vice principal), 11 parents.

Welcome Words by PAC Chair, Cindy Rodier.

Our Secretary, Krissy John is unable to attend tonight's meeting, so the minutes will be taken by Danielle Brochu.

Minutes from the last meeting on October 21, 2020 are not available yet. They will be shared at the next meeting in January 2021.

There are some positions on the PAC Executive with are either currently vacant, or will be vacant as of September 2021. These include PAC Chair, VCPAC Representative (vacant), Canadian Parents for French Representative (vacant), Secretary, and Events Coordinator. Anyone interested in volunteering for one of these positions can please contact Cindy.

The PAC has funds to spend on enhanced learning and outdoor activities. Cindy emailed the Willows staff last week for suggestions on how we can support our teachers during this continuing pandemic. Sally Hallam (kindergarten teacher) has suggested an outdoor play kitchen/mud kitchen for the kindergarten/grade 1 playground area. Cindy has a local contact for this type of non-climbing structure, so this may be a possibility. We are waiting for more input from teachers. Other possibilities include more gaga balls or an additional gaga ball pit, and temporary/foldable picnic tables.

Last week, the PAC sponsored a free webinar on Internet and Social Media Safety. Notes are available on Facebook on the Willows Parents group.

The week prior, there was a Math webinar sponsored by Margaret Jenkins Elementary. It was recorded and the video is available on the MJ PAC website. There are additional videos there from other past speakers.

Any suggestions for future speakers that the PAC could sponsor, can be sent to Cindy.

The PAC is revisiting a request around safe routes to school through the Oak Bay Municipality, in time for their upcoming 2021 budget. In 2017, Tim Murphy (then Vice Principal) and some grade 5 classes did a presentation to the municipality regarding safe routes to school, and specifically a safe bike route along Cadboro Bay Road, as this would impact students at Willows, Oak Bay High and St. Patricks. This has fallen by the wayside while development has been happening at the Bowker St and Cadboro Bay Road intersection. The pedestrian crossing at that intersection is to be upgraded as part of the development, but as of yet remains unchanged. A former Willows parent, Roy Brook, has recently written a letter to the municipality reminding them of these concerns, and requesting that they make a barrier type bike lane a priority for their 2021 budget.

Also regarding safety along Cadboro Bay Road, our crossing guard Margaret has raised concerns about congestion at her pedestrian crossing. There is a large stream of people moving in both directions causing

many to be waiting on the narrow sidewalk, and people with bicycles and strollers often end up on the road. It has been suggested that the municipality should install temporary barriers at both sides of the crosswalk, similar to what has been installed at crosswalks along Oak Bay Avenue. Cindy is hoping to contact the municipality this week to bring this concern forward.

Update from Brenna O'Connor and Dianne Chrétien:

A representative from the school district will be coming to give a quote for the projector and built-in sound system for the gym. It is estimated that the cost will be approximately \$15,000

The school received money from the federal government which they used for extra EA time. This was important as EAs are spending more time on recess supervision with the staggered recesses required during COVID. The school also used some money towards Chromebooks and technology, as well as some additional sinks to be installed in some of the classes which currently have none.

The staff like the idea of having access to logs at Willows Beach (hopefully to be placed by Parks Department and used for outdoor learning). They are also hoping for more equipment for the kids to use outside at the school.

Willows' Code of Conduct is in the process of being revised. The existing Code of Conduct can be found on the school's website. The staff have come up with a draft of 4 expectations which they hope will be clear and easy to understand for all children at the school. The draft will be accessible to parents (by means to be determined), and input can be sent to the school. These expectations will be displayed in poster format, which will include students' art.

Friday, November 20th is a ProD day. Staff will be doing a module on reconciliation. Following this, staff will divide into groups and venture out to one of 8 first nations markers/sites in Oak Bay. They will explore how to include the site in their teachings, the history of the site, etc and will share their findings with the rest of the groups. They will develop a resource for all teachers to use. This ties in well as the kids are quite connected to the surrounding lands, with neighbourhood walks and activities at Uplands Park (led by Margaret Lidkea of Friends of Uplands Park).

Teachers are starting to work on report cards. These will be sent home on the last day of school before Christmas break (Friday, December 18th).

PAC Business:

Chair report, Cindy Rodier

Nothing at this time.

Discussion:

It was asked if the school has donated to Friends of Uplands Park. FOUP runs programs for kids at Willows where they plant native plants, scatter seed bombs and plant garry oak trees. Brenna indicated that the school did make a donation to FOUP last year.

It was asked if there is any way to celebrate the holidays within our school community, particularly including parents. Brenna and Dianne described the recent successful Remembrance Day ceremony held over Zoom, which was watched by children in their individual classrooms. The school will consider privacy issues and research what a video celebration could look like, but are hopeful that there will be something to share with parents.

It was asked if the wearing of masks will be requested of parents during drop off and pick up times. Brenna recently send out a reminder to parents to maintain physical distancing during drop off and pick up, which is the most important thing we can do to keep everyone safe. She noted more parents wearing masks this week. The wearing of masks can not be mandated, but the school could draft a recommendation if there is a desire for one.

The next PAC meeting is on January 20th, 2021, 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm Via Zoom