

The Montessori School of Winston Salem Community Meeting

MINUTES

NOV 16 2006

6.00PM – 8.00PM

THE MONTESSORI SCHOOL

FACILITATOR	Shona Simpson
NOTE TAKER	Anu Williams
TIMEKEEPER	Mark Strauss –Cohn

The meeting was called to order by Angela Manning, the Interim Head of School. She welcomed all presented and said the Community Meeting will be held every month and everybody within and outside the Community are welcomed to attend. As per the guidelines of the Community meeting it will not be led by the HOS, a Board member or any staff member. A facilitator from the Parent Community will be appointed to facilitate the proceedings. She introduced Shona Simpson who had agreed earlier to act as the facilitator.

Shona Simpson then called on Dan Pfeiffer to give a quick overview about the Community Meeting. Dan summarized the characteristics of the meeting, which is a condensation of a document by Tim Seldin. Some key characteristics are: There will be a basic agenda, allow every voice to be heard, nothing personal will be discussed everyone participates as an equal. The condensed version is attached to the minutes.

It was also clarified that only policy related matters will be referred to the Board for its consideration and approval. Actions for other issues will be voted by the community using the “five finger voting process”.

The meeting was informed that the Blue Printing is still in progression but the latest version can be viewed at the school’s web site www.wsmontessori.org. The Blue Print is accessible to everyone and can be used as tool of reference or “constitution” of our community. There will be several more meetings to finalize the Blue Print and the dates will be made known shortly. Everyone is welcomed in the process to finalize the document.

Agenda topics:

10 mins

PARENT AMBASSADORS

HOLLY TOSCO

DISCUSSION	<p>Holly talked the Open House for Prospective Parents that will be held from Nov to March .She requested for parents to volunteer to sign up as Parent Ambassadors for these sessions. The Parent Ambassador will be part of group and may be invited to share their experience with the school and the program and show prospective parents around the school. It was suggested that parents write testimonials and these can be posted at the school’s website and in the information package that are given to prospective parents. Also quotes made by parents and students from the Open House meetings can also be used for marketing in the future.</p> <p>There was also a suggestion for calling cards to be given to parents who can then pass them out in the community. There was a request that parents continue to act as ambassadors on their own time as well outside the school</p>
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	<p>established in the community and is tied to Winston Salem which is rich in history, culture, arts and academics. Several questions were asked if we want to change the name and if there is a need to change the name. Financially this may be good time to change the name as we do not have very many administrative items to change, like letterheads, name cards, etc. A new name will also give us an opportunity to share our changes with the community by making a press announcement.</p> <p>The question was raised if we needed to seek the Board's approval to change the name. Some felt this was not necessary as this was not a policy decision, others felt that it would be better if we had the approval from the Board before embarking on the process to find a new name.</p>	
CONCLUSIONS	The Community voted to seek the Board's approval to change the name of the school.	
ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
The Board will respond to this item of the minutes	The Board	One week

5MINS

SCHOOL T-SHIRTS

VALERIE BROCKENBROUGH

DISCUSSION	<p>Valerie presented the idea to have a T-shirt made for the school with the words "Peace, Love, and Montessori. She was seeking approval from the Community to go ahead with this project. This idea was supported by many who felt this would be great way to promote the school's identity. Also this could be a marketing tool nationally if we owned the patent for the T-shirt. Valerie said that although her company will oversee the project, it will be non profit venture for her and all proceeds will go the school. In order to prevent overstocking, sale of T-shirts can be done twice a year. Different designs, like long sleeves shirts, sweat shirts in child and adult sizes will be made available. T-shirts can also be worn during fieldtrips by the children for easy identification as well.</p>	
CONCLUSIONS	The Community voted and a five finger approval was given	
ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Valerie to proceed with the project	Valerie	Next Qtr

5 MINS

PEACE ROSE BOOK

VALERIE BROCKENBROUGH

DISCUSSION	<p>Anu and Kay, the CH teachers gave a short demonstration on how the peace rose is used in the classroom. Valerie proposed that the children put together a short story demonstrating the use of the peace rose. She will then publish</p>	
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this as a simple book that can be given away to prospective parents. She did not envisage high costs here as she said that the printing process can be kept simple. It was suggested that this book can be posted on the school's web site and not necessarily have to be part of the Information Package. Mary Lou said that there is already a book on the Peace Rose available and we can look at that for ideas. It was felt that since it will require the teachers to facilitate the program it will be good to discuss this idea with the teachers first. Angela also suggested that perhaps this could be incorporated into the lesson plan for the next year, when a suitable time /occasion can be set aside by the teachers to work the book.

CONCLUSIONS It was agreed that Valerie will talk to the teachers first.

ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Valerie to meet with the teachers to present the idea.	Valerie	Next mtg

10 MINS FRONT OF SCHOOL SECURITY RUTH WINING

DISCUSSION Ruthi expressed concern about the fact the front door of the school especially after school hours is left unmonitored. While she appreciated the care and safety measures adopted by the teachers in charge of the After School Care Program, she was still uncomfortable with the idea that anybody could walk into building unnoticed. She wanted to know if it would be wise to impose some security system within the school. A parent said that she enjoyed the free access to the school now and she feels that we are safe community. To impose restrictions on movements would only send out negative vibrations. Another parent expressed concern that most of the time people only tend to remember the negative events that have taken place like one plane crash in a year but fail to note that there thousands of planes that take off and land safely every day. He felt that the by imposing safety systems we are only encouraging the fear culture. There were also several parents who voiced that there is a need to have safety measures in place especially after school hours. Angela felt that it was not always possible to keep a look out for persons walking through the front door, short of hiring someone to man the front desk ten hours a day. A buzzer or key pads were suggested.

A parent who felt strongly against the idea of imposing security monitoring, quoted Benjamin Franklin" If you give up liberty for security, you deserve neither".

After much discussion there was a general consensus that perhaps a fact finding team comprising a member of the Board, teacher, parent and an administrative person be set up to come up with options and costing.

CONCLUSIONS The Community voted and a five finger approval was given to take up this issue with the Board. The Board is to look into security after school hours.

ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
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5MINS

MILK PROGRAM

WENDY BARTLETT

DISCUSSION	Wendy wanted to know if there any plans for a Milk Program to be implemented. She said she rather pay a few cents to make sure that milk is available everyday for a son than to run out late a night to replenish her supply at home. There was another parent who enquired about plans for a school lunch program as well. Angela said that while she has received several requests. A comment was made that school lunches also tend to lack the variety that home made lunches provided. Children are picky eaters and it would be good for parents to experiment new tastes with their children. Also wastage can also be minimized.	
CONCLUSIONS	It was agreed that a sub committee will look into various possibilities of implementing Milk Program to start with.	
ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Wendy to coordinate	Wendy	Next mtg

SPECIAL NOTES	<p>Wendy Bartlett suggested that items on the agenda be allocated a time. This will ensure that no one topic dominates the meeting .If we go above the time allocation ,then a vote can betaken to add another five or ten more minutes to the discussion or to be tabled for the next meeting. This was adopted after the first item on the agenda.</p> <p>All agreed that the Community Meeting will replace the PIE.</p>
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