

## Minutes

Committee for School as is, with Revisions

Monday, May 7, 2007

Peacham Elementary School

Present: Cathy Browne, Debra Vogini, Neal Gombas, JoAnne Post

Meeting called to order at 4:35pm.

We approved the minutes of April 11.

Debra reported on conversation regarding the possibility of developing affordable housing with Ed Stretch of the Gilman Housing Trust. A housing market feasibility study would need to be conducted and authorized by the town, and would cost in the range of \$5,000. This has been done in other towns, for example Glover. There is also a program for home ownership, which is called the Land Trust Model, in which the land is not taxed and is restricted in resale. There is also tax relief in the form of income-sensitive rebates. George Mathias could be asked to come and talk to us about this program. A feasibility study would also be done for this program. This may include how many students would need to be added to the town to make enrollment for the school be viable. We will email/talk to Gib Parrish of the town planning commission to see if there is any interest. Debra will contact Ed for contact information for George Mathias.

We discussed the town selectboard's concerns for leasing space from the school, such as changes in enrollment, space available, and costs. Other concerns mentioned by JoAnne are safety issues for students with many more adults in and out of the building. Cathy will talk with Wendy Olcott and staff at Peacham school to determine what possible space is available.

Discussed whether or not there is a cost savings in special education with smaller class sizes. JoAnne has had conversations with other towns, and there appears to be a wide swing in costs in smaller towns, depending on special needs populations. A small number of high needs students can dramatically alter a budget in this area. In Winhall, with total school choice, special education costs are twice as high as before, due to multiple locations, additional personnel, and transportation costs. There is no provision in state law for designating an elementary school; therefore Winhall is a voucher town. Cathy will talk with Judy Eklund, CCSU Special Education Coordinator, about her perspectives on class sizes and special education costs.

Considered other ways to encourage use of the school building and grounds as a community space. We discussed the possibility of the school board appointing a committee, similar to the Friends of the Library and the Town's Economic committee, which could seek and coordinate grant funding, and coordinate use of the school building and grounds for community groups. This could be expanded to for-profit organizations, such as farmers' markets.

We discussed concerns for efficient energy use of the building. JoAnne explained that Efficiency Vermont has completed a recent energy audit.

We discussed ways to encourage and/or promote unique programs at Peacham, such as PLP's, and laptop computer programs. JoAnne will talk with the board about lowering the announced tuition rate.

Meeting adjourned at 5:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Browne