

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

Special Meeting

Monday, September 22, 2003

Called by order of His Honor, Mayor Michael A. Sullivan, acting in accordance with Chapter I, Section 3.3, of the Rules of the School Committee for 5:30 p.m., for a roundtable meeting of the School Committee and the City Council for the purpose of dialogue and discussion, including an update on the new main library.

School Committee Members Present: Alfred Fantini, Joseph Grassi, Richard Harding, Jr., Alan Price, Alice Turkel, Nancy Walser, Mayor Michael Sullivan

City Councilors Present: Vice Mayor Henrietta Davis, Marjorie Decker, Anthony Galluccio, David Maher, Brian Murphy, Kenneth Reeves, E. Denise Simmons, Timothy Toomey, Mayor Sullivan

Also Present: City Manager Robert Healy, Deputy City Manager Richard Rossi

Mayor Sullivan in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee and City Council being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 5:50 p.m.

The Chair introduced and welcomed Dr. Thomas Fowler-Finn, the new Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Fowler-Finn was heard. The Chair turned the meeting over to Mr. Healy and Mr. Rossi who introduced Alan Burne and the library design team.

Vice Mayor Davis asked that the Superintendent entertain questions from the Council since he has to leave early to attend a parent forum. The superintendent responded to some of the Councilors' questions and comments, including the following:

- The School Department should have an on-going role and be part of the process on the library design
- A comprehensive technology and an at-risk program are needed
- Development of small schools was the right way to go
- What strategies will be put in place to help children of color close the achievement gap
- What are some methods of outreach to disenfranchised families
- How will the community be engaged to bring families back to public school
- School Committee and City Council need to be more engaged other than at budget time
- Look at ways to use resources in the community
- Teacher morale needs to be strengthened
- Concerned about charter schools coming to Cambridge Public Schools
- Concerned re families who cannot leave public school system
- Find a way to organize information and resources that are available
- Concerned about special education
- Hope there will be a partnership between the high school and the library
- Hope to see stronger partnerships between out-of-school time and adult education
- Let the Councilors know how they can help
- Looking forward to all schools and all students being treated equally
- Make RSTA program as successful as possible
- This school system does not have representation from all groups in all areas
- Music offerings are too low
- This system is unable to produce academic excellence for Black and Latino males
- Make use of college resources to help math, science and technology

The Superintendent responded to some of the Councilors questions and comments.

The Chair turned the meeting over to Alan Burne and the design team who presented the current plans for the new library.

At this time, the Superintendent and some School Committee Members excused themselves to attend the aforementioned Parent Forum.

Respectfully submitted
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw
Executive Secretary to the School Committee