

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

Special Informal Meeting

Wednesday, February 9, 2005

Called by Mayor Michael A. Sullivan in accordance with Chapter I, Section 3 of the Rules of the School Committee, immediately following the Budget Sub-Committee meeting, in the Culinary Conference Room, Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, for a presentation on the use of vacant school buildings.

Members Present: Mr. Fantini, Mr. Grassi, Mr. Harding, Mr. Lummis, Mr. McGovern, Ms. Walser

Mr. Harding in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 p.m. and turned the meeting over to the Superintendent.

The Superintendent corrected a statement made earlier stating that the cost of renovating the Upton Street building is not a \$10 million budget item, it would be bonded.

The Superintendent and staff responded to some of the following questions, comments, and concerns raised by the Members:

- What is the process for using an empty building before it reverts back to the city
- What information does the Committee need to make an informed decision on the use of a vacant building
- Need more information on the lease at 159 Thorndike and the cost of h repairs
- What is the timeframe for decision-making on buildings
- Process should happen sooner rather than later
- The SMMA facilities analysis does not meet our needs
- Look at 5-year facilities plan and include other offices that are not in the SMMA study
- Keep learning space and administrative space separate
- If there are plans for an early childhood center, could it go into either one of these buildings
- This is a sloppy study
- What does sustainable building mean
- Don't let time spent on building usage throw us off the track of academic achievement
- Need to know if moving central administration is a priority before we move forward
- The Superintendent should bring forward a recommendation

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to suspend the Rules to extend the meeting past 10:00 p.m.

- Schedule two public hearings after the budget and then receive a recommendation
- Figure out what we need to advance our academic goals
- Form a committee with the School Committee, City Council and the neighborhood
- Identify educational needs first
- How does the bond issue work
- What are the current and future needs of the school system
- What are the pros and cons of putting administration in the Longfellow building
- What process would Community Development use

It was agreed that the Vice Chair would draft a motion asking that, prior to a recommendation, the Superintendent report back to the School Committee with the necessary educational needs for the use of

the two vacant buildings; background information required for informed decision-making; a timeline on the use of space; and a process that would involve the necessary parties for participation.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to adjourn (10:45 p.m.).

Adjourned
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw
Executive Secretary to the School Committee