

MINUTES
RYE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
JOINT BOARD OF EDUCATION /
RYE CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Rye Middle School Multipurpose Room
April 12, 2008

Present

Mr. James Culyer, *President* BOE
Mr. Joshua Nathan, *Vice President* BOE
Ms. Kendall Egan, BOE
Mr. Edward Fox, BOE
Ms. Laura Slack, BOE
Mr. Robert Zahm, BOE

Mr. Steven Otis, Mayor
Mr. Andrew C. Ball, Councilman
Mr. Mack Cunningham, Councilman
Ms. Paula J. Gamache, Councilwoman
Ms. Catherine F. Parker, Councilwoman
Mr. George S. Pratt, Councilman
Mr. Joseph A. Sack, Councilman

And Dr. Edward Shine, Superintendent of Schools
Mr. O. Paul Shew, City Manager
Mr. Scott Pickup, Assistant City Manager
Mr. William Connors, Police Commissioner
Mr. William Rodriguez, Recreation Dept. Supervisor
Mr. Brian Dempsey, Chair, Traffic and Transportation Committee

Mr. Culyer called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The City Clerk called the roll for both boards.

1. Traffic and Safety

Mr. Culyer asked Mayor Otis to give an overview on what the City has done in connection with the topic of discussion. The Mayor said that the City has a long history of working with the schools on the issues of traffic and safety. A joint study was conducted by Traffic and Transportation Committee Chair Brian Dempsey's firm TRC Engineers, Inc. in 2000-01 and the study has been updated recently in order to look for solutions for flow and drop off patterns on campuses. The City has joined with the YMCA and other organizations in the Activate America Program and created the Temporary Trails and Traffic Safety Committee that applied for a grant from the Safe Routes to School Program. The City Council also decided to divide the Post Road Diet project into three sections in order to accelerate the work on the section closest to the High School. He said the City is concerned with minimizing children crossing streets and wants to work with the School District on having them dropped off on campus or on a street abutting the campus. Mr. Culyer said the School District is cognizant of student safety and it has been a consideration in every school renovation project because once the children are on campus they are the school's responsibility.

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Mr. Dempsey said that his firm performed traffic counts in the area of the Middle School/High School and it has been determined that there is a 15 minute problem around the schools in the morning at drop off time and in the afternoon at dismissal time. Since no one other than staff can enter the middle school property after 7:30 a.m. and most of the drop off zone is not used, traffic backs up onto the Post Road for approximately ten minutes. The Police Officer or Parking Enforcement Officer at the Milton Road/Apawamis Avenue intersection currently directs traffic from four directions and parents continue to drop children off in the middle of Milton Road. Mr. Dempsey then presented two options for changing traffic flow patterns around the Middle School/High School during drop off and pick up times. Both plans call for an expansion of the current drop off area on Parsons Street; the addition of bollards on Milton Road at Apawamis Avenue; prohibition of left turns from Apawamis Avenue onto Milton Road; the addition of a crosswalk on Apawamis Avenue and construction of a right turn slip ramp onto Milton Road beyond the tennis courts. The plans differ in the following ways:

Option "A" would:

- Allow traffic into and out of the Middle School parking lot entrance on Parsons Street;
- Reverse the flow of traffic into the school property at Milton Road.

Option "B" would:

- Drop off traffic on Parsons Street would enter and exit at different locations;
- Create a new driveway on Milton Road that would maintain the current traffic pattern at the Milton/Apawamis area.

Mr. Dempsey also noted that no matter what is done, there would always be congestion with cars. He suggested encouraging children to walk and bicycle to school at a younger age and also to arrive at school earlier when there is less traffic. Dr. Shine said that the Safe Routes Committee is encouraging a return to children walking to school. He said children now walk through the parking lots to get to the buildings and this must be considered if drop off on campus is increased. He warned that traffic and pedestrian safety must be considered together when considering options.

In the ensuing discussion, the following points were raised:

- The School District is not in a position to consider staggered scheduling;
- The School Board must be given latitude to fix on-campus issues;
- Changing traffic flow patterns is a "painful process" that must be accompanied by education and enforcement;
- The City can install crosswalks and signage;
- The City has already implemented a police/parking enforcement officer presence at Milton/Apawamis intersection and is proceeding with the Boston Post Road diet;

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- Changing patterns from driving to school back to walking to school could take years;
- The people of the community want some action taken.

There was a consensus of both Boards that one of the options presented by Mr. Dempsey should be implemented as a pilot program in September and they should work together to present plans. Mr. Culyer, on behalf of the Board, stated that the priority of any planning should be on student and pedestrian safety above other concerns. The School Board will forward suggestions to its architect and follow up with a work session and will then notify the City Council of an option to implement. Mayor Otis thanked Mr. Dempsey for his time, availability and expertise.

Mr. Fox moved and Ms. Egan seconded the motion at 10:20 a.m., to adjourn into Executive Session to discuss matters of litigation.

Mr. Culyer moved and Mayor Otis seconded the motion to reconvene in public at 11:27 a.m.

There being no further business, Mr. Culyer moved and Mayor Otis seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:28 a.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Edward J. Shine
Superintendent of Schools