

INFORMAL MINUTES OF
Joint Meeting of the City Council of the City of Rye and the
School Board of the City of Rye
1051 Boston Post Road, Rye New York
April 9, 2011 9:00 A.M.

PRESENT:

Mr. Douglas French, Mayor

Council Members:

Ms. Paula J. Gamache

Mr. Peter Jovanovich

Ms. Suzanna Keith

Ms. Catherine F. Parker

Mr. Joseph A. Sack

Mr. Scott Pickup, City Manager

Ms. Sally Rogol, Recreation Superintendent

Mr. Brian Dempsey, Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Committee Chair

Ms. Maureen Gomez and Mr. Steve Cadenhead, Shared Roadways Committee

Ms. Helen Gates, Safe Routes to School Committee

Board of Education Members

Mr. Joshua Nathan, *President*

Ms. Laura Slack, *Vice President*

Ms. Kendall Egan

Mr. Edward Fox

Ms. Katy Keohane Glassberg

Ms. Young Kim

Mr. Raymond Schmitt

Dr. Edward Shine, Superintendent of Schools

Ms. Kathleen Ryan, School District Business Manager

ABSENT:

Council Member:

Mr. Richard Filippi

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor French called the meeting to order and invited the Council to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call

The meeting commenced with a roll call for both Boards.

Mayor French said the public expects the City and School District to work together and great progress has been made and this agenda should move that progress forward. Board President Nathan echoed the Mayor's comments saying that the partnership between the two boards is excellent.

3. Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Initiatives Update

- Summary on the completion of the stimulus projects adjacent to the schools.

Brian Dempsey, Chair of the Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Committee, said that the five stimulus projects were basically done with a couple of minor clean up projects that will be completed in the Spring. Improvements included: replacement of the traffic signal outside City Hall; a cross walk and bump outs were put in at Midland Avenue and Palisade Road; new crosswalk and pedestrian signals were put in at Playland Parkway and Forest Avenue; a new sidewalk was put in along the Boston Post Road near Johnson and Hannan Place; and the repair and installation of a sidewalk system on Oakland Beach Avenue. The City is looking at other issues now relative to an increase in students at Osborn School that causes additional traffic backups.

- Shared Roadways Initiatives: new project identification process, road sharrows

Maureen Gomez of the Shared Roadways Committee said that the Shared Roadways Committee had been formed in 2010 to examine the roadways in Rye from the perspective of all users. They utilize the Five Es from the Safe Routes to School model (Engineering, Enforcement, Encouragement, Education and Evaluation) as a guiding principle. This year they are emphasizing education and encouragement. Education must extend to all users of the roadways. The philosophy of the Shared Roadways Committee is to analyze the targeted user groups by observation to determine potential projects. Observations and suggestions regarding the different schools were presented:

Osborn School

- Parents and children should be encouraged to walk to the crosswalk and not cross at Sonn Drive.
- Homeowners should be asked to remove shrubbery that encroaches into the sidewalks.
- The utility pole that blocks sight lines and also blocks sidewalks should be moved.
- Children should be educated about the rules of bicycling on roads.

Midland School

- The center crosswalk could be removed and replaced with two crosswalks, one at the North end and one at the South end of the school.
- Some crosswalks on Forest Avenue are faded beyond recognition.

- The five points intersection on Midland Avenue and the rotary near Citibank are confusing and dangerous.

Milton School

- There is no pedestrian crossing signal at the corner of Oakland Beach Avenue and Milton Road on the sidewalk side of Oakland Beach Avenue at the corner near La Panetierre Restaurant.
- Something should be done to let pedestrians know that there is oncoming traffic coming through the crosswalk at that intersection due to the left turn signal.
- The crosswalk at the intersection of Forest and Hewlett Avenues should be moved to the South side.
- Look at putting a crosswalk across Dearborn Avenue.

High School/Middle School

- Due to sun glare parents drift into the crosswalks. Put up portable bollards in the crosswalk that can be removed after morning drop off.
- Many children from Forest Avenue and Grace Church Street use the Eve Lane cut through. The path and stairs are in disrepair and should be made safer.
- Test the use of crossing flags at the worst crossings.

It was suggested that a new list of projects should be drawn up and ranked according to priority.

Steve Cadenhead of the Shared Roadways Committee said that the Committee has three prongs of activities: programs, policies and projects. They are compiling a list of projects to be prioritized that will be brought to the Council with their recommendations in May. They are focusing on school safety projects, but also taking a long-term look at projects for safety and enjoyment in Rye. The Committee will also address a sidewalk policy and a Complete Streets policy. Mr. Cadenhead provided an overview of “sharrows” which are markings placed on roadways to indicate to motorists that the road will be shared by both cars and bikes. They also provide an indication to bicyclists as to where they should ride. Sharrows are included in the most recent edition of the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices. The Committee is working with staff to determine pilot locations for sharrows.

- Safe Routes to Schools Initiatives

Helen Gates of the Safe Routes to School Committee provided a summary of the 2010-2011 accomplishments of the Committee in the schools and in the community in the areas of education and encouragement. The Committee wants to create awareness and encourage responsible behavior by both drivers and school children to bring about safer walking and driving in the community. Behaviors that should be encouraged include: complying with the speed limit, crossing in crosswalks and turning off phones while driving. Ms. Gates also spoke about the Walking School Bus Program that is used in Larchmont, where children, carrying a large sign with the name of their school bus, go from house to house, accompanied by a parent or other adult, picking up children as they walk to school. A pilot Walking School Bus program will be kicked off for the elementary schools in Rye in the next few weeks.

A suggestion was made that it might be a good time to bring back the Youth Advisory Committee to get them involved with safety projects. It was also suggested that the City should analyze roads prior to repaving them to determine any opportunities to widen them and provide additional shoulder areas in the right-of-ways.

4. Discussion on a joint statement on mandate relief

In January, the School Board adopted a Resolution saying that any tax cap proposal adopted by the State Assembly should include unfunded mandate relief. The two Boards discussed a proposal to pass a joint Resolution opposing the proposed tax cap, especially if it is adopted without mandate relief. It was the consensus that the two Boards would review the proposed Resolution, circulate any proposed changes and vote on the Resolution at their next meetings.

5. Review of fields and facilities management scheduling and IMA

Sally Rogol, City Recreation Superintendent and Kathleen Ryan, School District Business Manager, discussed their work on coordinating the use of fields. Ms. Ryan said the schools currently do not have an automated system for scheduling the use of space. She said they are looking at a program to manage the fields electronically in a cooperative effort with the Recreation Department. Ms. Rogol added that they are looking to streamline the process to make it more efficient and are looking at products to use as a shared resource. It is hoped that a new system can be in place by September.

6. Modified Drugs, Alcohol, and Safety Program Outline

Dr. Shine reported that four days in the late Spring have been designated for Detective Wood to come into the schools and meet with the fifth graders to go through four major topics: alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and internet safety. A key issue is for the children to recognize that the police are their friends and are there to protect and defend. Having Detective Wood in the schools at the fifth grade level is a way of building a long-term relationship with the children. The School District will also be working with Commissioner Connors and Detective Wood during the summer to look at places where Detective Wood can get involved with the Elementary and Middle Schools next year. City Manager Pickup added that there has also been discussion about other topics that may be included such as safe walking to school and distracted driving and, therefore, the curriculum may be adjusted in the future. He said this is an attempt to adapt the program to fit better into the school calendar.

It was suggested that research has shown that having the DARE Program in the fifth grade is too early and that the program might be better suited to the Middle School aged student with other topics being more appropriate for the fifth grade level such as appropriate use of cell phones.

7. Executive Session

Mayor French made a motion, seconded by Councilman Jovanovich and unanimously carried to adjourn into Executive Session to discuss personnel at 11:05 a.m.

Councilwoman Keith made a motion, seconded by Councilwoman Gamache and unanimously carried to adjourn the Executive Session at 11:27 a.m.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss Councilwoman Keith made a motion, seconded by Councilwoman Gamache and unanimously carried, to adjourn the meeting at 11:27 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn F. Nodarse
City Clerk