

QUINCY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING ~ May 30, 2018

A meeting of the Policy Subcommittee was held on Wednesday, May 30, 2018 at 6:45 pm in the Coddington Building. Present were Mayor Thomas Koch, Mr. Anthony Andronico, Mr. Douglas Gutro, Mrs. Kathryn Hubley, Mrs. Emily Lebo, and Mr. Paul Bregoli, Chair. Also attending were Superintendent Richard DeCristofaro, Deputy Superintendent Kevin Mulvey; Ms. Allison Cox, Quincy Education Association President; Mr. Scott Alessandro, Citywide Parent Council Co-President; and Ms. Laura Owens, Clerk.

The first item on the agenda is consideration of a name for the new middle school being built to replace the Sterling Middle School. Dr. DeCristofaro reviewed the history, the building was named South Junior High School when it opened in 1924. In 1963, Principal Reay A. Sterling passed away and School Committee voted to name the school in his memory. Dr. DeCristofaro suggested that with the new building, this is an opportunity to return to the geographic name.

Dr. DeCristofaro reviewed that Mr. Sterling's widow and two of their three children have passed away. Dr. DeCristofaro spoke to a grandson, Mr. Glen Sterling, who was happy to hear about the plan to name the library in the new building for Mr. Sterling. Mr. Sterling has not followed up with contact information for his aunt, Ms. Ann Sterling, who is still alive.

Mayor Koch noted that all of the other Quincy Public Schools are geographically named and this would make sense for the neighborhood to bring the new school back in line with the rest of the city. Mayor Koch said the School Committee minutes from 1963 detail the discussion that ranged over several meetings and the vote was not unanimous. Mr. Sterling was a well-respected teacher and principal and it is appropriate to name the library in his honor to keep his legacy alive. The new school and park upgrades will be a huge lift to the neighborhood. In his experience as the Park Department director, there were guidelines about contributions to the community and a 6-month waiting period before memorializing a recent death.

Mr. Bregoli asked for suggestions for the new name. Mayor Koch said Southwest Middle School is one idea. Dr. DeCristofaro said South Middle School has also been suggested.

Mr. Gutro agreed with the importance of the geographic name and noted that most, but not all, elementary schools have geographic names. Mr. Gutro asked if there is a possibility of revisiting other schools that are named after people. Mr. Gutro asked if the students and families have been polled about their opinion, the city recently conducted a poll about opening the Independence Avenue gate for access to the Quincy Adams MBTA station.

Dr. DeCristofaro said that informal conversations have happened with the school administrators and staff.

Mayor Koch said that polling the neighborhood about the Independence Avenue gate was important because of the neighborhood impact potential. Mayor Koch noted that the Clifford Marshal Elementary School was built next door to the Pollard Elementary School site without any public input on the name.

Mrs. Lebo likes the idea of the geographic name, noting that students who have graduated from Sterling will be reluctant to give up on the name. Mrs. Lebo noted that the Bernazzani Elementary School was named in memory of a principal and many still refer to it as the Furnace Brook Elementary School. Mrs. Lebo suggested that the Student Building Committee be involved in the discussion.

Mr. Bregoli said he doesn't know how to assess the opinion of the neighbors, this is a big neighborhood district. Mr. Bregoli is hoping the Policy Subcommittee will come to an agreement on a name change and bring it back to School Committee for a vote.

Mrs. Lebo asked that the name be discussed at Sterling and Lincoln Hancock PTO meetings and with the staff through the Quincy Education Association.

Mrs. Hubley agrees with Mr. Bregoli, would like to move the name change forward to the full School Committee.

Mr. Andronico motioned for the name change to Southwest Middle School be brought forward to School Committee for consideration. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Hubley, and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

The next item on the agenda is a proposal to post the School Committee Policy Book online for School Committee review through the Google Docs platform. Ms. Owens shared a sample of Policy Book Chapter 2 and demonstrated how different reviewer comments are visible. A link would be posted on the School Committee Policy Book page on the Quincy Public Schools website, so the reviewer comments could be seen by the public. Each School Committee member will receive a Google logon connected to their Quincy Public Schools email account.

Mr. Gutro requested information on whether any public body has done something similar, and whether there are legal concerns. Mr. Gutro would still like the opportunity to discuss suggested changes in Subcommittee. Under the Policy Book process, all proposed edits would be discussed and voted at Policy Subcommittee and then brought forward to full School Committee for vote.

Mrs. Lebo supports the idea and doesn't mind being a pioneer in the online review process.

Mr. Bregoli asked Mr. Mulvey to research and provide a legal opinion.

Mrs. Hubley made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 pm. Mr. Andronico seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.