

## Neighborhood Liaison Committee

May 25, 2023

In attendance: Rachel E. Skiffer, Mary Fahey, Jason Langkammerer, Jerry Mullaney, Paige Berardo, Sarah Holliman, Anne Purcell, David Gross, Rodney Thompson,, Ana Gomez, Amber Childress

### Introductions and New Members

Mary Fahey introduced Ana Gomez, Director of Operations at Head-Royce School who will be taking her place on this committee after her retirement. Rachel Skiffer shared that these meetings happen twice a year. Jerry added that we've held them for the past 20 years.

Amber Childress introduced herself as Chief of Staff for Councilmember Ramachandran, Oakland City Council District 4 representative.

Jason shared that former Neighborhood Steering Committee (NSC) member, Karen Caronna, is leaving this group. Anne Purcell is her proposed replacement.

### Summer Program

Mary Fahey explained that HRS will have a scaled back summer program this year in that we are only running the Heads Up program. We will invite one hundred and twenty (120) 6th, 7th and 8th graders to campus between June 19–July 14 from 8:00 am – 3:45 pm. HRS will have one bus servicing summer students and a third of students will use the bus. We are planning one evening event for Heads Up. Students will no longer be on campus after July 14.

Rodney expressed concern about the use of amplified sound such as bullhorns, etc. He asked about “bounce houses.” Mary replied that there will not be any lower school aged students present and therefore no bouncy houses and will not be using a bullhorn.

Rodney asked if we've educated staff and parents about drop off and pick ups. Mary responded that we have. Training has occurred with parents and we will have full staff out to ensure good behavior.

Anne asked about the academic schedule for the fall. Mary responded that school starts on August 21 and we will have students participating in school athletics on campus beginning August 7.

### Vegetation Management / Wildfire Evacuation

Jerry Mullaney explained that HRS has been working year round on vegetation management. Over the last few years we have "doubled down," constantly keeping levels of grasses and other growth low. We have at least one person doing it every day on campus. This time of year we have 2-3 people working on vegetation management. These people are currently working on the Charleston corner on North Campus. We are heading into fire and inspection season and fire marshals will visit. He feels ready for them to come. Inspections are unannounced but usually happen around June 1. These have gone smoothly every year.

Anne has noticed that some eucalyptus trees have been removed (around the top of lot F) and asked if there is a plan to remove more? Jerry replied that we have removed several trees this year (preemptively due to the wind and rain this year) and we either removed or significantly pruned 28 eucalyptus trees already which costs the School between \$5-10K per tree. All in all, HRS has spent a couple hundred thousand on trees and expects to annually spend six figures every year on tree removal and maintenance. These are steadily being removed and there is an informal plan to remove all eucalyptus over the next 5-10 years. This is expensive but HRS is on track to accomplishing it.

Rodney asked about the row of eucalyptus along Lincoln Ave. Jerry responded that those trees are a priority for removal. Their location is how they are prioritized. HRS has already taken off branches of those trees and has removed 8-10 from that area already—the rest are designated a high priority for removal.

With regards to the Wildfire Evacuation Drill a week ago, Jerry reported that he was pleased it went so well. All students left their classrooms when the drill began and went to the gym and then dispersed from there. Some left the gym via the back driveway and Whittle Gate and some left by the middle gate on Lincoln Avenue. This helped HRS develop additional muscle memory to feel prepared to evacuate campus in an orderly fashion, if needed. In a real emergency, Jerry explained, we would walk to Diamond Park or a safe zone near the tennis courts.

Rodney asked if we engaged the fire department in the drill. Jerry responded that members of the Oakland Fire Department were on site. A hook and ladder was out front. Rodney asked if we will do a full evacuation trial to the final rally points. Jerry wanted to discuss this internally before answering as it may not be necessary. Jerry recommended HRS consult with experts to determine need. Rodney said "practice makes perfect." He thinks there would be a lot of risk to neighbors in a real evacuation.

Anne asked if anyone has considered a "snow day" (e.g., a fire day)? Specifically, if there is a high wind / high risk day, would the School consider canceling classes? Rachel Skiffer responds, yes, and for bad air days, too. Rachel explained that we have and are prepared to not have kids come to campus if the risk is high. Our policy, Jerry said, if there is for example a PSPS day, we won't have school that day. Mary further explained that HRS has built those days into our School calendar so that if we need to cancel a day we still have plenty of school days left. Jerry clarified

that if there is a PSPS day, we would automatically cancel school. We would consider canceling school on other high risk days on a case basis.

## **End of School Year Plans**

Mary Fahey explained that the last day of class is Wednesday, June 7 and that on the next Thursday, Friday and Saturday, we will host graduation ceremonies. All ceremonies will begin at 10:00 am. The Lower School ceremony will last approximately one hour. The Middle School ceremony will last a little longer than Lower School. And finally, the Upper School graduation will last between two and two and a half hours. We will provide valet parking for Middle and Upper School events. We will also offer the Greek Church parking lot to our families and will have parking monitors outside to support good behavior. Guests will arrive starting at 9.

## **Campus Access After Hours and on Weekends**

Jerry Mullaney asked both Rodney and Anne for input about campus access. He said he is aware that some neighbors may want access to the campus to exercise or walk the dog. Yet, campus has been closed for COVID for the last couple of years. Jerry said we are amenable to declaring COVID behind us, but need to be cautious with regards to theft and burglaries. There were burglaries on campus many years ago and IT equipment was taken. We shifted to 24/7 security to respond to the higher risks. Now with the security team, we monitor campus with cameras and security patrols and we don't permit people on campus who aren't identified as having campus business or being within our community. There have been some encounters with neighbors who have wandered onto campus and were asked to leave. There was a time when they used to be able to access campus. We want to be welcoming to the neighborhood but also need to protect the School and our community. How can we do both at the same time? Jerry offered the suggestion that after hours, neighbors be allowed on campus if they register with security at the Gatehouse and obtain a pass. Then our security team would know they'd be there. (Neighbors would not be allowed on campus during school hours). Jerry asked Rodney and Anne if they are hearing frustration about campus access from neighbors?

Rodney replied that he hadn't heard anything. He only hears complaints about noise and disruptions. More recently he has heard concerns about security on the South Campus. Rodney asked how HRS plans to manage security on South Campus over summer months? Anne added that they are hearing firework activity on South Campus which is a real concern over fire months. Rodney noted that there are usually a lot of loud bangs around 4th of July from South Campus. Can we keep security around July 4th to address concern/nuisance/risk. Rodney noted that a bottle rocket landed on his shed last year. Jerry said he was not aware of these issues and asked if they were reported?

Rodney responded no, that he hasn't felt that expressing concerns was helping, so hasn't been as diligent in reporting them.

Rachel Skiffer encouraged the neighborhood liaisons to report issues and reach out to us.

Anne responded that the hillside “lights up” around 4th of July. She asked, if they hear fireworks that seem to come from South Campus, on for example a Friday or Saturday night, who should she call?

Jerry responded to please call our Security number. He will also talk to Ana to coordinate an extra guard for the south campus over the July 4th timeframe. Jerry encouraged neighbors to work together with HRS to reduce incidents. Jerry encouraged Rodney to reach out to him directly—ensuring that HRS will take action.

Rodney asked, with regards to neighbors on campus, are we referring to the North Campus?

Jerry responded, yes. At this time there is only North Campus access, primarily the athletic field.

Rodney asked if we were to ask guests to register for access would it include pool and tennis courts? Jerry responded no on using the pool, yes on using tennis courts.

Anna asked what is the Security phone number? Rodney responded that he has it. Anne said that it is not well known where to find it. Mary replied that it is on our website.

Jerry added that folks can also call the main number after hours—510-531-1300—and a security guard will answer the phone and be able to help. No special security number is needed.

Rodney commented that both he and Karen did the majority of reporting. He would like to communicate to other neighborhood representatives what the security number is so they can reach out directly.

David asked whether HRS would share data captured on our cameras / if his organization could see footage?

Jerry said the cameras are not generally outward facing but we would be happy to share footage from those that are outward facing.

A discussion about increased crime such as stealing converters and muggings have been happening, some of which we are aware of and other things we are not.

Rodney asked Mary if there are any other School events planned for campus over the summer? Mary said yes, there will be small groups of kids shooting hoops and kicking a soccer ball around all on the North Side, but nothing else big.

## **Summer Projects - Jerry Mullaney**

Jerry reported that there are a lot of projects happening this summer but all of them are indoors, such as remodeling offices. We do not have any large (noisy) outdoor projects planned that would generate noise or outdoor impacts. We will resurface a sport court over the course of a week—an annual activity—but don't expect that to disrupt traffic or be loud.

## **South Campus Project Update**

Jason noted that HRS won approval from the Planning Commission and that an appeal was filed and that the City is now working through the appeal and looking ahead for the project to be heard at City Council. Jason asked if there are any specific asks from the NLC that we could address in order to remove the appeal?

Rodney said nothing he can speak to at this time.

The meeting was adjourned.