

Town Meeting

1-30-14

TOWN MEETING

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Precursors

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- SAB – No.
- Staff Meeting – Yes. We discussed capacity issues and HBW's role in that, virtual classes and their role in scheduling, and Junetime.

Announcements

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- Teen Author Workshop, Shirlington Library, TODAY, 4:30-5:30
- Les Miz is HERE! Tickets selling out. Buy them in Eleanor's room. Front row is the "action" row – get 'em now.
- Middle School Students! Afterschool Fun Club continues: Each Tuesday from 4 to 5:30. Sports, games, art, etc. Room 209 & Gym. Sponsored by Arlington Dept of Parks and Rec.
- H-B Woodlawn Donations to AFAC – 2707 pounds so far this year! Thanks for helping out the hungry at a time when the feds are slashing assistance programs. AFAC reports a 20% increase in need this winter.

Motions

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- Motion to create a committee to draft a letter to the School Board explaining HBW's position on the proposed "split" of middle and high schools and create a policy committee that explores overcrowding. Previously TABLED. Will's idea, but he wasn't here. WE should table it in light of new info and it might be better to make motions after discussion. Motion TABLED.
- MS Dance on March 7th from 6 to 8pm by the Class of 2014 – Zunair. Admission fee \$7. Coleman is the DJ. Let's not have a different price structure for couples. Casey says \$5 each should be sufficient. Are we actually having an argument about this. Is this what Town Meeting is like when a lot of people attend? This is ridiculous. Motion to close the speaker's list. Speakers' list is closed. Is it \$7 a person? Yes? Motion PASSES unanimously.

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Discussions

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- Continue discussion from last two weeks: County sent "More Seats for Students" survey to some parents which included a question about splitting HBW into middle and high school programs. Powerpoint issued Tuesday (see open window) showing options currently "on the table." We have a TM next Tuesday because of a switch in our schedule. When are they thinking about making a decision on this? The proposed timeline is: the County will make a final decision in June. What are the odds that one of these options (increasing our size, moving us, decoupling MS & HS) will actually happen? Have we talked to any School Board members? We do not know the odds. It is a possibility. We need to do what we can to help capacity problems, but we need to keep HBW as HBW. What are we actually planning to do? What are our options? If we move to a different space or expand, how would the culture of HBW be affected? What would the impact be, we need to find a way to articulate that. What can we, as students, do to help and do we have any say at all? That's our discussion for today, what are we gonna do? It's important that we speak as a united group. Absolutely there's something the students can do.
- Lizzie: We will be bringing this to SAB, bring 'em hell. Also, Margaret's committee, approved last week. Eleanor: In no other case are they looking at a change that would dramatically alter the character of the program. What can we do? Answer the question. Tell them what this would mean for us. Respond to

each one of these. Say: here is our response, and here are our questions. Mary: help with the solution, we are a part of Arlington schools. Amanda: It would be valuable, if we're going to find a solution, to have a group of parents, students, and teachers. Remy: Why don't they just put a new school in a leased building instead of moving us to one? Casey: Wakefield is still under capacity. They're trying to think of ways to make it more populated, like giving it an IB program. Joe: we need to look at the positives. If we get boosted by 600, the culture is threatened. But sometimes it's okay to sacrifice the culture and livelihood of H-B Woodlawn and move on. Staying too attached to this building isn't good. We need to stay flexible. Mary (PAC): form a committee made of parents/teachers/administration, and you all. We're gonna meet next Monday at 7:30. We've been strategizing to see how we can affect the School Board. We have to decide what's essential about our program. How big can we get and still be HBW? If we have 1200 kids, is it possible to hang in the hallways or have TM in the library? You might consider going in groups of kids to talk to the School Board members during open evening hours. The more they hear from us, the better, but don't just say "this is my school and I love it." The decision-making about this is going to happen faster than you'd like. In April, final proposals will be given to the School Board.

- Daniel: avoid repetition of "this is how I love the school." It's intangible, and their decision will be on the tangible. Incorporate the alumni, too. At W-L on Wednesday night there's going to be a presentation on this Powerpoint. Get informed and stay interested in the topic. Katie: if we move to a different location, would this building become a regular school? Casey: yes. It would be a comprehensive Middle School. They still don't know if it's feasible to put a 1200-student school on this property. Katie: HBW is an intangible idea – while the building is great, that's not what makes HBW. It's the community. We can let go of the building. Brad: There were three committees proposed before, one of them has been passed. Another was to answer, with data and statistics, what would work for HBW. The third was to create a letter to the School Board. Elly: HBW has been struggling with these kinds of problems for 30ish years. This proposal isn't unique, it's just a little severe. I think 600 students would take away the integrity of the program, but it's up to us to list what is unique about this program. Everyone go to the School Board meeting! There's nothing more intimidating than people going to the School Board. Maybe even invite local newspapers to attend! Birdie: When's the School Board meeting? Casey: there's a meeting on the 5th and then a School Board meeting on the 6th. But we need a plan! We may not be ready to go to the Feb 6th School Board meeting. Jeff: there's nothing that brings people together like a struggle. Now we start to understand the underbelly of power: it includes channel 70 filmmakers, tweeting, social media. Go to the underbelly: exploit those avenues that allow your point to go throughout the community. Get that kind of publicity and we can win this. There will be some compromise. Emma S: We're not in a battle against the School Board, they're just trying to accommodate. They're just doing their job, and we need to respect that. We don't need to FIGHT them and come out on top.
- Bennett: Have alumni and former teachers participate too. Lizzie: to the parent – what have the parents been talking about? Mary (PAC): a lot of HBW parents know School Board members. We're alarmed. We have not been consulted. To double the size of this program is an outrageous proposal to put in a Powerpoint presentation. Most important thing is to get-together on Monday. Ariana: what do we want? Obviously not doubling the size of the school. Are we willing to relocate? What do people really value? The philosophy of HBW, which doubling the size would compromise. Eleanor: no one is the enemy. In the things we talk about, embrace the Middle School/High School identity as a whole. I love this building too, but I'd go anywhere with you guys. Rhys: As a community at H-B Woodlawn, we need to prove our worth and our program's worth to this county. Build solidarity between Middle and High school. Build a community. Hope for the best, but expect the worst. Artur: We're beyond the point of "we have to stop this!" now we need solutions. If we do need to move, it won't affect us. We are capable of starting again. Emma: it's a pain in the butt to get to HBW from south Arlington. Build a new HBW in south Arlington? I would rather be sitting in an office space or even in a jail than be in this building with 1000 kids. It's not fun, it's scary to walk in the hallway, you have like 30-kid-classes. If we say we're not okay with anything, they're not going to listen. If we compromise, they will work with us. Elly: I think it's interesting, when I first started teaching, Elementary was 1-6, Junior High was 7-9, High was 10-12. People think that these days it's carved in stone, but it's not. It's another option that the School Board can think about. Rachel: We all agree that HBW is an idea, it's made up of the people in it. The people in here now and the idea isn't the same as when HBW was first created. We're still changing, AND THAT'S NOT A BAD THING, it's just something that's happening. Changing the culture of our program is just how things work, it's how things get done. If we added 600 students, we'd adapt. It wouldn't kill us.
- Sienna: We should look at other solutions than are just on the Powerpoint, too. Alana: Could we have a paper in the front? As a way to get all our ideas on what we want, don't want? It's a motion. We have a motion to put up a piece of paper. Motion PASSED. The piece of paper will be put up. Eleanor: I have a motion! Motion to adjourn, but a caveat: we have a lot of places to gather. Tell the people who AREN'T here what's going on! With a posting of info about the groups we have, the meetings. Casey: if you can't come Monday night, H-block Monday, friendly amendment. Eleanor accepts. Motion PASSED.

Chair: Finlay McCracken

Co-Chair: Jules Cohen

Secretary: Margaret Gorman

Chair-in-Waiting: Hannah Hauptman