

Los Feliz Charter School for the Arts Board Meeting Minutes
January 24, 2009 10:00 a.m. to 1 p.m.
2709 Media Center Drive L.A. 900290

BOARD MEMBERS:

Present: Karin Newlin, George Abrams, Marta Alcumbrac, Gabrielle Samuels (via phone until 11 am), Robert Greenberg, Linda Johannesen, Michael Bishop (via phone), Marissa Chibas-Preston (via phone)

Absent: Verna Dauterive, Sharon Sutton, Elise Buik

Quorum? Yes.

Also Present: Mary Ann Gallo, Nancy Martorelli, Louise Manuel, Bruce Newlin, Cyrice Griffith, Susan Lee, Candace Cain, Tish Hicks, Naomi Slodki, Andreas Wenger, Damian Robledo, Kevin Mulcahy, Reed Stilwell

PROCEEDINGS:

- Marta Alcumbrac called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m.
- Linda Johannesen moves to approve the minutes from the October 11 and December 9 2009 Board Meetings. George Abrams seconds. Ayes (via roll call): Marta Alcumbrac, George Abrams, Bob Greenberg, Gabrielle Samuels, Linda Johannesen, Michael Bishop. Motion carries.
- Alcumbrac asks that Karin Newlin lead a discussion of the Public School Option.
- Newlin explains that LFCSA is one of 5 schools that made presentations and also each answered one question. She included a 2 minute DVD with Spanish subtitles that was about the LFCSA program. The 5 schools will then give another presentation before community members. She adds that if the Board chooses to proceed, Newlin feels she has made good connections and that LFCSA has made a good impression thus far.
- Alcumbrac asks Newlin to speak to why LFCSA has explored this option.
- Newlin gives brief background of the Public School Option that made underperforming or unused schools available. She emphasizes the economy of scale from which LFCSA would benefit as well as the need for increased ADA. Adding that this doesn't impact plans for Media Center campus, she said that at the very least, she wanted to put LFCSA in the running.
- Alcumbrac expresses concern about doing a better than adequate job opening a new campus when focus needs to stay on getting in to Media Center. Abrams concurs.
- Newlin says she has given much thought to whom she would bring on since she would not be the principal of the North Hollywood campus.
- Linda Johannesen echoes concerns about taking on such a big project at this particular time. She emphasizes that she does support the idea of expanding LFCSA's program.
- Alcumbrac notes that they have long been interested in building a middle school, not necessarily another elementary school.
- Johannesen worries about fostering ill will if they said yes to LFCSA's proposal, but the LFCSA Board decided not to move forward.
- Newlin thinks that the Board would have to make a decision in early February.
- Abrams asks if Board recommends that Newlin go ahead with second meeting. Johannesen thinks yes. Abrams and Alcumbrac agree.
- Newlin says she will go to meeting and give feedback to Board afterward.
- Alcumbrac says the CUP public hearing will be Friday, January 29.

- Newlin gives overview of what has happened thus far and what she foresees for the meeting. Veronica Bercerra (?) will be representing LFCSA. She is a land use consultant and has familiarized our assigned hearing officer with the LFCSA program. Newlin anticipates that in addition to Bercerra, speaking on our behalf will be our scientist, a representative from Ed Reyes' office, the education chairperson from the Glassell Park neighborhood council. Additionally, Samuels has gathered letters in support of LFCSA from other landlords and tenants in the Media Center complex. Newlin adds that Bercerra is confident there will be no major problems.
- Alcumbrac notes that Heidi Rouse who works with our scientist will be in attendance.
- Responding to a question from Greenberg, Newlin says that the Jan. 29 meeting will be a public hearing with the public hearing officer who will be making the decision and writing his recommendation.
- Alcumbrac stresses urgency of getting a project manager on board.
- Responding to Greenberg's question about planning commission hearing, Alcumbrac says that it is set for April 8, but they are trying to get an earlier date, one reason being that Newlin is working with Ahmanson toward a \$500,000 grant and their Board meets in early April. It would be important to have a CUP prior to that meeting.
- Introducing Louise Manuel from ExED, Newlin says that she has met with Carrie Waggoner who is COO of ExED and Joe Mezza, who will be our contact following John Vargas' departure. Finances through the end of November indicate that our reserves will be spent by the end of the year. The hearing will help determine how much we will need for construction. She emphasizes the need for loans and grants.
- Alcumbrac notes that a project manager will be able to give a clear idea of how much is needed to get us in the door.
- Samuels joined in person at 11am. Chibas-Preston joined by phone at 11:05.
- Alcumbrac asks Manuel to speak. Manuel says that she is in facilities development, not finances. She thinks the Media Center costs will not be as high as projected. She gives overview of lending to charter schools. She adds that our low number of free and reduced lunch students continues to be a problem. She also mentions that there are steps needing to be carried out in order for the landlord to provide its offer of covering costs of half tenant improvements. She says ExED may loan \$30,000 between now and CUP approval.
- Abrams notes that the Public Random Drawing will take place in early March, before the CUP is approved. He asks that Newlin determine how they will select for preferential enrollment.
- There is a short discussion about hiring a project manager. Abrams asks that Site Committee select candidates to be presented to the Board for approval. Various aspects of deciding on right person for this critical position are discussed. Prior experience and a relationship with ExED are emphasized.
- A Board meeting Sunday, February 7 is proposed.
- Alcumbrac opens discussion of fundraising by thanking Johannesen for her hard work. She asks Newlin to speak first. Newlin gives brief overview of her efforts which include working with Ahmanson, Side Street Project & The Walton Foundation. She mentions that they are working with the Huffington Post to get the DVD posted there along with a story about LFCSA. Alcumbrac adds that they have closed the Capital Campaign and will be rolling out the Moving In 2010 campaign in early February.

- Johannsen gives short talk about fundraising, emphasizing that foundations like to see that 100% of families are giving what they can. Newlin adds that the Capital Campaign raised \$191,000 from the parent population. All present applaud this accomplishment. Johannesen talks about plans for upcoming salons and tools for framing discussions with potential givers. She suggests making this a larger action, not just about giving to LFCSA, but about the bigger issue of arts in education. She points out that because we are currently the only arts-integrated public school in Los Angeles, we have an edge there.
- Responding to a question, Manuel says that while she is encouraged by the discussion, she cautions against alienating the lower income families. She feels LFCSA needs to work toward 40-50 % free & reduced lunch students.
- Abrams touches on complexity of issue, how to craft message that conveys that all are welcome & that everyone can participate in giving. Johannesen underscores importance of crafting a message that won't be misinterpreted.
- Short break is taken at 12:10pm.
- Returning from break, Abrams moves to close open session at 12:30pm. Greenberg seconds. Ayes (via roll call): Alcumbrac, Abrams, Chibas-Preston, Greenberg, Samuels, Johannesen, Bishop. Motion carries. Abrams moves to open closed session at 12:30pm. Greenberg seconds. Ayes (via roll call): Abrams, Chibas-Preston, Alcumbrac, Greenberg, Samuels, Johannesen, Bishop. Motion carries.
- Alcumbrac moves to re-open open session at 1:08pm. Johannesen seconds. Ayes (via roll call): Abrams, Alcumbrac, Bishop, Chibas-Preston, Samuels, Johannesen, Greenberg. Motion carries.
- Alcumbrac says she will schedule the GRASP meetings via email.
- Abrams moves to approve the Consolidated Application. Alcumbrac seconds. Ayes (via roll call): Alcumbrac, Abrams, Chibas-Preston, Greenberg, Samuels, Bishop, Johannesen. Motion carries.
- Johannesen moves to adjourn at 1:10pm. Alcumbrac seconds. Ayes (via roll call): Alcumbrac, Greenberg, Samuels, Bishop, Abrams, Chibas-Preston, Johannesen. Motion carries.
- Following official adjournment, Alcumbrac opens the floor to public comment.
- Cyrice Griffith, Chair of Site Council, wants to acknowledge the significant contributions that Kevin Mulcahy has made toward the development of LFCSA.
- Alcumbrac says the Board recognizes the tremendous energy & work that he has contributed.
- Tish Hicks introduces herself as Co-Chair of the Room Parent Committee. She wants to know when information discussed at the meeting will be shared with the parent community. Alcumbrac says that a letter will be going out via email the following day.
- In response to a question from Hicks about where a parent goes with an "issue", Alcumbrac says that it depends on the nature of the issue, noting that George Abrams, as parent representative to the Board is a good first stop as is Site Council, adding that Site Council addresses "micro" issues with the Board handling "macro."

Minutes submitted by Mary Ann Gallo.