

## DPAC MONTHLY MEETING: 1 MARCH 2018

*Katia Dilkina called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.*

---

In attendance:

Katia Dilkina	Cindy Luchka	Erin Prescott
Robin Grazley	Fiona Ely	Natalie Buchmann
Adrienne White	Wendy Huibers	Glenn Wagner
Leticia Villalpando		

Staff: Ms. Brenna O'Connor, Mme Josée Paris, Mme C. Digeso

---

1. January 2018 Minutes to Approve -- motion to approve by Wendy Huibers, seconded by Katia Dilkina

2. Bingo Night -- Katia for Mercedes

- Bingo Night was held February 22, and was a success. The event made \$920 — unsure of the breakdown, but the concession did very well, especially once it moved into the gym.
- Mercedes sends thanks to Katie for co-organizing, and to everyone who volunteered.
- Mercedes has some suggestions for next year, and we hope she will be willing to take on organizing this event again. In particular, Katia hopes we can support the organizers better by getting more volunteers committing to help out before the event.

3. PAC Budget

- discussion / approval of proposed budget delayed until 8 pm in hopes of reaching quorum

4. Fundraisers -- Katia, Erin

- Purdy's Chocolates (Easter) – Katia for Alexis
  - reminder went out today — deadline is March 4 — we will hear once it's done
- West Coast Seeds – Erin
  - a few orders in so far — will send out another email reminder, also include it in school newsletter and our newsletter
- World Cups Youth Soccer Festival – Katia
  - This event happens over Spring Break — one poster is already up in the school. Once we agree to participate, we get credit for the total number of Doncaster students participating. The school with the most kids (can?) win \$1000, with a minimum of 20 needed to participate.
  - This is a tournament held over a weekend, usually Easter weekend, rather than a camp — all age groups play, and the organizers sort the teams.

- Katia will send an email to class reps, and also to World Cups Youth Soccer to ask how many from Doncaster are currently registered, and how that compares to other schools.
- TC 10K Thrifty Foods Family Run – Katie not present tonight

#### 5. Garry Oak Meadow Restoration – Katia, Erin

- We have progress on this issue. On February 16, Katia, Brenna, Erin, and Glenn met with David Loveridge, Director of Facilities with School District 61. His starting position was very clear: the District is unable to pay for the restoration we currently need. Once we introduced the idea that we might fund this restoration, he agreed that the District would maintain the area (as they would playground equipment purchased by a PAC or other donor) once the major restoration work has been completed.
- We also achieved some clarity around the area’s status. During the meeting, Glenn asked specifically whether the meadow was considered part of the school grounds; according to Loveridge, while the area is part of the school’s footprint, it has never officially been a part of the school grounds. Now that we have clarified this issue, the area will be added to the list for maintenance. This information is also necessary to complete our current grant application.
- Brenna was approached by a parent whose family has a private foundation which funds projects like this, and we were invited to apply. Brenna has drawn up the application, and Katia and Erin have been getting quotes from arborists to support it. Some quotes have been higher than the one the District received from Bartlett, others are lower. Erin is waiting for one more quote, which is expected to come in by the end of this week; we hope to submit the grant application by Monday. It sounds like the foundation is not dealing with a large volume of applications at this time, so we hope for a quick turnaround. Ideally, if this funding comes through, we could have the work completed over Spring Break and reopen the “Magic Forest” in April.
- Erin noted that she did reach out to Saanich Parks, and they were extremely supportive of our efforts to restore the meadow. Given, how helpful and responsive they have been to the school making use of this area, they would likely be open to a partnership in future if we need that.
- Katia noted that the conversation with David Loveridge really showed that the District is struggling with priorities in funding maintenance. Brenna clarified that other schools do use property the District does not own or maintain (e.g. Sir James Douglas, Oaklands), but the land piece can get sticky unless there is a partnership.

#### 6. Walk & Wheel Wednesdays – Katia, Erin

- kickoff last week was a success -- lots of excitement around the geocaches, and generally a positive feeling about the initiative from students and families.
- Highlights from and discussion of the the Traffic Survey findings:
  - 64 people have completed the survey so far, an estimated 20% of families. Brenna noted that counting families is not as straightforward as we hoped, but can be done.
  - Approximately  $\frac{1}{3}$  of respondents never drive;  $\frac{1}{3}$  always drive all the way to school; the rest of the respondents fell into the “sometimes” categories.
  - popularity of Thistle St. as a parking area was clearly represented

- A number of parents raised the issue of confusion around which areas are designated residential parking only, and suggested that the school should issue a map showing where people could park.
- Streets added to the alternate list included Glacier (off Doncaster Drive near the golf course trail); Browning (Natalie expressed reservations about this one due to existing parking issues and bike traffic); and Cedar (where the Shelbourne St. Church of Christ is).
- Erin confirmed that the Church of Christ has discussed and agreed to support Doncaster parents using their gravel lot at pickup and dropoff. We should promote this option, as it also provides a quick and safe route that kids could walk on their own. We will need to stay in close contact with the church, however, to make sure that people aren't parking there all day.
- Using the lot at Cedar Hill Golf Course was generally perceived negatively. Respondents noted problems with safety at the intersection of Cedar Hill & Derby: those present agreed that addressing this issue is pivotal to encouraging families to walk instead of driving in those blocks. A discussion of possible solutions and responsibility for safety at this intersection followed. The lack of sidewalk space at the corners was noted. Asking the school to place cones was not seen as feasible or all that helpful. Cindy observed that many creative things can be done with lights, which all agreed is a municipal responsibility; Glenn cited an intersection in Cook Street Village as a supporting example. Natalie offered to reach out to a contact who works in Saanich roads on this issue. Katia felt that taking action to improve safety at this intersection is something everybody would support. Fiona suggested parking and/or walking on Doncaster Drive to the path, then using the intersection patrolled by the crossing guard (at Cedar Hill and Rowan) as a viable alternative to Cedar Hill & Derby.
- most respondents walk with their children, although about ¼ of children do walk on their own. Wendy observed that this is less possible for parents with children in Kindergarten or Grade 1, as teachers do not release them unless they have a pickup.
- people feel very strongly about the issue of traffic at the school one way or another, which made drawing constructive content from some answers to the open-ended questions difficult. Many parents cited lack of time as a reason they did not walk. Some felt "bullied" by people being encouraged to walk, and by incentives like the weekly draws. However, those present felt that many kids are enjoying going to the geocache sites, and are feeling enthusiastic about the draws.
- Fiona spoke to the ease of getting a parking spot on streets other than Rowan; if parents choose alternatives, it is possible to arrive closer to pickup time, whereas on Rowan or in the loop people arrive around 2:20. Parents should be aware that they may actually save time by using nearby streets. Others related that sometimes it is actually faster to walk than drive. Natalie suggested posting positive statements like this (as with client testimonials) to encourage parents, especially those who might feel defensive about driving, to think about the issue differently. Erin mentioned art projects in support of this idea as well. When Katia releases the survey results, she will include comments and observations like Fiona's above.

- The pull-in area with the yellow lines frequently gets blocked; placing cones there might stop people from parking. Brenna and Josée expressed support for this idea.
- Katia also observed that the survey results showed a split on relationships with the school's neighbours. Some parents expressed concern about disturbing them with parking; others complained about inability to park on neighbours' property.
- Some respondents made specific suggestions proposing changes to infrastructure. In addition to some mentioned above, these included physical changes to the loop/grounds (unlikely to be feasible), and restricting parking to one side of Rowan only (adjacent to the school)/making Rowan a one-way street. Such changes would also affect the residents on Rowan, however, and may add to existing traffic problems on Pear St., especially the stretch between Thistle and Shelbourne.
- Some parents questioned the decisions of the crossing guard. Several present noted that Alison's job is not to direct traffic, but to help children cross the street safely. Staff have been advised not to direct traffic in the loop, as they were facing verbal abuse. As Wendy observed, some respondents may be drawing a comparison with Christine, the previous guard, who was there for 13 years, and used some techniques that kept traffic flow moving. Parents should be reminded that the crossing guard's role is not to direct traffic, but perhaps we could also remind Alison to be mindful of the traffic flow.
- Many respondents felt that the problem is that parents don't follow the rules. We must continue to educate parents about the rules (e.g. in the loop), but it is difficult to enforce those rules without compromising relationships. Police enforce the speed limits but cannot be there to direct traffic. A sandwich board or other posted list of rules on how to behave in the loop may help, but parents who are already unreceptive may continue to disregard them.
- Some respondents suggested offering staggered pickup to ease congestion. Brenna cautioned that this would have a fairly significant cost to the school in terms of staffing for supervision. It may also create complications for families with multiple children at the school. Parents of kids in grades 3-5 could (continue) to do this informally, however, by arriving closer to 3:05.
- Others suggested community-based solutions, such as parents organizing walking school buses in their own neighbourhoods, or a carpool signup sheet which could be posted in the office or on the PAC board. Katia suggested we follow through with the carpool signup sheet.
- It was agreed that it might be productive to meet again with our police liaison and Saanich regarding the survey findings.

#### 7. Principal & Vice-Principal Reports -- Brenna O'Connor and Josée Paris

- Josée: report cards go out next week (March 9). We will have early dismissal on Wednesday March 14 and Thursday March 15 to allow for student-led conferences and/or individual meetings, depending on teacher/class.
- Brenna followed up on last month's request for website postings re: sports opportunities. Offerings are not always consistent year to year, as they are dependent on staff volunteers

(every sport offered must have a teacher sponsor, although parents can volunteer to coach). Posting information may create expectations we cannot fulfill.

- Check-in on communication (i.e. "week ahead" emails, monthly newsletter, also website). Those present do read the week ahead emails and find them helpful; a little more information could be added, e.g. topics of assemblies/special presentations. Monthly newsletters are also helpful, although we know they are time-consuming to produce.
- Josée: this week, grades 2 and 4 went to UVic to hear the symphony. This happens every year for grades 2 and 4, although there is no guarantee every school will be invited every year. Yesterday (February 28) was Pink Shirt Day. We held an assembly in the morning; some classes did songs/presentations about friendship, then we watched a video of Todd Parr talking about his book *It's Okay To Be Different* and discussed the reasons we hold Pink Shirt Day. Children followed up on this later in the day by writing post-its about kindness and being a good friend, many of which have been displayed in the school.
- Brenna: thinking ahead to next year already -- we anticipate having the same number of divisions as this year: 11 French, 8 English. We'll share more information in future.
- Josée noted that the Scholastic Book Fair is coming up on March 14 and 15 (same time as conferences).
- Question from Erin: can we set a date for the back-to-school BBQ in September, as we need to book the Red Barn truck in March? Last year the BBQ was held September 14th. Administration will need to cross-check calendars before setting a date, to avoid conflict with middle/secondary schools' welcome events.

#### 8. PAC Budget

- quorum of 10 parents is present at 8:13 pm, and discussion of the budget proceeded.
- highlights: spending on outdoor learning (last year was technology). \$3000 from GIC is earmarked for the Garry Oak Meadow Restoration project, but it may not be needed if we get funding from the private foundation. In that case, the \$3000 could be redirected to other outdoor learning initiatives (e.g. the School Garden). Allocations for parent education nights include Darren Lauer on digital safety (every second year), but we would like to do more and apply for the grant we got last year. We should be thinking about it in June for a September application. Fiona agreed to take the initiative on this again -- she is open to suggestions regarding speakers.
- question from Glenn: are we allowed to pass a budget that is not balanced? answer: yes. This budget is also conservative with estimates of revenue: we may earn more in fundraising, and also may not have to commit the entire \$3000 line to the Garry Oak project.
- The budget passed unanimously.

#### 9. Welcome Pole – Leticia

- Presenting a proposal for a welcome pole for Doncaster, inspired by the one at Quadra School and by a trip to UVic with Mme Digeso and Mme Roberts. A welcome pole would contribute to a positive experience for Doncaster's children and families, as well as those who see it as they pass by. The pole signifies community coming together; it would provide positive opportunities

for our children and families to learn more about indigenous people, cultures, and histories, and to acknowledge the Lekwungen and W'SANEC peoples on whose unceded territories our school sits. This proposal was drafted in collaboration with another parent, Aliko Marinakis, who is unable to be here tonight.

- This project would likely be quite expensive. However, there are some ways to do it. The log could be donated by a forestry company, or by the school district. The carver(s) potentially may also donate their time. We may be able to connect with an interested carver through contacts in the school and at UVic.
- Importance for children to learn about indigenous peoples in a positive way — acceptance is a gift. A pole would also be an important reminder about reconciliation (seeing the pole and a Canadian flag side by side every day).
- It may be possible to ask the carver(s) to work on site.
- Brenna noted that we have support to get this right, gain the correct permissions. Aliko also suggested territorial acknowledgements in the proposal; the school is on board with this and already does it.
- Question from Katia: would Aliko be the contact? Leticia: yes — she is open to people contacting her, but cannot make it to evening meetings.
- Brenna: our next step would be to contact Nella Nelson in the Aboriginal Education department at SD61, and inquire about cost and protocols. A small group from PAC could meet with the department and figure it out what we need to do, then arrange a meeting at the school level. Leticia suggested that we try to do this at a time when Aliko is available (daytime).
- The PAC members present were supportive of this idea.

*Next Meeting: Thursday 5 April 2018*

*Katia Dilkina adjourned the meeting at 8:27 pm*