

MINUTES

William Penn Taskforce Meeting (of the Harrisburg School District)
Reflecting Task Force Meeting of Thursday, October 19, 2023 at 6 p.m.
Harrisburg School District Headquarters

Task Force Members Present:

Jody Barksdale
Danielle Bowers
Linda Cammack
Audry Carter
Brian Carter
Melanie Cook
Trina Gribble
Laura Harding
Joel Hervitz
Reynardo (Rick) Hicks
Yvonne Hollins
Brian Hudson
Heaven Poles
Gloria Martin Roberts
Gloria V. Merrick
Vern McKissick
David Morrison
Rafiyqa Muhammad
Doug Thompson Leader

Professional Staff (Ex-Officio) Present:

Mr. John Reedy, Chief Operations Administrator, Harrisburg School District
Dr. Marcia Stokes, Chief Financial Officer, Harrisburg School District
Dr. Lori Suski, Commonwealth Court Appointed Receiver, Harrisburg School District
Mr. Eric Turman, Superintendent, Harrisburg School District
Dr. Travis Waters, Chief Recovery Officer, Harrisburg School District

Co-Facilitators:

Elan Drennon
Sheila Dow Ford

I. Sheila Dow Ford convened the meeting at 6 p.m.

She directed those assembled to the following documents distributed:

- a. Minutes of the October 7, 2023, task force meeting.
- b. The agenda for the October 19, 2023, meeting.
- c. The Norms facilitation document.
- d. The set of questions posed by task force members via the Google Docs platform.
- e. The proposed evaluation matrix and accompanying definitions to be used to review and score proposals.
- f. The schedule of activities planned for the duration of the task force.

II. Information and Review of Questions- Dr. Lori Suski and administrative team

Dr. Suski reiterated that the purpose of the task force was to bring forth recommendations to the District on the best and highest use(s) of the William Penn High School property, which includes the building and surrounding land. She reminded members to keep an open mind, and reminded the group that as the Receiver she retains the ultimate authority to make any final determination.

In tandem with the professional staff in attendance, Dr. Suski and the team responded to each of the 15 inquiries posed by task force members via Google Docs. The full recording of the questions posed, and responses provided by the professional team, is set forth on the Harrisburg School District website, under the tab, William Penn Meeting Recordings.

Of note in the information provided by the District's executive team was the recognition of task force member Rafiyqa Muhammad's initiative in linking the District to senior state officials with oversight and funding authority in the environmental realm. Dr. Suski noted as the task force undertakes its work, she and her team will also be engaged in seeking out potential funders such as that provided by Ms. Muhammad, as they develop budgets to fund any programs and capital projects an adaptive reuse of the William Penn facility will undoubtedly entail.

III. Plan for Evaluating Proposals/Criteria for Evaluating Proposals

Elan Drennon, Co-facilitator, walked the group through the process and criteria proposed to be used for evaluating proposals brought before the task force. The task force conveyed their assent to the use of the evaluation criteria and posed no questions or concerns.

IV. Presentation by Superintendent Turman

Superintendent Turman provided a presentation to the group, advancing a proposal in which the District would raze the William Penn building, retain the land, and, thereafter, repurpose the land for use as a park-like recreational area for students and the community. Mr. Turman noted that the District is loath to sell the land because of its significant future value to the District. Mr. Turman also opined that the reasoning behind the recommendation to bring down the building was largely based upon the external and internal deterioration and the very significant costs associated with a full-scale rehabilitation project. Finally, he noted that his presentation was but one proposal, and that he remains open to hearing other proposals and engaging with the task force.

Having reached the hour of 8 p.m., the task force adjourned.

The next meeting of the task force: Thursday, November 2, 2023.

