Community and Intergovernmental Relations Committee
Meeting of the Whole
January 5, 2006, 5:30 p.m.
Minutes

Attendance: Commissioners Brennan, Elliott, Evans, Garcia, and Powell; Ms. Kimberly Rohring; Ms. Linda Dunsmoor; Jana Carlisle
Absent: Commissioner Thompson (Sick)

Commissioner Evans convened the meeting at 5:36 p.m.

Facilities Modernization Initiative
Commissioner Powell arrived at 5:41 p.m.

Ms. Carlisle opened by stating the Board will be asked to make decisions about site acquisition, air conditioning in every school building, etc as we move through the solutions phase. No specific proposals have been made by the project team. There will be two cabinet meetings this month prior to the January 17th committee meeting so they can make recommendations then to the Board, but the final decision lies with the Board.

Presentation made by Ms. Carlisle. Written PowerPoint document provided to members in advance. Mr. Jay Judson of the project team addressed the facilities needs assessment section. He stated that a loud message from the state is to extract the greatest value possible from existing facilities, not as supportive of new building at least in the early phases.
Dr. Rivera noted that the cost of renovating some schools (i.e. 22 and 36) may exceed the cost of replacing. State Ed stated that should not be part of Phase I.

Mr. Jim Fenton of the project team spoke to the delivery model options and legislation.

Commissioner Evans entertained questions.
It was stated that Buffalo used a county industrial authority for political reasons to do bonding; they also used the program manager model.
Commissioner Elliott stated that diversity is going to have to be. There is only one black and one Hispanic in the audience tonight. I will hold you accountable for having the right people in place; shows students there are opportunities for them as they grow up in engineering, finance, etc. She further stated that the black community does not feel connected to the City School District.

Commissioner Garcia asked about the delivery options. He stated that any delivery option that puts the Board in position of giving up its right to make decisions for the District is not acceptable. He just wanted that kept in mind.
He added that we need to have a planning discussion on how to increase minority participation in construction; commitments made to hire and recruit apprentice from individuals who live within the City.
He asked about capitalized interest. Ms. Tripi stated that it is if the District invests interest earnings to gain greater interest earnings.
Commissioner Garcia then asked about equipment and technology. Can we design a situation in which technology upgrades are viable without major renovations?

Mr. Judson stated that this design anticipates improvements in technology and delivery up to ten years out. It would use infrastructure rather than have to go in to improve it for use.
Ms. Tripi stated that there is a capped amount per building available for expenditure on equipment/technology.

Commissioner Powell noted that at least two schools in the RCZ defined area are proposed to be razed and rebuilt. She noted the limited swing space identified and that it is not necessarily in the Northeast zone. She also asked why schools in the RCZ are not recommended for phase I.
Ms. Carlisle stated that SED advised the District to look at equity including geographic equity, so there is not a focus on the RCZ in the first phase thought may be able to make sound case for doing so.
Dr. Rivera stated that swing space is limited. There is a school on St. Paul Street (former Charter School), and one or two others in the City.
NOTE: Swing space discussed is not District owned facilities, which was part of original concept.
Commissioner Powell asked if the team had considered maintaining the shell and gutting the interior to modernize. She noted that this was done in Albany.

Commissioner Evans asked how we were progressing with the timeline.
Dr. Rivera reiterated that it is an aggressive timeline, but have to stick to it. If we miss the window, we will have to wait a year. It is our desire to keep things on track.

Commissioner Garcia revisited limited swing space. How much is needed for Phase I? What is our limitation?
Dr. Rivera stated that this is part of the discussion as we develop solutions for Phase I.
Commissioner Garcia asked about the impact it can have on our normal budgetary process?
Ms. Tripi stated it depends on the financing options selected.
Dr. Rivera stated that the District is commencing the 2006-07 budget process and as part of that will make clear projections over multiple years as to the impact on the operating budget.

Rochester Children's Zone
Dr. Rivera stated the Mayor needs to be clear leader as well on this project. We are embarking on a planning process that will begin as early as late March 2006 and continue for five or six months to bring to point of implementation.

Ms. Carlisle went through the presentation. Written copies provided to members.
She stated that we will work with a group out of Boston (Interaction Institute for Social Change) on the community wide planning process. They have facilitated such processes across the country. They will also work with RCSD to build capacity.
We will be communicating the planning process over the next three weeks. We will make sure we are totally transparent as we go forward.

Commissioner Evans asked how stakeholders in the RCZ area will be identified. How will we ensure they are at the table, involved in the process?
Ms. Carlisle stated that this has been started at the grassroots level, herself, Dr. Ray and Ms. Nydia Padilla. They have met with community groups, neighborhood associations, etc. All documented.
Dr. Rivera stated that everyone will know what the planning process is, where they fit in and where they can provide input.

Ms. Elliott stated that she vehemently opposes this proposal from the perspective that it is driven by the District. How does the District think it can put social services in place when it cannot even educate

kids? It is offensive that someone from outside comes in to the community to tell us what to do, and a white female to lead it. The District should be in a subordinate position to support, not lead. Harlem zone was led by the community, not the school district. I am not convinced that RCSD will do whatever is necessary for it to succeed. It appears to be a work around. I do not have a problem with bringing resources together as a community to make sure the area is improving. The RCZ is a community. I will fight against. We have to acquiesce and give to someone else to do. It is a smoke screen when we are unable to educate kids to go in there and say when social ills are gone, everything is going to be OK, and kids will be educated. RCSD needs to be more customer oriented.
Dr. Rivera stated that Mr. Jeffrey Canada would have loved to have the public school support when he started the Harlem Children's Zone. There are good service organizations, but they are not working together very well. Education of kids does not happen six hours a day, five days a week. Improvement in education for our children is happening. Hoe can we leverage other needs these families may have? It is not big brother; rather saying we need to come together. There has to be ownership or it won't succeed.
Ms. Carlisle stated that Dr. Rivera has taken the lead, put a stake in the sand and said community we need to do something about this situation. RCSD is leading the planning phase, but does not have the intention of taking over service delivery. We will clarify the mission, vision and RCSD role which focus will be on education component.
Commissioner Elliott stated that community agencies are limited by lack of resources; limits their effectiveness. RCSD has the resources.

Commissioner Garcia asked how Mr. Canada managed services beyond the district providing.
Dr. Rivera stated that it was done by strategically creating an infrastructure that grew over time. It was a cooperative relationship with NYC regarding housing; working relationships.
Ms. Carlisle stated a fundamental distinction between Rochester and Harlem is that RCSD will not provide services. Mr. Canada created a service delivery organization.

Commissioner Powell stated that if someone else steps forward to champion besides Dr. Rivera then yes, it should be led outside the District. However, until that giant appears to do so, she will put her trust in Dr. Rivera and his team. We are making progress in educational achievement. We grabbed the low hanging fruit under Dr. Janey's administration. We cannot eek out much more in achievement without such a major initiative.

Commissioner Brennan stated that the project, as in any project, will be error prone and difficult, but worthwhile. The problems schools face are rooted in many ways outside of the schools themselves. Children do not come to school ready to learn.

Adjournment:
Commissioner Evans adjourned the meeting at 7:39 p.m.