

**Nova Classical Academy  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
Special Meeting  
August 8, 2011**

**Directors Present: Jason Belter, Tom Corrigan, Brandon Foat, Damon Fraser, Karen Groppe, Andrea Johnson, Dianne Krizan, Becky Lund**

**Directors Absent: John Bujan, Teresa Taggart**

**Advisors Present: Brian Bloomfield, Miranda Morton, Dawn Ellerd (NPTO Representative)**

**Others in Attendance: Nova parents**

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM. Damon Fraser led the meeting.

**II. Approval of Agenda**

Mrs. Krizan moved to approve the agenda with the addition of board chair comments after the approval of the agenda and changing the consent agenda item to an action item. Mrs. Groppe seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**III. Board Chair Comments**

Mr. Fraser spoke about Mrs. Hornseth's immediate resignation (as of 8/7/11) from the board due to a conflict of interest. As of her resignation, Mr. Fraser moved into the chair position. Further discussion of board positions will happen at the regular August meeting.

**IV. Action Item**

Mrs. Krizan moved to add Nancy Blankford to the Friends of Nova Board. Ms. Lund seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**V. Presentation by Minnesota Pollution Control**

Lynn Grigor from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency spoke about the Victoria Park Site aka the Koch property. She began by explaining that in the late 1990's, the Koch property entered MPCA's program after being a tank farm (above ground storage) for Koch. Before being acquired by Koch, the property was backfilled with urban fill (some dirty, some clean) after being a limestone quarry.

Testing done by the MPCA showed very little petroleum in the soil, but some lead (most likely from paint on the tanks). They removed whatever petroleum and lead contaminated soil there was north of the railroad, but lead contaminated soil was buried at the bottom of the quarry with a clay barrier above it. The removal of that soil also removed the worst of the urban fill which contained contaminants from coal and creosote (from treating railroad ties). This left most of the Koch land clean for commercial or residential use, but some land south of the railroad was still not good enough to qualify

for residential use. There is an active cleanup happening with that land, though Nova's land is north of the railroad.

As we move forward, there are four things we need to consider to ensure the land remains safe for our use:

1) There is an active petroleum cleanup going on a few blocks south of our property and we cannot do anything that would impact that cleanup, like causing water to infiltrate at a high level.

2) Lead impacted soil (slightly above industrial standard) is at least 15 feet below the surface and a clay cover was placed on that soil. We may not disturb it, which means dig within 3 feet of it, unless we want to remove all of it.

3) There is low level ground water contamination (solvents/ petroleum) which is common to almost all properties in the Twin Cities, but those contaminants could turn into vapors that came into the building through cracks in the floor. We must put in a vapor barrier and a sub-slab venting system, which is something that is already required for radon protection, not just vapor concerns, in all new buildings.

4) Though most of the urban fill has been removed from the land we are purchasing, down to the bedrock, there is a small strip that still has some fill remaining. That soil will be removed prior to, or at the same time as, our construction. We have a received a grant which should cover the cost of that removal as well as at least some of the cost of the vapor barrier.

Once the soil is removed and the vapor barrier and venting system are in, the MPCA would require no further action from us to make sure the property is safe for residential use (other than ensuring that the venting system is working). We can always contact MPCA with questions at any time. We should also keep in mind that because of the work that was done on this property, the MPCA has a very good idea of what the soil is like and is probably cleaner than most any other residential property because the surface soil was clean. In addition, our school would qualify for a no association letter.

## **VI. Facilities Update**

Mr. Bloomfield gave a brief facilities update, including the latest floor plan. He also shared the overview documents for the three stages of the trivium, which are also available on the website. He reminded people that the point of Classical Education is to build on each stage and build connections between the stages, which is something we'll be able to do in our new building. Finally, Mr. Bloomfield said that the city of Saint Paul approved the change in the plan for the land so that we can build where roads had previously been intended to go and sketched out the next steps in our process. There was some discussion about traffic and drop-off/ pick-up flows given the changes to the floor plan.

## **VII. Enrollment Scenarios**

Mr. Bloomfield spoke about the proformas comparing two enrollment options (natural growth with our current enrollment or accelerated growth right when we move into our new building). Mr. Bloomfield also reviewed the four enrollment scenarios that he presented at the last public forum. He reminded everyone that these aren't the only options, but are some major possibilities that could be combined or tweaked to fit Nova's needs.

Comparing the natural growth plan and the accelerated growth plan, Mr. Corrigan pointed out that after four or five years we would be in about the same place with either plan. He shared some graphs he had made for the Finance and Budget Committee comparing the finances for those two enrollment plans.

Mr. Bloomfield spoke about the financial requirements we will have to budget for as a part of securing our bond.

#### **A. Public Comment**

Concerns raised included:

- Wondering where the 17.5 million dollar figure came from in the first place...is all of that necessary?
- Moving a small school into a large building could become just filling chairs...concerned that we manage the growth to ensure the quality of the program.
- How do we know that adding the 180 students two years ago was successful? (What were the criteria for that statement?)

#### **B. Board Discussion**

Mr. Bloomfield spoke about St. Croix Prep's experience growing to a new building and Nova's decision to grow more gradually. There was discussion about controlled growth and when and where to add students. There was further discussion of the four enrollment options. Highlights included:

- Option 3 would leave us with a lot of unknowns.
- Option 4 could be a challenge if all of the students at the "feeder" school stayed.
- Option 1 may not work well if 30% of the new students in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade leave.
- General concern over losing our program or lowering our high standards with any option.
- There was discussion of the space required in our new building based on state standards and a general description of the costs and where the \$17.5 million figure came from. If costs come in less than projected, then we have more decisions to make of what to do.

#### **VIII. Public Comment**

There was public comment.

#### **IX. Next Meeting Date/Agenda Items**

The next regular Board of Directors meeting is August 22, 2011 beginning at 6:30 at the Upper Campus. We will be voting on enrollment and making other facility related decisions.

#### **X. Adjournment**

Mr. Belter moved to adjourn. Mr. Corrigan seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:36 PM.

Minutes submitted by Becky Lund.