

Minutes
of the
KUTZTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
Public Hearing for the Matter of Albany Elementary School
Tuesday, March 6, 2012, 7:00 p.m.

The Board of Directors of Kutztown Area School District met for a Public Hearing for the Matter of Albany Elementary School on Monday, March 6, 2012, 7:00 p.m., in the High School Auditorium pursuant to due notice to board members and the public.

Present Patricia Bealer, Randy Burch, Alan Darion, Amy Faust, Kurt Friehauf, Caecilia Holt, James Shrawder, Carl Ziegler

Absent Craig Schroeder

Also Present Nicholas Lazo, Karl Olschesky, Rikki Clark, David Miller, Matthew Link, Cynthia Meyer, Rebecca Beidelman, James Brown, Tracy Blunt, Peter Miller, Barbara Richard, Deborah Kulp, Christopher Wehr, Scott and Stephanie Hugo, Vanessa Stelzman, Ann Dietrich, Monte Schroeder, Becky and Lindsay Schroeder, Darlene Zimmerman, Randy Zimmerman, Jeana Knabb, Florence Knabb, Joanne Englehart, Kay Fritz, Rebecca Ziegler, Melissa Leiby, Kevin Leiby, Trisha Berger, Kerry Berger, Lauren Bohning, Dale Bohning, Rodney Bartman, Michele Randall, Angie Furlong, Joan Dietrich, Denise and John Heffner, Bethany Weber, Lewis Weaver, Karen Austin, Donna Keglovits, Tracey Oroxom, Arabel Elliot, Stacie Jones, Pam Ashman, John Perella, Renee Perella, Fay Rothenberger, Troy Berger, Michele Schoener, Jim Pizzelanti, Brandi Faust, Betty Parks, Rob Gottland, Jeff Huffert, Melanie Wessner, Krista Keim, Cyndi Parker, Donna Feirtag, Beth Sica, Pam Heid, Alaina Hernandez, Lisa Kanaskie, Melissa Blatt, Judy Heffley, Colin Heffley, Karl Nolte, Melissa Nolte, Angela Bittner, Karise Mace, Christine Stauffer, Felicia Esterly, Terry Guers, David Loeb, Erin Kraal, Mara Rockliff, Angela Troutman, Scott Tackack, Andrew Robert, Charlene Sheetz, Sarah Stump, Beth Stump, Matthew Baez, Kathy Mohler, Sarah Mohler, Marc Yoder, Melissa DeLong, Chrisy Wood, Zachary Wood, Elizabeth Wessner, Bonnie Treadway, Steven Moyer, Jed Wood, Stacey Wood, Laura Miller, Lisa Schnell, Pat Loch, Elaine Rabenold, Philip Moyer, Sue Collier, Jo Stevens, Janet Yost, Hajim Yulan, Joe Karzas, Amy Wessner, Fred Jones, Kay Brendlinger, Erica Snyder, Sherry Weaver, Michael Weber

Call to Order The public hearing was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by President Ziegler.

Welcome President Ziegler welcomed all attendees and stated that this is a public hearing for the possible closure of Albany Elementary School. President Ziegler stated that this hearing is not a public debate. It is an opportunity for the public to hear a presentation concerning the possible closure of Albany Elementary School and for the Board to receive and record comments and observations. He asked that each person, when called upon, state his or her full name for the record and make his or her statement as concise as possible.

Hearing Notice The following notice, which appeared in the *Reading Eagle* newspaper on Sunday, February 19, 2012 and the *Kutztown Patriot* newspaper on Thursday, March 1, 2012 was entered into the record.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Board of School Directors for the Kutztown Area School District will conduct a public hearing for the purpose of seeking public input with regard to the possible closure of Albany Elementary School, 3656 Route 737, Kempton, Pennsylvania 19529. The hearing will be held on Tuesday, March 6, 2012 in the auditorium of the Kutztown Area Senior High School, 50 Trexler Avenue, Kutztown, Pennsylvania 19530, at 7:00 p.m.

Interested members of the community are invited to attend and will be offered the opportunity to present information to the Board on this possible school closure. If you would like to speak at this hearing, please contact Rikki Clark in the District Administration Office at 610-683-7361 x106 or rclark@kasd.org.

Closing Plan Overview Mr. Lazo presented a PowerPoint to the audience depicting the plan and rationale on closing Albany Elementary School, including, but not limited to: demographic census data, building enrollments, classroom arrangements, transportation, educational and academic gain, and approximate cost savings.

Public Comment Beth Sica expressed her concern there may be additional, unforeseen costs associated with moving the fifth-grade. She also expressed her concerns that the plans are too involved and affect too many different areas to move forward without research and more planning. She asked the Board to focus on repairing some of the programs by reinstating a few positions that will have an enormous positive impact on our students.

Debby Kulp expressed her concern with exposing 10-year-olds to the disrespectful, tormenting, and disobedient behaviors of middle school students.

Arabel Elliot expressed her concern that KASD needs a more thorough and well-planned solution rather than a misguided proposal. She expressed proper analysis and planning is needed, as well as a comprehensive/strategic plan to address perennial problems such as the budget.

Erin Kraal expressed her concern with the lack of a plan for a major shift for our students, and KASD needs appropriate time to assess, create, and implement a plan for this transition instead of setting a pattern of initiating changes over the summer which sets us up for failure.

Christopher Wehr expressed his concern that the plan seems narrowly focused, and KASD needs a more detailed plan in order to make an informed decision.

Joe Karzas expressed his concern only one side of the plan was presented and it didn't show any consequences, negative impacts, and all perspectives.

Maura Rockliff asked for clarification on the PowerPoint presentation.

John Perella asked for clarification on the savings if Albany Elementary School would close. He also stated his concern that two months is not enough time to make an academically sound plan if Albany is closed.

Erin Kraal inquired if the fifth-grade library materials would be available at the middle school and if anything would change in the fifth-grade library curriculum.

Amy Wessner inquired how will arrival and departure disruptions be dealt with since the fifth-grade will be on a different time schedule.

Fred Jones expressed his concern the plan seems short-sided and indicates a lack of research and sources, and should show impact and foresight into the future. He also expressed his concern with rushing 10-year-olds into a more adult world.

Arabel Elliot inquired if fifth-grade teachers and elementary guidance counselors will be pulled and/or rotated to the middle school.

Karise Mace expressed her concern that fifth-grade is not a part of the elementary schools nor a part of the middle school. She expressed the district should research bringing in more revenues and increasing programs instead of making cuts and closing schools.

Renee Perella expressed her concern with scheduling at the middle school and if timing will allow the fifth-grade to have a separate lunch time.

Kay Brendlinger questioned what the total capacity of the schools is and if enrollment increases, will we run out of space if we sell the Albany building. She also questioned if the property would go up for sale immediately.

Erica Snyder inquired how the student to teacher ratio for kindergarten will be affected. She also expressed her concern that younger people may be purchasing vacant properties from the elderly population which would increase enrollment.

Sherry Weaver expressed her concern with having only one elementary and one middle school principal.

Erin Kraal stated she was tired of KASD bringing in wonderful faculty and administration and then losing them due to seniority.

Kay Brendlinger questioned who actually owns the Albany property and who will receive the profit from the sale.

Maura Rockliff expressed her concern with losing an elementary principal, and that she feels the Board is being distrustful with the public.

Christopher Wehr inquired if there will be any additional information and details posted on the website.

Jed Wood expressed his concern that there is no firm plan and few concrete details. He also expressed his concern on the debt still owed on the Albany building in ratio to its value and selling price. He inquired what would happen if the property would not be able to be sold by December 31, 2012.

Kevin Leiby expressed his concern that the decision to close Albany Elementary and the budget approval is so close in time, and if the Board decides not to close Albany will there be time to come up with alternatives to balance the \$300,000 deficit.

Lisa Schnell stated she is frustrated that the Board seems to be playing a game to get the public to ask the right questions.

Arabel Elliot expressed she did not know this hearing was including a discussion of possibly having only one elementary principal and the loss of other staff the public does not know about.

Erin Kraal inquired what the plan was for disseminating alternative cost saving solutions to the public, and if there was an assessment plan being considered.

Michael Weber expressed his concern on possible future growth and the need to build a new facility if the Albany building was sold.

Melissa Leiby wanted to clarify to the public that the Board is considering other options, and she expressed her concern that the Board may be making a hasty, rushed decision.

Adjournment The hearing was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Rikki L. Clark
School Board Secretary