



**EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
CITY HALL
8TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33301
THURSDAY, August 20, 2020 6:30-8:30 PM**

Members	Attendance	July 2020 – May 2021	
		Present	Absent
Dr. Allen Zeman, Chair	P	2	0
Ruchel Coetzee	A	1	1
Maureen S. Dinnen	A	0	2
Wendy Gonsler	A	1	1
Lisa May	P	1	1
Amy Ellowitz, Vice Chair	P	2	0
April Jeff	A	1	1
Terry Large	P	2	0
Jennifer Lovell	P	2	0
Dr. Heather Munns	P	2	0
Tina Jaramillo	P	2	0
Colleen Lockwood	P	2	0
Sarah Owen DelNegri	P	2	0
Vickie Melus	P	2	0
Christopher Relyea	P	2	0
Lillian Small	P	1	1
Rory Sponsler	P	2	0
Betty Shelley	P	1	1
Dr. Michele Verdi-Knapp	P	2	0
Yolanda B. Francis	A	1	1
Tomislav Lukic	P	2	0

Staff/Guests

Zoie Saunders, Chief Education Officer, City of Fort Lauderdale
 Danielle Smith, Principal of Bennett Elementary School
 Jill Young, Broward County Public Schools
 Joseph Beck, Broward County Public Schools
 Daniece Williams, Broward County Public Schools
 D'Wayne Spence, Assistant City Attorney
 Martha Steinkamp, Parks and Recreation Board
 Ericka Franceschi, Assistant City Clerk
 Jeff Moderelli, City Clerk
 Jamie Opperlee, Prototype, Inc.

I. Welcome and Pledge of Allegiance – Dr. Allen Zeman, Chair

This meeting was called to order at 6:29 p.m.

II. Attendance and Roll Call, 21 appointed members; 10 needed for quorum

As of this date, August 20, 2020, 16 of the 21 appointed members were present, which constituted a quorum.

III. Approval of Last Meeting Minutes – July 16, 2020

Mr. Lukic advised that his first name was misspelled on Page 1 in the Roll Call section, as well as on Page 2, Paragraph 3, and should read as, “**Tomislav**”.

Mr. Relyea mentioned Page 5, last paragraph, should read as “Dan **Gohl**”, not Gold.

Chair Dr. Zeman stated that Page 8, 2nd paragraph, should read as, “Making **progress** on an education initiative is difficult.”

The next sentence should read as, “Everywhere feasible, there **should be** a joint use park.” and the next sentence should read as, “It is a brilliant idea that the City of Fort Lauderdale **works to** meet standards the Education Advisory Board came up with.”

Mr. Lukic commented that the Pledge of Allegiance was not said and Chair Dr. Zeman advised that it would be done at the next meeting.

Motion by Vice Chair Ellowitz, seconded by Ms. Lockwood, to approve the February 20, 2020 minutes as amended. Motion passed unanimously. (16-21)

IV. Presentation: Sunshine Law Refresher Training, Jeff Moderelli, City Clerk, and D’Wayne Spence, Assistant City Attorney

Chair Dr. Zeman explained the fundamental intent of the Sunshine Law. A long time ago, the Legislator passed the Sunshine Law, which was intended to open all government discussions to everyone in the State. Meetings must be open and publicized in advance. The key is that the intent is good, and it is to prevent people from talking about any issue that has or could come before the Board. The Board has been open about sharing information, but the information should be factual, non-influential, and non-advocacy for any position of anything discussed or that might be discussed.

Chair Dr. Zeman acknowledged Jeff Moderelli, City Clerk, D’Wayne Spence, Assistant City Attorney, and Ericka Franceschi, Assistant City Clerk.

Chair Dr. Zeman welcomed Lisa May, new Board member.

Ms. May stated that she is the Executive Director for Live the Site in South Florida, a non-profit founded in 1998 in Tallahassee. Their goal is to teach healthy relationship education beginning in middle school through senior adults and they are dedicated in strengthening marriages and families. Four years ago, a Healthy Relationship class was started at Fort Lauderdale High School and currently they are engaged in conversations with 30 public schools in Broward County.

Assistant City Attorney Spence, Ms. Franceschi, Assistant City Clerk, and Mr. Moderelli, City Clerk, provided a Power Point presentation regarding the Sunshine Law. The following points were made:

- Three forms listed under the City Clerk's Office on the City webpage pertain to this Board: Form 8B, Florida Commission on Ethics Guide to the Sunshine Amendment, the Code of Ethics, and the Guide for Members of Boards and Committees.
- The Education Advisory Board is a Board, not a Committee and it is created by an Ordinance, which is shown on the webpage with a list of Board duties.
- If a member wants to leave the Board, they can access the online Board and Committee appointment process and apply for any Board they choose.
- The Board does a Communication to the Commission, which is a process when they want to get something in the hands of the Commission. The Board must make sure the motion is clear and concise.
- One of Ms. Franceschi's main job duties is being a liaison between the Commission and Commission Assistants.
- One of the most important duties is that the staff liaison serves as an active link with the Department Director, City Manager, and City Commission. Page 10 of the online booklet was referenced as well as the Guide for Members of Boards and Committees. The Guide is mostly a question and answer format. It was noted that the Board or Committee does not supervise the staff liaison; the City Manager or Supervisor is ultimately responsible for all City staff. The Board is appointed by the Commission and has a duty as outlined and the staff liaison serves as the link.
- New Legislation requires Ethics training for the City Commission, which is done in conjunction with the City Attorney. The Sunshine Law and Public Records Law is engraved in the Constitution of the State of Florida. The Legislature followed up that Constitution provision with State Statute 286.011, which sort of mimics the Constitutional provision.
- Three main components of open meeting requirements are that meetings of Public Boards and Commissions remain open to the public; reasonable notice is given for meetings; and minutes are taken for each meeting. As liaison, Ms. Saunders needs to be concerned about these requirements to make sure they are met. Any requirements that are not met result in a violation of the Sunshine Law.

- Through legal opinions and the Florida Attorney General opinions, it has said this Sunshine Law applies equally both to elected and appointed Boards and Commissions. Subject to the Sunshine Law, Advisory Boards and Committees delegated in decision-making authority and Advisory Committees appointed by a single public official not subject to the Sunshine Law are Advisory Boards and Committees delegated in information gathering authority. If a group collects information and does not do anything to instill that information and just passes it on to the City Commission, it would not be subject to the Sunshine Law. The function of the Education Advisory Board is subject to the Sunshine Law.
- A meeting under the Sunshine Law is any gathering, whether formal or casual, of two or more members of the same Board to discuss matters on which foreseeable action would be taken by the Board. It is important to understand that it does not mean there has to be a called and convened meeting at which the public is absent from; it could mean that two or more Board members are speaking face to face, or that there is a written correspondence between a Board member about an item that will foreseeably come before the Board, or that there is a telephone conversation, hand signals, or use of an intermediary person to transmit information between Board members. This does not mean you cannot talk to any Board members, but if an item is coming up for discussion before the Board, there cannot be any sort of communication about that item outside of a Sunshine noticed meeting, which is open to the public and in which minutes are taken; this extends to e-mails. The general principle is that emails may be sent to fellow Board members; however, replies are not permissible. Board members have been advised of this policy for many years and have found it is a hard burden to understand as to what they should not be replying to or accidentally replying to. In consulting the Florida Attorney General, they came up with an internal policy where the Board has been advised to use their liaison as a go between and have her make determinations as to what information can be sent. The disclaimer footnote found on Page 15 of the Boards and Committee Guidebook was referenced.
- There are cases where the Sunshine Law becomes a meeting of one. If a member of a Committee is delegated as a decision-making authority by the Board in which a decision does not have to come back to the Board, then they take on the decision-making authority of the entire Board and the meeting becomes a meeting of one.
- The Sunshine Law can be violated during an actual meeting if two Board or Committee members lean back in their chairs and quietly chat about an issue during a presentation. This could be considered a violation of the Sunshine Law. It is okay for Board and Committee members to visit neighborhood Associations or other Boards and Committees as long as they are not going with any decision-making authority of the Board. Members of one Board can speak with members of another Board on a matter that would come before their respective Boards, but they cannot speak with other Board members on the same Board. Many Board

members who volunteer are involved in other Committees and organizations throughout the City, so be mindful of items that are discussed in group meetings.

- Penalties and violation of the Sunshine Law or an intentional violation is a non-criminal infraction punishable by a fine of \$500 and a knowing or intentional violation is a second-degree misdemeanor punishable by \$500 or a jail term not to exceed 60 days.

Chair Dr. Zeman summarized that the Board is subject to the Sunshine Law; therefore, the rules should be followed and communication with each other should be through Ms. Saunders. Fact-based information can be shared with Ms. Saunders, who would receive and distribute the information. The key is that members have people to ask about any questions whenever they think they are crossing the line or might cross the line. Board members are also citizens of Florida, so if anyone does not like the way the law is written, there are things that can be done, but not as a member of the Board; it can be done as a citizen of Florida.

Mr. Large commented that the law violates his personal rights and it is a violation to send members an email because of the potential that someone could respond. He contacted the Attorney General's office and after talking to City Attorney Spence, it was suggested he contact his local Representative, which he did. This Board does not do anything that would impact anyone's job; members are a group of people interested in education and they cannot discuss what is going on from the last meeting. He encouraged every member to contact their Representatives and request they consider changing this.

City Attorney Spence advised they are not trying to censor; information can be presented during an open meeting. Advisory Boards have been used as proxies by Commissions that would delegate certain decision-making authorities to them and that is why the Board is included.

Chair Dr. Zeman advised that Board members are not encouraged to send information directly to members; the Board's liaison can perform a useful streaming function to move factual information between members not related to any issues that might come up. In his opinion, the inability for a City liaison to share information that is not in violation of the Sunshine Law is likely to encourage people to engage in electronic submissions, which would be a real violation of the Sunshine Law. He thought a more reasonable policy could be taken in terms of allowing Board liaisons to be the gatekeeper and review things to make sure they are factual and appropriate to share between meetings. There is an abundance of caution that sometimes prohibits good information flow and demoralizes people who volunteer their time to these Boards. Not allowing Ms. Saunders to share information has a risk of people sharing information around her.

Mr. Sponsler concurred with Mr. Large. He likes that the Board limits their meetings, but believes if things were brought to Ms. Saunders' attention, some of the concerns and issues members want to advise the City Commission on could be added to the agenda.

Chair Dr. Zeman stated that new agenda items can always be nominated. They want to be mindful of everybody's participation and major concerns, which will be considered as a Board. As new things are mentioned, the Board will vote to see if they should be added as Strategic Initiatives; otherwise, they may be discussed at the next meeting and passed as a Communication to the Commission.

V. Presentation: Bennett Elementary School, Danielle Smith, School Principal

Chair Dr. Zeman welcomed Principal Danielle Smith. He noted that Joe Beck and Daniece Williams, are both part of the Smart Bonds team for executing money and building.

Principal Smith provided a brief presentation of Bennett Elementary School and noted there is currently a large enrollment of students who have reassignments because they want to go to a great school with a lot of programs. As part of the Smart Bond, money will be designated to make necessary repairs and renovations. After previous storms, it was realized that some of the renovations are not the best way to use the funds; instead of renovating, it is believed it might be better to rebuild. Bennett Elementary was built in 1952 and some of the buildings are the same. There have been many air-quality concerns, mold, and different issues that have had band-aids, which cannot continue. A new building is needed; however, they are going to phase things in and do repairs on the newer buildings. Because of the different phases, they want community input because they need a compelling reason for the School Board to approve adding additional funds, so a rebuild can be done.

Mr. Beck stated in early 2000, a Castaldi Analysis was conducted, which is when the State determines if replacing buildings is more cost effective than renovations. There are 11,600 planned residential units proposed as of last November and at least 78 different projects online in the proximity of Bennett Elementary. None of the big projects are in the Bennett Elementary boundary; however, it is believed improving the quality of the school would put them on a parity in terms of facility condition with Bayview, Harbordale, and VSY, so they are better prepared as an organization to offer high quality educational options in the east.

Ms. Saunders questioned current enrollment trends with Bennett Elementary, Bayview, VSY, and Harbordale.

Mr. Beck advised that VSY is a full magnet school and enrollment is through application only, with a choice area that aligns with Victoria Park, the Flagler Village area, and some other neighborhoods in Downtown Fort Lauderdale. VSY is always full; there is always a

wait list. Bayview has been the same and has a longstanding culture of being one of the most cherished schools in the entire County and it is always enrolled at full capacity. Harbordale is the most important to mention in the context of Bennett Elementary. The schools are similar in size; Harbordale has a capacity of 480 and Bennett Elementary has a capacity of about 540 and both were built in the 1950's. Both schools had similar enrollments through the early 2000's, though Bennett Elementary was a little higher. Harbordale always struggled enrolling neighborhood students because it was older, but the school was always filled with reassignments by people who worked Downtown. Once the facility upgrades were done and the original buildings were replaced, the inbound enrollment increased dramatically. Bennett Elementary has struggled with enrollment and has been sharply declining since 2015 and it now has the lowest enrollment of any of the mainstream mainline elementary schools in Broward County, at about 310 students. Last year, the official enrollment count was 327.

Chair Dr. Zeman commented that he was trying to link together the facilities and what goes on inside. He questioned the costs of rebuilding or remodeling and scrapping and new construction.

Mr. Beck stated there was nothing present; however, he or Ms. Williams could get some estimates. Originally, the Smart budget for Bennett Elementary was quite a bit of an under fund, even for just the renovation work. A Needs Assessment was conducted in 2014 and the original budget was about \$1.8 million. Those projects, which do not include any replacement, is currently estimated at about \$2.4 million. Consultants have developed different options for replacement. Renovation is about \$2.4 million. The replacement cost, depending on the size and square footage of the new building, could ultimately give Bennett Elementary a capacity ranging between 480 and its current capacity of 542, on the low end was about \$10 million to the high end of about \$15 million. He clarified that \$1.8 million was in the Smart Bond for Bennett Elementary.

Principal Smith advised that Debate was added, which has been a great success. They did the Cambridge program last year and are integrating the global perspectives, which is the feeder pattern where they do the Cambridge Pathway to Sunrise Middle School and then to Fort Lauderdale High School with the goal of children completing the program and being able to have more opportunities for college scholarships. The Best Buddies program was also implemented, where students in general education classes mentor each other and there is a Student Council this year. Their academics with student learning gains have gone up. Principal Smith posted a meeting at Bennett Elementary and shared a video of great things going on. They are working with social emotional learning and since she has been there, morning announcements have been added. She invited everyone to visit the school. Their goal is to have a book in hand all the time, literacy everywhere. The building is not stopping them but having a beautiful new facility would help. She quoted one of her teachers who said, "You put lipstick on a pig" and sometimes she feels that is what they are doing. It is a clean place to work, but the building is old, there are issues with the air quality, and there are four different tiles on the

floor because they have been replaced so many times; equity is important when going to public school.

Chair Dr. Zeman questioned what options the Education Advisory Board could do in support of Bennett Elementary School.

Principal Smith commented that it would be helpful if Board members could give feedback regarding their thoughts and if they would support a new building. The biggest thing is the \$1.8 million allocated to what they need to move forward. The question is if the School Board is willing to take a risk on investing in Bennett Elementary because it is a huge investment. They need community support that a new building is worth it.

Mr. Lukic watched the video presentation that Ms. Saunders linked in the emails regarding Bennett Elementary plans and he thinks investing in schools should always be a priority. He liked the option to include a community so residents could use the school after hours for different events; he thought that would help their case to get the funding. He mentioned the chart provided in the video and noted that it alluded to Harbordale receiving funding for their renovation prior to the recession, which was completed in 2008, and enrollment increased at that time, but Bennett Elementary did not have success because they were unable to renovate. Harbordale and Bennett Elementary seemed to be on an essentially level playing field up until 2015; only after 2016 to 2020 did the enrollment plummet. He questioned if there were any other reasons attributed aside from the buildings as to why enrollment is falling and if there is anything the Board can do to help alleviate that.

Mr. Beck thought 2009 was the year Harbordale completed the last of its replacement buildings, which was the main classroom building on campus. He noted that in addition to the facility quality tarnishing the school, in 2013-2014 Lauderdale Manors Elementary School in west Fort Lauderdale was closed due to poor performance and children from that school were rebounded to several surrounding neighborhood schools. Bennett Elementary was not part of the rebounding, but during the first year they were offered a priority choice for students from that school. Correlation does not equal causation, but prior to 2015, Bennett Elementary had been an A school consistently and when children are shifted from schools that suffered poor performance, they often shift that poor performance with them. Bennett Elementary suffered a few years of State letter grade decline following 2015 and eventually ended up as low as a D grade school. Bennett Elementary is a wonderful school in a great neighborhood that has driven away its customer base.

Mr. Lukic commented that many parents take into consideration the quality of the building along with both the Professors and teachers; however, it takes more time before parents can feel comfortable and know the quality of the teacher. He thought funding would help attract more residents.

Mr. Beck concurred.

Ms. Jaramillo mentioned the issue of mold and air quality and questioned if there is recent information because that would be an issue for parents, as well as the aesthetics of the school. Parents may be hesitant to send their children in a building that potentially has mold or poor air quality. That could be a push for renovation if it is a health and safety issue and if there is current data on the quality of air or the level of mold occurring within the school.

Principal Smith stated all that information is public record. The rooms have been tested for different things and there is a process they need to follow if any type of air quality concerns is detected. Currently, there are no air quality concerns in the building; however, just the fact that it is an older system, the HVAC breaks down and when the air is off the rooms get warm. There are not any current “concerns” or mold in the building, but she believes this has been discussed since there was some negative publicity and concerns in the past.

Mr. Sponsler mentioned that he graduated from an 1883 high school and they are still using the same buildings. He teaches at Fort Lauderdale High School and the building he works in is less than 15 years old and they have mold. He questioned how many students at VSY and at Harbordale do not live in the boundary.

Mr. Beck stated that VSY does not have a boundary; roughly 700 kids are magnet kids.

Mr. Sponsler commented that some of the magnet kids are from the Victoria Park area.

Mr. Beck mentioned the priority areas, Victoria Park, Collee Hammocks, Flagler Village, and some other Downtown neighborhoods. He did not have data for this school year, but did have data from last school year, which he could provide.

Ms. Saunders suggested that a deeper look be done at a different meeting around some of the demographics of the schools to provide an overall arch and context. There is an interest in understanding enrollment by neighborhood as well. This is an opportunity for the City in partnership with Broward County Public Schools and Bennett Elementary to create a call to action to get community members more engaged in education. As a group, this has been important, and they have been advocating. It was intended to have community forums this year, which will look a little different in the virtual environment. Some things being discussed are ways the City can help to promote this opportunity for residents to help shape education. She thought it would be helpful to collect as much community input as possible to substantiate the demand for the school as they look long-term at the future of Bennett Elementary School. She would like to see that expanded more broadly, with Bennett Elementary being an opportunity to try strategies to promote engagement. The Next-Door app has been leveraged to promote input and involvement while working with our Communications Team to explore other channels in which they

can help to engage community members. There is an opportunity as a City to do that more broadly across all areas and all schools to get that high level of engagement.

Mr. Relyea agreed with Ms. Saunders. He teaches at Nova High School and is currently teaching some Cambridge classes. Students who successfully complete the Cambridge program qualify for the Bright Future Scholarship, which means a free four-year university. He knows their data is good and the video presentations are amazing. The thing working against Bennett Elementary is the “Pig they have to keep putting lipstick on”, which is the facility. There needs to be a better job of marketing, which this Board has discussed for years. The marketing team works perfectly, and if you are compelled to put your best foot forward, the facility is not tied around your neck. Nova comes with a reputation as being a fantastic school; however, when the Needs Assessment was conducted six or eight years ago, the school graded as the single neediest campus in Broward County public schools. Their reputation remains because they are an A grade. If the marketing tool is used it can overcome the fact that the entire facility is not beautiful. He mentioned Harbordale and stated it is a fantastic school. He thinks Covid provides a unique opportunity where strengths can be played because everyone is at home and no one can see the physical school.

Ms. Lockwood indicated that context is missing. To put forward a justification of rational, we need a bigger picture; our concentration is Fort Lauderdale schools only. We need to have our own prioritization list about why Bennett Elementary should go to the top and why this Board is putting their attention and focus there. We need to be clear that Stranahan has needs, Fort Lauderdale High School has over-capacity issues, and other schools with challenges are on the Bond list. She is not clear that low enrollment is because of the building or if there are other factors and if the other factors are something the Board can help work on and support. She felt a little different about the pandemic than Mr. Relyea. Come January when the Property Tax Bills come in, we are going to be in a different place in terms of dollars and cents and what is available to spend on what. We must plan for a new abnormal environment; we are not going back to the same old. From a design standpoint, there are structural considerations, but she questioned if this was the time to be talking about a new building and if this was a priority. There is great marketing, but she agreed that a strong spreadsheet is needed that says the reasons and substantiation of why the Board is putting this at the top of the list.

Chair Dr. Zeman stated that prioritization is a great idea; it is not something the Board has done before, but it is something that can be done. He acknowledged Alex Collazo and questioned if he had some thoughts about Bennett Elementary.

Principal Smith thanked everyone for their feedback, questions, and concerns. One of the reasons they wanted to attend this meeting was because a survey was put out and there were not as many responses as they hoped. She requested everyone take the survey because that will help determine how they move forward.

Chair Dr. Zeman questioned if a link sent from Principal Smith to Ms. Saunders could be forwarded to Board members.

Ms. Saunders stated she could forward the link to Board members; it is on all the City's social media channels.

Mr. Collazo mentioned Ms. Lockwood's comments and stated that homeschooling is not going to continue. His son started at Bennett Elementary School yesterday. They considered private school in the past, but after visiting Bennett, they were able to appreciate the diversity, the faculty, and the staff. As times are changing, one of the major concerns is security. A new facility could help Bennett Elementary. He is President of the Civic Association in Poinsettia Heights and they worked hand in hand with Bennett Elementary for quite some time. He attended some of the Education Advisory Board meetings in the past where they were able to hammer out a deal that allowed them to have meetings at Bennett Elementary, which has been extremely helpful until Covid 19 put an end to that. On behalf of the Poinsettia Heights Civic Association, he also advocates for their area and new families coming in. He can personally attest to having discussions and overhearing discussions of how their area and neighborhood gets overlooked due to the state of the public schools in their area. In conclusion, the school is long overdue for a major overhaul. Let's invest our taxpayer money smartly in the right place and spend it on the schools, education, on the kids, and on a new facility, where they can learn and be safe.

Chair Dr. Zeman stated there is an opportunity that is bigger than Bennett Elementary to remind people of the role of each City in advocating even though they do not fund. We can advocate for students to go to great schools, public or private, and for them to have tremendous opportunities, but there is an opportunity at Bennett Elementary to learn more and try to keep this issue with us for the next couple months. As more data is received, more research will be conducted. There are two opportunities in front of this Board; one is if we can do a prioritization and advocate through the City Commission for this being the highest priority in the City, which would hopefully influence the County and their allocation of dollars either for the renovation or for something better. He pointed out that there are \$10 million to \$15 million homes in Fort Lauderdale and we are talking about building a school for \$10 million or \$15 million that serves 540 students. If we cannot find money to build great facilities for students, but we build houses on the beach that are worth more, we have a problem. We cannot give up just because a year is a crisis year or the money is tight, there is Smart Bond money. We should do what is right first and if it takes an extra year to get the money, that is the way it is.

Ms. Lockwood mentioned there are lots of elementary institutions between Harbordale and Bennett Elementary and we are comparing one to the other. Harbordale is top line and she thought other comparisons should be done as well within the prioritization.

Chair Dr. Zeman commented about what does not work well in political discussions and

what is influential. The Board needs to be mindful of the politics and needs to be clear about analytics and prioritization. As Ms. Saunders mentioned, at the next meeting we should discuss what goes on inside the facility, which is just as important in terms of building or not rebuilding. Mr. Relyea mentioned that Nova's facility is amongst the worst in his area; however, they continue to put together A rated education, first flight graduating classes, and above and beyond performance in many aspects of education.

Mr. Sponsler commented that Nova is a school of choice. He still wants to know how many students are at VSY and Harbordale that do not live in Fort Lauderdale. Mr. Beck stated that he had data from last year on those questions.

Mr. Beck advised that the demographics and enrollment planning is published on their website. VSY has 93 kids coming from the priority zone out of 698. Harbordale has 310 in the neighborhood out of 509, which increases every year and opportunities for reassignments are diminishing. Bennett Elementary has 133 from the neighborhood out of 327.

Mr. Sponsler stated they are talking about a difference between \$2.4 million and \$10 million to \$15 million. He does not want anyone to misconstrue his questions because he is a firm believer in community schools and that elementary should serve the local community first. He understands the need for Bennett Elementary to be an improved facility for the sake of the students. His point is that we allow VSY to be populated by children who do not live in the City of Fort Lauderdale or near the school and Bennett Elementary is not that far from VSY. There are 600 seats at VSY that go to children, many of which leave and go to Beachside Montessori and then come back to Fort Lauderdale High School. If economic times are tough, maybe advocating for more than an upgrade to the existing facilities is not necessarily the best path. He wants Board members to be aware that some of the City schools are serving people outside the City and some of the City residents are attending C and D rated schools because the County has bounded them outside of our City.

Chair Dr. Zeman requested Principal Smith and Mr. Beck attend next month's meeting. There are some additional facts the Board needs to think about, such as what the City can do in order to make a recommendation to Council about the build versus the remodel and how this Board can help galvanize the community through the Homeowner's Associations, PTA's, and other organizations, businesses, and realtors to help finish up the intent of that survey to learn what residents want in the next five to ten years from our neighborhood school. He liked Ms. Saunders' point that this Board is wedged in an organization that has some influence but no money for education. We continue to find opportunities to use this Board to gather information and to get the Commission to use their influence to do good things; sometimes the Board can do things to directly support the schools. The idea that what goes on inside the school might best be determined by a group of people who get new data. Mr. Sponsler stated local reasonably sized elementary schools focused on the needs of the neighborhood and continued to produce

excellent results. Taking students from inside or outside is just as important as the facility. He suspected that after discussion over the next month or two, the Board would settle on what could be done about the build versus remodel issue, but they could work for a long time to help think about how to gather enough input so there is enough information about what goes on inside the facility.

VI. Old Business

A. School Reopening

Not discussed.

B. Joint Use Parks Initiative Update

Ms. Saunders advised that the playground at Bennett Elementary will be a new joint use park situated in a park desert in our City. There has not been a ribbon-cutting or grand opening due to the Corona Virus, but a ribbon-cutting would be a great way to launch this larger initiative to expand joint use parks across their City. From a property perspective, it is contiguous with Sunrise Middle School. The Board has engaged Principals and having conversations around joint-use possibilities. They have looked at Sunrise Middle and Bennett Elementary collectively, trying to explore any improvements that might be available at Sunrise Middle that could also be a larger benefit to Bennett Elementary School. Several upgrades regarding joint-use parks were shared last week and this has been a collaborative project with Broward County Public Schools and school Principals. Throughout this process, the focus has been on creating win-win projects. Funding is limited even though dollars were earmarked in the Parks Bond, which was approved by voters. They were very cognizant to make sure they had a fair and methodical approach as they evaluate the possibility of exploring these joint-use sites. The importance of prioritizing is so they can maximize the impact of the City, particularly when looking at limited resources and how a high return on investment can be achieved.

Martha Steinkamp commented that it looks like they will be meeting with the Parks Advisory Board at the next meeting, possibly in a month or so. On a personal level, she knows AECOM, which is a global company with several divisions, one of which is a translation division; they are very responsible. She thinks the Parks Bond and all the schools and parks are going to be in good hands by being administered by this company.

Ms. Saunders stated that Ms. Steinkamp is a member of the Parks and Recreation Beaches Advisory Board and was designated by the Board to be a liaison on the joint-use parks project. She has been very diligent in providing updates to the Parks Advisory Board to keep them abreast of the progress being made. She thinks we have developed a criteria and methodology that the City and Broward County Public School officials have agreed to and that the Principals believe this is a fair rubric to assess. The next step as part of the Parks Bond process, will be more community meetings. There was a holding

period to understand if we might be able to do those in person; however, things must be done a little differently in a virtual environment. The Parks Program Manager will develop these virtual rooms to promote community conversations and will build off some of the suggested improvements already outlined within the list of projects presented to the voters at the time of the Parks Bond Referendum. The next phase, as it relates to the joint use, goes back to the rubric and identifying the short list of schools that would be most beneficial to be part of this first phase of community meetings.

Vice Chair Ellowitz thanked Ms. Saunders. She also thanked Heather Brinkworth for her service to the School Board and congratulated Sarah Leonardi on her election yesterday.

Chair Dr. Zeman also congratulated Ms. Leonardi, who will be their next District 3 School Board member.

C. Early Learning Centers

Not discussed.

VII. Open Discussion

Chair Dr. Zeman mentioned that people join this Board to have a voice. The agenda will be pared down to make sure speakers have specific time slots they will be held to and at 8:00 p.m. they are going to open to people sharing ideas and things they read about, talking about why they are on this Board, and how this Board can make education better. Toward the end, things will be wrapped up, minutes will be approved, Communications to the Commission will be done, and the Board will decide if any ideas discussed should be considered the following month as a Strategic Initiative. Once something becomes a Strategic Initiative, it is followed and information is gathered, trying to make progress on it. It is a good way to continue and we are at the point where more time can be spent putting it together.

The next meeting is on September 20, 2020 and it will probably be virtual. It was noted that 30 people attended the meeting last month and this month.

VIII. Closing

Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

[Minutes transcribed by C. Guifarro, Prototype, Inc.]