

.Neighborhood Survey/Needs Assessment Committee Meeting
Monday February 11, 2008, 4-6pm
Honan-Allston Library
North Allston, MA

ATTENDEES:

Monika Bankowski
Mary-Helen Black
Martiza Ciliberto
Keith Collar
Ellin Flood-Murphy
Michael Hanlon
Linda Kowalcky
Kevin McCluskey
Rita Vaidya
Brent Whelan

MEETING MINUTES

- Mary-Helen discussed the agenda items
- Michael Hanlon was concerned about survey being completed in the fall, he feels that it should be done in the summer in order to begin new programs in the fall; he asked about the survey to include all Allston & Brighton
- Ellin Murphy agreed but said that the survey will cover more areas than education; said that some programs could be started in the fall without waiting for the results of the survey
- Brent Whelan said that the Ed Portal should be up and running in September
- Linda Kowalcky said that the Ed Portal will be open in the spring; math and science enrichment should be up and running by summer time
- Mary-Helen Black said that Harvard established an Internal Advisory Committee (IAC) to work on programs and ideas; after the survey is complete, the results will help to drive programming at the Ed Portal
- Linda Kowalcky said that the role of the committee is to support the market research firm; in the future the Education Advisory Group will be formed by Harvard to advise on the future programs
- Brent Whelan asked if the IAC is a short-term body to advise on programming
- Mary-Helen Black said that the internal IAC provides ideas on programming and brainstorming internally at Harvard
- Michael Hanlon asked who attends the IAC meetings
- Kevin McCluskey said that the IAC group is there to provide advice outside of the Task Force process to see where Harvard's capacity aligns with community aspirations; Harvard called people internally to talk about the programs that can be added; Harvard established an internal model to see how the advisory committee structure would work

- Michael Hanlon said that it feels that the Ed Portal program will explode all over the City and at the end will not benefit the Allston/Brighton community
- Ellin Murphy said that the Gardner should not be the main focus
- Kevin McCluskey said that Gardner is the existing vehicle for delivering the programs to the neighborhood and over time the Ed Portal will take that over
- Linda Kowalcky said that over time there will be a formal advisory group to make decisions regarding priorities and programs
- Rita Vairdya said that about 71% of Allston/Brighton children go to the Gardner
- Ellin Murphy said that Gardner is a pilot school and it has to take kids from the City; she said that the community center would be a lot more beneficial for the community because not all the children go to the Gardner school; amenities at the community center such as pool, computer rooms, etc. would be more useful to the neighborhood; looking at the large picture of what's currently available for the community, the community center would be used not only by children but also by the adults and elderly, it would be used more widely
- Mary-Helen Black said that the timeline is the best estimate of what's going to happen; some things may happen earlier and others may take some time; RFQ should go out within the next two weeks and the RFP in about three weeks; originally the purpose of the survey committee was to discuss education; there is a plan to bring more people who are experts in different topics;
- Brent Whelan said that the committee should have the time to discuss the questions that need to be included in the survey
- Michael Hanlon said that the community has articulated in many different ways as to what they are looking for; it should be the community's decision and not the outside experts'; the Task Force has advised as to what the community benefits should be
- Linda Kowalcky said that the needs assessment is to collect data and not to make decisions; the final decision will belong to the Task Force, the City and Harvard.
- Mary-Helen Black said that this is why the Task Force members are on the committee
- Ellin Murphy said that it would be helpful to hear from the experts as to what they have to say about questions regarding education; they would help the committee to shape the questions for the survey; she proposed that after the school vacation the committee should meet every week; suggested that there should be a meeting with experts from the City before the committee meets with the consulting firm;
- Brent Whelan said that people know a lot about this community; experts can be predominant in the discussion
- Ellin Murphy said that the information from the experts can be requested ahead of time
- Linda Kowalcky explained the census data; City/BRA will partner with Census Bureau and provide more results; survey is done by regions; the data is not perfect but can be compared to previous years and give a hint whether or not anything has changed significantly;
- Michael Hanlon asked whether the BPS knows what areas children are from; how many school aged children there are currently in Allston;
- Linda Kowalcky said that BPS collects their own data and does not rely on Federal Research; they try to collect info from each BPS school and based on that information

they know where the children live; there are also agreements with Archdiocese and parochial schools;

- Kevin McCluskey asked about the use of the consultants; asked if the committee envisions the consultant collecting the information & taking the secondary information, summarizing the data and reporting back to the committee; he suggested thinking of ways to advance the process & get things done quickly
- Brent Whelan said that the data is needed to figure out the questions
- Linda Kowalcky said that there is no reason to ask for things in the survey if information is already available
- Linda left the meeting
- Michael Hanlon said that whatever happens there is no 100% guarantee
- Kevin McCluskey said that you can have a wider scope but information on N. Allston can be pulled out from the overall survey
- Michael Hanlon said that Harvard can be asked to mail the survey out to every household in Allston/Brighton
- Kevin McCluskey said that Harvard will use whatever mechanism necessary to collect the most accurate data in order to make the best decision for the community in the long term; said that other organizations have done surveys in the past and some of the information will not be a surprise to the community
- Mary-Helen Black said that the survey has to be sent out to all Allston/Brighton households with extra number of surveys in the impact area
- Rita Vaidya suggested to make sure that the survey is all weighted out in all levels of population
- Brent Whalen said that the committee is not there to decide what gets build; their role is to present data
- Kevin McCluskey said that whatever is established (facility under which the programs will function), who will have access to those programs(?); there is an issue of capacity if programs will be desired by more people than they were originally intended for; it's all about finding balance in the future;
- Rita Vaidya asked if Brighton residents are going to be included in the survey
- Mary-Helen Black said that all sorts of people will have a chance to voice their opinions
- Elin Murphy said that the needs are similar (squeezed by BU & BC); there are people in Brighton who won't come to Allston
- Michael Hanlon said that when the survey will end, the analysis may begin; asked if between now and July, Harvard would consider offering the community e.g. night of baseball, summer camp, tutoring, etc.; he asked what Harvard is planning to do in terms of education and other benefits
- Kevin McCluskey said that the Internal Advisory Committee is in place to discuss the possible programs and expand the existing ones; their role is not the legal obligation, it is people's willingness to help and come up with new ideas
- Mary-Helen Black said that the Ed Portal will be open in the spring with the idea to target N. Allston/N. Brighton residents; eventually the program will be expanded and will welcome all residents from Allston/Brighton & enhance experience; there will be programs running in spring & summer
- Rita Vaidya asked how the programs will be advertised

- Mary-Helen Black said that most likely through direct mail, e-mail, internet, postings at the library, etc.; there will be math tutoring, expository writing, public speaking, enrichment programming through museums; there will be programs developed alongside with the Gardner school; in the fall there will be adult programming
- Keith Collar from Graduate School of Education explained how the GSE works and that it is a research school; 3000 educators in GSE programs;
- Michael Hanlon asked what the GSE could do for the community especially teachers who teach in the Allston/Brighton community or even outside the community;
- Keith Collar said that there are 13 different Master Programs, Doctoral Programs in 6 concentrations, Professional education programs;
- Michael Halnon asked if GSE recruits
- Keith Collar said that GSE does extensive outreach, through marketing team and web
- Kevin McCluskey said that where the relationship is headed between Harvard and the community, it may result in things like scholarship programs, etc.
- Brent Whalen asked if the GSE would be able to study the effects of the Ed Portal or the community school; is there a local interest for research
- Keith Collar said that the faculty directs their own research; there are many researches that are being done in Boston area; his job is to make sure that the faculty is aware of the possibility of a research
- Brent Whalen asked whether or not due to the partnership with Harvard, there is a chance that at some level the faculty can be enforced or asked to do a research
- Keith Collar answered that he didn't know
- Brent Whalen said that it doesn't look like there is a partnership with the community
- Kevin McCluskey said that Harvard is trying to understand the culture of the community and the community needs to understand the culture that Harvard brings; the community should not force the changes and the ways Harvard operates
- Brent Whalen said that the substantive ways would be better than symbolic responses
- Mary-Helen Black said the Ed Portal is the first visible step that will connect Harvard with the community; she said that there are other ways of asking the faculty to do research on the effects of the Ed Portal or the community school; she said that students will be involved with the programs and will bring ideas and possibilities to the faculty members
- Brent Whelan said that the community school is a good idea and the community is waiting for somebody to grab it and go with it
- Keith Collar mentioned the Harvard Family Research Project web site
- Ellin Murphy said that many after school programs are too expensive for middle class families and after school program is an issue for a lot of people
- Kevin McCluskey said that this would result in a good question for the survey
- There was a discussion about the after school programs, issues with bus transportation from schools to the after school facilities
- Michael Hanlon asked why Harvard cannot adopt a school
- Ellin Murphy said that the school would have to meet the Federal Guidelines
- Michael Hanlon said that there must be an university in the US that has adopted a school
- Ellin Murphy said that Leslie, Tufts, University of Chicago, Columbia had adopted different school programs

- Mary-Helen Black announced that the next Survey Needs Assessment Committee meeting will take place on Monday, February 25th from 4:00pm – 6:00pm at the Honan-Allston Library.