Transcript of Proceedings
December 16, 2015

Whittier/ Wainwright Public Hearing

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WHITTIER/WAINWRIGHT BOUNDARY REVISION

PUBLIC HEARING

December 16, 2015

Fircrest, Washington
APPEARANCES

Moderator:

Dick Withycombe
BE IT REMEMBERED that on Wednesday, December 16, 2015, at 555 Contra Costa Avenue, Fircrest, Washington, at 6:06 p.m., before Eva P. Jankovits, Certified Court Reporter, the following proceedings were had, to wit:

MR. WITHYCOMBE: Thanks, everyone. I want to get as many of you as possible arranged and started this evening. We -- we promised you that we would begin at 6:00, and I want to try to be sure that we keep our commitment to start on time. All of us who have been in any way involved in this particular boundary process appreciate enormously the comments, the concerns, the participation, the involvement that we have received from so many of you. And we want to thank you for that. Obviously, any time a new school is built, or several new schools are built, there is a need to do something to adjust a school attendance area so that youngsters are available to move into that beautiful new school and other children are arranged somewhat
1 in other schools as well.
2     And so tonight is a public hearing, primarily a
3 public hearing, as a strategy on the part of a
4 committee represented here, part of a committee, who
5 have been asked by the superintendent and the school
6 board to develop a series of recommendations in
7 relationship to what the attendance areas ought to be
8 for the schools that you see arranged on the map,
9 some of whom, maybe all of those schools, are schools
10 that you have children attending today or will have
11 children attending in the future. And so, for you,
12 this is important work, and it's important work for
13 us as well.
14     Tonight's meeting, as I said, is primarily a
15 public hearing in the sense that it's an opportunity
16 for those of you who are here, who wish to, to offer
17 comments regarding the proposed boundaries as you see
18 them drawn on the map. They are preliminary. They
19 are preliminary. And they are subject to change
20 depending upon what we hear and how we are
21 influenced, if we are, with respect to changes that
22 you believe still should be made.
23     Ultimately, the responsibility for making
24 recommendations lies with the -- specifically with
25 the committee, not with members of the district staff
who are serving in a consultive or technical role and
helping the committee with their work, not by Dick
Withycombe who's asked to perform some fairly
specific responsibilities by way of facilitating the
work of the group. Our support is just that. It is
technical support. It doesn't have to do with
decision-making.

There are two responsibilities that the committee
has. The first of those responsibilities is to
develop a set of recommendations regarding how to
assign students as the result of the location of
school attendance areas in the schools that you see
on the map and to make those recommendations
available to the superintendent.

The second responsibility the committee has is to
be as thoughtful as possible, to listen to comments
and concerns that are brought to us by those of you
who are parents and community members, and to use our
own good judgment and to produce a series of
recommendations or proposals for the superintendent
and others that can help assist families and children
who are affected by these boundary changes, help them
in some ways with the transition, with the readiness
to move to a new school and with a school's ability
to welcome them and support them when they arrive,
and for parents as well.

Our next meeting is January 6th in the district administrative office in the center in the boardroom. And in that meeting the committee will be working to try to finalize the recommendations to develop transition recommendations about families' and students' support systems and to listen to each other as they listen to what those of you who are here tonight may wish to say to them.

This is not a Q&A session. This is not an opportunity to ask a series of questions and have committee members answer those questions this evening. It is, for us, an opportunity to take out our pencils and our paper and to listen very carefully to what people are saying and to come back to our next meeting and reflect on what we heard and decide if there are things that we can do or should do to adjust these preliminary recommendations in some meaningful way that is responsive to what we've heard tonight or what we've heard in subsequent meetings that we've been together in.

There is tonight a court reporter who is with us. Her responsibility is to construct a -- a description of the comments that are received so that we together will have, for our use, an exact replication of what
people have said so that we are both aware of the
effect nature of what's said and can be reminded of
the intent. So that's a part of tonight's
proceeding.

There are some fresh fruit, some coffee, some
water and some other things in the back of the room.

When you came in, some of our colleagues were
welcoming you and asking if you wanted to sign up to
speak this evening. I'm not sure that anybody signed
up to speak this evening, which makes for a very dull
hearing. However, we would be delighted, in the
absence of a sign-up sheet, if any of you would like
to come to the podium, use the mic, help us
understand where you live, if that would be helpful
to us, and offer the comments that you came this
evening perhaps to share.

And I will stay, and our committee will stay, as
long as there are comments that you wish to make. My
only rule with regard to that is, in a formal hearing
we would probably limit the amount of time that each
person has available to speak to somewhere in the
neighborhood of three or four minutes. And I will
try to gauge that for those of you who wish to speak
so that individual comments don't go on and on and
on, as much as we might respect that.
So that said, for those of you who came and it was an inquiry of just what does this proposed map look like, and that's the piece of business that you came tonight to see, once I have assured myself, and the committee has assured itself, that no one else wishes to speak, we will then shift our attention to the maps. And if there are some questions that we can answer before you leave, we'd be delighted to do that.

Some of you may have mistaken tonight's meeting for the opportunity to meet Santa Claus, and he and the truck is outside. So if you want to make this real quick, you still have time to catch Santa.

The bottom line, however, is that every school that's involved in this experience together has worked very hard to share with each other how important it is to be sure that children and families are supported as a result of the outcomes of their work.

Schools for any person -- parent, grandparent, others, and for children in particular -- are enormously important, and we understand that. And boundary work can be contentious, and we understand that.

At the end of the day, this committee has worked
1 enormously well and very hard to try to do the very
2 best it knows how for all of you who live in this
3 region. And I am very proud of them, and I'm very
4 appreciative of your time, and we're happy to have
5 you here.

6 So for those of you who would like to speak, I
7 will certainly invite you to this podium, ask you to
8 share with us your name and your address, hope that
9 you keep your remarks reasonably short, and thank you
10 before you begin and thank you when you conclude for
11 taking the time to be with us. Okay?
12
13 We are very friendly. We are very friendly. Is
14 there somebody who would like to -- who would like to
15 take a moment and share a comment with us? We would
16 be happy to have you do that. We, on the other hand,
17 would be -- would be equally happy to get up and move
18 from our chairs and where we are now and join you if
19 you would rather have us join you at one of these
20 maps and share a moment or two with you before you
21 leave. But I want this evening, in whatever form it
22 takes, to satisfy whatever objectives you had when
23 you came this evening. Okay?
24
25 I don't want you to be disappointed. I don't
26 want you to feel that your time spent tonight, in a
27 holiday season, was meaningless.
So if you would like to, we would love to hear from you. If you say to us, No thank you to that, I'd rather look at a map, I'd rather da-da-da-da, we'll -- we'll be glad to do that as well.

Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Would it be possible for one of the committee members to present the map and the boundaries to those of us who are out here, just as a whole so that we don't have to fuss around tables for that so then we know what -- what -- if we have ideas or anything that we need to express to the group, we can do that? Is that possible?

MR. WITHYCOMBE: I suppose it's conceptually possible. I haven't prepared anybody to do that. What would you -- what would you like them to be able to do?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, if you -- you could just go over where the boundaries are for the various schools for the audience members here who may not be familiar with that.

MR. WITHYCOMBE: Okay. Okay. That work for folks? Are we able to do that? Are we in a position to do that?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I think
that's fair.

MR. WITHYCOMBE: Okay. Let's --

let's start -- let's start with the school that began this work, which is Whittier/Wainwright. Can we begin with that, and just describe the outline of the -- of the --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I have to look at the boundaries.

MR. WITHYCOMBE: Sure.

MS. BASIL: I'm Donna Basil, principal of Wittier, and I'll share with you the boundaries that the committee -- the latest boundaries that the committee has proposed.

And I'll start with the north side, and that's North 19th. And on the west side is 67th Avenue. On the right side is Orchard. You know what I'll do, is I'll move this so that you can see this a little bit better.

So it jogs a little bit, as you can see. The east side is Orchard Street. This street here is Center Street. This goes along -- hmm. It's not quite Tyler. Yeah. And then along 36th Street South and then Tyler. And the south side here is South -- no, I don't think it's quite Cirque. No. No. And then this is that -- Orchard continues. This is
South 56th Street. This is where Cirque -- 56th and Cirque are the same name. And then it jogs south here to, I believe, South 64th Street, so... And then 67th Street West on the west side of the borders.

And if you'd like to come up to take a closer look, please do. And I hope that I did an adequate job of describing the -- the boundaries.

Mr. Copeland?

MR. COPELAND: You just missed the little southern section that was added below --

MS. BASIL: Okay. All right.

And this -- this is the new proposed addition. It's a southern -- the southern part of this, which I believe is -- I know includes Hannah Pierce Road, but Lakewood Drive West. And this is an additional piece that was added to the -- the proposal.

MR. WITHYCOMBE: Okay. Great. Did that help with that?

And then Franklin --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Other schools here?

MS. BASIL: Yes. We have other principals here who can share as well.

MR. WITHYCOMBE: You would --
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We have --
Franklin has a change we've just added.
MR. WITHYCOMBE: We've added a little piece, yeah.
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Just added a piece.
MS. BASIL: Okay. So this is the Franklin area.
And, Keisha, if you want -- which additional piece was added?
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Part of the mall.
MS. BASIL: Okay.
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: From Procter to Tyler.
MS. BASIL: From Procter to Tyler.
So this was the additional -- in that lavender color, the addition.
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: In the southern section.
MS. BASIL: From 19th.
MR. WITHYCOMBE: We did -- we did that because there was space available at Franklin that
helps them stabilize that they can grow their --
their enrollment.
And then we went down to Arlington, and there is
a significant addition that we made there as well for
some of the same reasons.
Do you want to describe that at all in terms of
what changes were there?
MS. PYE-CARTER: Well, sure.
MS. BASIL: So Wendy is the
principal -- Wendy Pye-Carter is the principal of
Arlington.
MR. WITHYCOMBE: I'm sorry. I
think we're going to need -- sorry.
Sorry. This is -- this is -- this was not
staged, so we're doing the best we can.
MS. PYE-CARTER: Okay. So what we
did -- this is Arlington here (indicating). That was
our original boundary. And what we've done is we've
moved north to -- I think it's South 64th, so we've
added this piece from Edison on to Arlington, and
then we're over by South 74th, so 74th Street where
Mount Tahoma is.
So we're -- we're going to extend west on the
other side of South Tacoma Way down by Mount Tahoma
and the homes in back of Mount Tahoma on the side,
and then stop right here at South 80th. So this is a new addition, taking students from the existing Manitou Park and moving them over to Arlington and a few students from Edison to Arlington.

MR. WITHYCOMBE: And those -- and those changes were made because the two schools that we were taking some enrollment from were probably over capacity in terms of the existing school design and the enrollment. And we had some space that was available that we wanted very much to be able to use at Arlington. And it gave us the opportunity to do that.

MS. PYE-CARTER: Yes.

MR. WITHYCOMBE: So we're very pleased with those changes.

MS. PYE-CARTER: And Steve?

MR. WITHYCOMBE: Want to talk a little bit -- thanks -- thanks, Steve. Appreciate it. Thank you.

MR. MONDRAGON: Steven Mondragon, principal of Manitou Park.

And Donna and Wendy shared information of kind of what's going to be happening to our boundaries. We are very excited. (Speaking without microphone.) -- talk in the microphone.
THE COURT REPORTER: I'm sorry. I need you to either -- if I can't see you, I can't --

MR. MONDRAGON: Okay.

THE COURT REPORTER: -- understand you when you're speaking forward. Thank you.

MR. MONDRAGON: As was just mentioned, so, with preschoolers, we are a little bit below 700 students, and we are pledges of around 600, so we are very excited about having some of our students come to be -- just reducing class sizes because most of our -- like, we have -- currently have five kindergarten classrooms and we had our numbers show an additional kindergarten teacher; however, we do not have an additional classroom, so we have a teacher that's going to maybe Carlucci [phonetic], and so packed at the gills. And we -- with the reduction of this -- Arlington taking down here south and Whittier/Wainwright to the north, it provides some -- an opportunity for us to review some of our numbers and get closer to around 600, high 500s.

MR. WITHYCOMBE: Anyone else?

That -- that kind of is the -- is the fundamental changes, right, that we have?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)
MR. WITHYCOMBE: Yeah. Let's --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Eric.

MR. WITHYCOMBE: Let's capture just a bit, Eric.

MR. KONISHI: I'm Eric Konishi, principal of DeLong Elementary School. So, essentially, DeLong's boundaries in a lot of ways got smaller. And we have everything in green here, this forest green area, as far west as Mildred, all the way up to Sixth Avenue and down (indicating).

Like Keisha said, we carved out all the way to Tyler for Franklin, and everything north of 19th, students would be continuing to go to DeLong. Other than that, it's pretty much what was originally planned.

MR. WITHYCOMBE: And it keeps your enrollment about where, Eric?

MR. KONISHI: 500.

MR. WITHYCOMBE: About 500.

MR. KONISHI: Yeah.

MR. WITHYCOMBE: Which is -- which is clearly our target, or very close to our target.

So the -- the last school -- one of the last schools that was part of our -- part of our committee is Geiger, which is over here (indicating). And we...
have gone back and forth, and for those of you who were with us earlier, we had an undesignated area here to be decided. And at the end of the day, at least for the moment, rather than putting that area with Geiger or moving it across and somehow adding it to a portion of Franklin, we left it with DeLong, which leaves most of that population in a position to continue to attend the school that they had been attending, which meets one of the objectives that the board gave us to try to minimize the numbers of movements of families and kids from school to school.

So that's a profile of where we are at. There were a number of objectives, obviously, one of which was to try to balance enrollment against the capacity of schools as best we could; one was to try to be sensitive to the nature of neighborhoods as best we could; one was trying to at least think about and minimize transportation distances to the extent we could and, obviously, from the standpoint of transitions, to be thoughtful and offer ideas about ways to help children and families who would be affected by these changes when they're adopted.

In this process, the recommendations will go from the committee that completes its work, if it can, on January 6th, and the recommendations from that
1 meeting will go on to the superintendent for review,
2 for evaluation and for eventual adoption and
3 transmitting the information on to the -- on to the
4 school board.
5 So tonight we are here, and we thank you for
6 being with us. Unless there is somebody who now
7 wishes to offer comment, and I don't know that I see
8 one who does --
9 You do?
10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.
11 Actually, I do.
12 MR. WITHYCOMBE: Good. We'd be
13 delighted to have you.
14 If there are others among you who would like to
15 as well following this, we'd be happy to have you do
16 that as well. Thank you.
17 MS. SULLIVAN: My name is Krista
18 Sullivan, and I actually have a seventh grader going
19 into eighth grade, and I'm a little bit late in the
20 game only because life has been pretty crazy for me,
21 so my apologies.
22 MR. WITHYCOMBE: That's okay.
23 MS. SULLIVAN: Word around school
24 at Truman is that eighth graders are going to get
25 redesignated over to Wainwright, and they're going to
have to, you know, not be able to attend for their
eighth grade. So I'm not sure I -- you know, that
was one of the things that I was kind of curious with
the -- with the meeting. And, you know, they had
said that there would have to be extensive paperwork
if we wanted to have the middle schoolers stay where
they are instead of being transferred to the
Wainwright intermediate because it's the
intermediate.

And so, you know, I don't know. It's a lot --
lot of hearsay things going on, different parents and
stuff, so I guess I wanted -- I wasn't sure if this
meeting was strictly about elementary or if it's
about the breakdown also for the -- where the --
where the intermediates are -- if there's going to be
changes in that sense.

MR. WITHYCOMBE: This is --
MS. SULLIVAN: So --
MR. WITHYCOMBE: We have said this
is not a Q&A.

MS. SULLIVAN: No. And that --
MR. WITHYCOMBE: But, but, but --
MS. SULLIVAN: -- you know --
MR. WITHYCOMBE: But, but, but --
MS. SULLIVAN: Sorry.
MR. WITHYCOMBE: But, but, but.

But the question you have is one that we can answer. And if we answer it clearly for you, it will be helpful for you and others.

So with the questions you asked, let us try to answer it tonight so that you can leave with -- with -- with an understanding of what the situation actually is. Okay?

MS. SULLIVAN: (Nods head.)

MS. BASIL: So this is what I know:

Whittier/Wainwright is going to open up as a 4-6 school, and the intention is not to disrupt the lives of our students who are already attending comprehensive middle schools.

And I know SJ -- if there's anything that I'm leaving out, SJ supports us with enrollment services. But that's what we know. I mean -- and Justina Johnson, principal of Truman, is also here. So there's no plan to disrupt the existing education of your -- your student.

MS. SULLIVAN: Well, and that's what I was under the assumption from things that I had read. But then, like I said, it's a whole lot of talk that there was some different changes recently, that they're extending it past sixth grade, and I'm,
like, Okay. So I wanted to, you know, put that forth that, you know, I wanted to see if there was something else that was changing today. That's all, you know.

MS. BASIL: Yeah. Nothing that will affect your child. I mean, eventually Wainwright will be a 4-8 school.

MS. SULLIVAN: Yeah.

MS. BASIL: But your child will have already moved on at that point.

MS. SULLIVAN: Yeah.

MS. BASIL: And that's what we're --

MS. SULLIVAN: I was assuming, from what I was reading, but, you know, I wasn't sure if there was something as of today, so...

MR. WITHYCOMBE: Thanks for coming.

MS. BASIL: Yeah.

MS. SULLIVAN: Thank you.

MR. WITHYCOMBE: Thanks for asking the question, and, Donna, thank you for answering.

MR. HONEY: My name is Todd Honey, and I'm here and my wife, Tanya. And my daughter, Ella, goes to Whittier. She's a fifth grader.

We live at 1122 Magnolia Drive, and currently she
goes to Truman in the morning for a music -- she
plays the violin. It's very important to us that she
continues with that. She has established a
relationship with Ms. Shelton. Her older brother
went all the way through with Ms. Shelton at Wilson,
and that's what we want.
We -- I have no interest in her going to
Wainwright. We want her to be eligible to get into
sports and do those things. That's what I have to
say. And I don't understand why you have this
meeting and it's not a Q&A. What are we doing here?

MR. WITHYCOMBE: Okay.
MS. LECOMPTE: I'm Karen LeCompte,
and I live at 1081 Daniels Drive here in Fircrest. I
have a fifth grader.
As some of you know, I have raised several
questions before the committee and before community
members, and I have had many of my questions very
successfully answered. But what's happening here --
and I think the -- the Honey family is a prime
example of some of the things that are going on in
our community and perhaps others -- is that the
community has not been privy to updates and
information regarding policy and their children in
the middle school. And it probably would be very
helpful for our community and the parents who are concerned about their children to have some solid information from the district, not just sent to those of us who are giving you our e-mails, and I -- I do very much appreciate the information I received just recently from --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Roselyn.
MS. LECOMPTE: -- who was it? Yes.
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Roselyn.
MS. LECOMPTE: Yeah, Roselyn.

Very succinct, very appropriate, very informative, very easy to read, very clear. But I can't be the mouthpiece for the entire community, and I shouldn't be the information line for our community. That should be coming from the district so that parents who are concerned will understand what's happening, will not raise up in arms wondering.

So this is something that I recommend to the committee, is that, as soon as possible, you start publishing some answers to the questions that people are raising. And I think that they're the same questions that I raised.

MR. WITHYCOMBE: Okay.
MS. LECOMPTE: Okay? Thank you.
And, also, you know, I think many of us didn't understand exactly what went on when we started looking at boundaries because the domino effect is tremendous. And, yeah, I kind of raised a stink. You guys have done some really incredible work. And balancing enrollment is difficult; balancing socioeconomic groups is difficult; balancing programming is difficult; and I really commend you for that. Thank you very much.

MR. WITHYCOMBE: Thank you.

Anyone else?

I think, when we're finished then, we can walk over and chat with you for just a moment. We'd be glad to do that.

Anyone else, at least, for the microphone at the moment?

Then I'm going to call tonight's meeting over in terms of this element, the hearing portion. We would be very happy to have you who are here stick around for a few minutes if you'd like. We will get up and move to some of these maps. We'll take a few minutes. If there are questions, like the one that you asked, that we can answer before you leave, we'll try to do that.

And certainly I think we'll take under advisement
the broader issue of making sure that there's some kind of more substantial communication patterns with community -- with communities that are affected. We certainly can hear about that tonight. We know we need to do that immediately. We can make sure that happens. It's not something that we would ignore, nor is it something that we wouldn't care about. Okay?

So with that, thank you for being here. We'll get up. We'll gather around. We'll talk and chat. And then we'll wish each of you a really wonderful holiday, and thank you for being with us. Okay.

(Proceedings adjourned at 6:38 p.m.)
STATE OF WASHINGTON )    I, Eva P. Jankovits, CCR,  
County of King     )    a certified court reporter in  

I hereby certify:

That the foregoing transcript of proceedings was taken before me and completed on December 16, 2015, and thereafter was transcribed under my direction; that the transcript is a full, true and complete transcript of the proceedings;

That I am not a relative, employee, attorney or counsel of any party to this action or relative or employee of any such attorney or counsel and that I am not financially interested in the said action or the outcome thereof;

That I am herewith securely sealing the said deposition and promptly delivering the same to Attorney Shannon M. McMinimee.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my signature this 22nd day of December, 2015.

Eva P. Jankovits, CCR  
Certified Court Reporter No. 1915  
(Certification expires 7/3/16.)