NHE PTA Meeting minutes Nov. 7, 2014

In attendance

Maria Schick, Michelle Pendleton, Rebecca Cruse, Mary Hoffman, Brooke Vescovo, Uma Maheswari Balasubramanian, Manoj Anand Ananthakrishnan, Gina Keith, Karen Smith, Jennifer Hoskovec, Kyla McCulley, Leslie Schoenfield, Jennifer VanderSchoor, Heath Thibodeaux, Paula Carvelli, Ruth Parks, Shawn Kang, April McMath, Courie Anderson, Kate Potter

The meeting was called to order at 8:20 a.m. by President Maria Schick.

Meeting minutes

Michelle Pendleton made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the October PTA meeting. Karen Smith seconded the motion. The motion was approved with no dissent.

Treasurer’s report

The beginning balance for the NHE PTA main account was $67,747.70. The ending balance was $75,049.68. There is about $1,500 in the Paypal account.

SPARK Park

Jennifer VanderSchoor and Leslie Schoenfield handed out architectural rendering for park. (File is attached.) The committee factored in neighborhood desires and what SBISD would allow as they worked out the final plans.

The No. 1 priority was a leveled field and brand-new track. NHE is currently in talks with SBISD to fund or partially fund it. This is an $80,000 expense. In the last meeting with SBISD, a survey would be done with other schools who have not been rebuilt to see the condition of their tracks.

2: The Hills of Nottingham. Several health fitness teachers said hills are great for promoting fitness. Heath Thibodeaux said it was the most intriguing part of the plans.

3: Fitness stations. This would be geared toward people of all ages and can be used by children and adults. We still have to get approval by SBISD. Maria Schick said that NHE received a $5,000 grant from HEB through the 2013-2014 Knight Run that we are holding to use in this section. Jennifer Hoskovec said HEB really wants to close out the grant and need to get the plans by Dec. 1 so HEB can pay for it. The original plan was to spread out the stations, but this is tricky because SBISD requires the rubber fall surface underneath. It is more cost effective to have the equipment in one place.

4: More swings! This was the top request by teachers. This grouping of swings would include an ADA accessible swing and a tire swing (asked for by fifth graders each year).

The SPARK committee looked at adding to existing play areas, but because anything new must meet ADA requirements, it would require changes to every piece of equipment in the play area. This is why new swing area is inside the track.

5: Shade structure in the existing play area. It costs $30,000 to do the one large area. Because this is so expensive to install, the committee is looking at a grant that could possibly fund it.

6: Multi-use sports area on the field. This would include child-sized soccer goals that can be moved, but they will be available all of the time. In addition, it would include an improved baseball backstop.

7: Brick and wrought iron entrance will work with the new fencing. Bricks will be created to honor donors at a certain level and corporate sponsors. Fence is part of an SBISD decision because it wants to improve the perimeter security. This is not a SPARK issue, but an SBISD issue. NHE has complete open access right now, which is a security issue during the school day. The official entrance will be near the Pre-K area.

8: Updating Pre-K play area. We will be sprucing up the shed area and replacing the play structures that are falling apart. However, these will be similar temporary structures because if it’s a permanent structure, the whole area must be updated to meet ADA requirements.

9: Where existing USA map is, there will be a new play area with a large chess board, Gaga Pit, tetherball, and artistic mural. Because the Gaga Pit is played with balls, we are trying to work out how to ensure that the balls come out at the beginning of the recess period and are put away at the end of it. Hoping to have something similar to how it works with Fun Friday. We are moving forward so that kids can play with balls on the field.

Art installment will be a mosaic because we have the kiln on campus. Each child at the school will have a mark on the park in the mosaic. The committee wanted the art component in one place instead of everywhere.

10: New landscaping--as much as we can afford. We are working with Trees of Houston to try to get trees along entire perimeter. In the front of the school, we would like to install new sod, park-quality trash cans, and octagon shaped benches around the trees that will provide seating and still allow for the trees to grow. No grass will be under the trees because it will not grow there anyway.

Grand total for these plans is $300,000. The SPARK committee is hoping that our portion will be $200,000 to $220,000. This is a 2- to 3-year plan, the committee wanted an overarching plan where pieces can be added.

The question was raised asking if the numbers on the graphic match the priority of that item. The committee said that the track and field are first priority, followed by the fitness station, landscaping, chess board-gaga pit-tetherball area.

The question was raised about how much we already have raised. SPARK gave NHE $15,000. SBISD will give $5,000. And with money that is already available in the NHE PTA account, there is about $65,000 total available right now, including the SPARK and SBISD funds.

Kyla McCulley suggested having a bigger outside run to raise money.

The SPARK committee said it has been doing a lot of segmenting parts so people can fund certain items. For example, it did a grant request for the NFL’s Play 60 program, promoting the fitness station. Gina K said she could help with putting together an underwriting packet.

The SPARK committee said that they had to cut many of the ideas related to the knight theme because to these items, it would add more than $100,000 to the cost without adding anything usable to the playground. For example, in pre-K area, the committee wanted to get a dragon climb-on which would have cost $9,000. The drawbridge at the entrance of the park was $15,000. A castle play structure was $100,000 and would reopen ADA issue for everything in the main play area. SBISD also said no to adding the castle fort because of the cost and the affect it would have on the rest of the play area. The dragon head and tail in the hills added $20,000.

Kate Potter asked question about landscaping and maintaining it: Are we planning to budget to keep things up? The committee said the focus is not flowers, but larger items like grass, bushes and trees that will work with the landscape. We will not landscape once and be done because plants do need to be replaced with age, but these are items that will exist for years. Heath Thibodeaux pointed out that it is foolish to spend money if SBISD will not maintain it.

Mary Hoffman said that we need to make sure we transfer any assets so that SBISD will be required to maintain it. The question came up if there are assets with the garden and butterfly garden that should be transferred to SBISD. This is also an insurance issue.

Karen Smith wanted to know if the $65,000 was already in the budget. Brooke Vescovo said that she’s still working out the accounting because we are keeping the books in PT Avenue and it doesn’t work like a traditional accounting system. However, she said the $65,000 is available for this project.

Kate Potter wanted to show her appreciation to the SPARK coordinators and Maria for their work in putting together the plans.

Principal’s report

Mr. Moore said he has talked to the SBISD about the track. SBISD Superintendent Klussman and SBISD board members were there. Klussman said that he has to take a survey of the other tracks at schools that haven’t been rebuilt. So, for example, if nine schools have tracks that look as bad 2as ours, it may be hard to get approval. But if it’s at one or two, it is more likely that SBISD will assume the repairs. This would reduce the amount of fundraising for the SPARK Park by $80,000. The surveys are complete, and SBISD is now working on the numbers.

Enrollment will be at 449 the week of Nov. 10, 2014.

Judy Wallace will be holding a parent session on Jan. 22 from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. on how to help your kids become better readers and writers.

The math team is putting together web page so parents don’t have to hunt down resources on their own.

The 12-week benchmark tests will be coming for students in grades 2 through 5.

We have new cafeteria tables. District had extra cafeteria tables and offered them to us. Mr. Jose is trying to figure out how they will work out. The biggest challenge is that they do not fold up and move as easily as the old tables.

Mr. Moore thanked the SPARK committee for its work, and he thanked the gardening committee for the garden fencing. He also thanked all the parents who helped with field day.

A question was raised about the turnout for the Math In Focus meeting. Mr. Moore said about 21 parents attended and he thought it worked well.

In March, NHE will be doing a programming on anxiety with students. Kristie Moore, a professional counselor and Mr. Moore’s wife, will do this presentation.

Fundraising: Auction update

Kyla McCulley said the auction committee will need help Saturday morning (Nov. 8) to get the items from Courie Anderson’s house at 14806 Cindywood.

Maria Schick said online bidding has been going well, and there will be paper bidding at the actual event, with the last online bid as the starting bid. The committee is hoping to make $30,000, and to date, it has raised nearly $15,000 before the actual event. We had enough underwriting that all tickets will be profit. In addition, we could fund all staff and teacher tickets. 42 staff and teachers (including their guests) will be attending. Many of the underwriters are attending.

Online bidding will close Nov. 7 at 4 p.m. Bid sheets will then be printed and ready for the event.

We have to be out of Ninfa’s by 11 p.m.

Programs: Reflections

Gina Keith said that about 30 entries were turned in. Most of them were in the visual art category. Judging will occur on Nov. 10, and the entries that will go to district will be taken there on Friday.

A question was raised on the timing of the entry deadline because it happens during a busy time of year. Gina Keith said that this is set by the district, so we can’t do much on that.

Programs: Red Ribbon Week

Michelle Pendleton said that Red Ribbon Week went well. This is mainly a counselor-driven program, and the PTA works in support of what Ms. Halfin wants.

We still need to get the ribbons off of the trees at the front of the school.

The daily dress went well, and students enjoyed the NED Show. A question was raised about the yo-yos that are sold after the NED Show. Mr. Moore explained that the NED Show is free, and they use the money from yo-yo sales to bring the show to schools for free. In other schools where he has worked, students may have purchased 25 yo-yos. NHE students have purchased many more (more than $1,000 worth).

Programs: Field Day

Michelle Pendleton reported that Field Day went well. Jen Hoskovec and Coach Chavers worked well together. Because the theme and stations were set up far enough in advance, Jen could help get volunteers into stations that they would enjoy.

We had enough volunteers for both sessions, with the exception of the popsicle station in the afternoon.

If people have feedback on Field Day, they can let Jen Hoskovec know.

VP Membership Report: Rebecca Cruse

Yearbook cover: Contest delayed to 11/14 because of confusion in deadline.

Directory went out. The information that NHE was given from the main office was for only the primary parent, so that’s who is in the directory. Second parents can be added. All they have to do is e-mail Sandra McFaul for changes. The directory is password protected and online.

Room parents: Gina Keith wanted to make sure people are hearing from their room parents. Many people are not. Kyla McCulley suggested that room parents copy Gina Keith on e-mails so that she will know when e-mails are going out.

VP Fundraising Mary Hoffman had no updates.

The next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 30 at 8:15 a.m.

Maria Schick called the meeting to a close at 9:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Michelle Pendleton, filling in for Kiko Elliott.