

ESSEX NORTH SHORE AGRICULTURAL & TECHNICAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Ad Hoc Naming Of the School Subcommittee
November 15, 2017
6:00pm
Approved Minutes

Members Present:

Tom St. Pierre, Chair
Gary Hathaway
Melissa Teixeira
Gene Demsey
James O'Brien
Francis DiLuna
Jeff Delaney
Bruce Perkins

Members Absent:

Michelle Amato

Others Present: Dr. Lupini, Superintendent/Director, Students from Essex Tech, Brad Morgan/Principal, Essex Tech staff, Paul Leighton , Salem News.

1. Call to Order

The Ad Hoc Subcommittee meeting was called to order @ 6:00pm by Mr. St. Pierre
Ms. Teixeira announced there is a quorum.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the October 19 minutes was made by Mr. Strout. Mr. Hathaway seconded the motion. All in favor.

Mr. Perkins abstained. It was requested that copies of the actual speeches from students at this meeting be attached to the approved minutes. Mr. Strout made the motion made to modify the minutes from October 19. Ms. Amato seconded the motion. All in favor.

3. Public Comment

Amy Andrews: a senior. She does not support the school name without agriculture in it. All sports teams are commended for their accomplishments, but not the agriculture student's accomplishments. Technical students are given the upper hand over agriculture students. Believes the Agriculture name should be part of the school to preserve the history of the school.

Ms. Teixeira: asked that the student speeches be submitted to the superintendent for the record.

Caroline DeGrappo: Senior. One third of students belong to an agriculture program. Technical definition and perception are two different things. Adding Agriculture to the name of the school allows the public to identify who we are. Without the Agriculture program other students would be attending their own high schools or technical schools. It will have a great impact on local and state agriculture. Favors including agriculture in the name of our school.

Kathy Kindler: employed as the registrar at Essex Tech for eleven years. A name change will have a negative effect on the Essex Tech Community. We have been building community under the name of Essex Tech for four years. Transcripts are done for thousands of graduates from four possible schools. Renaming the school would increase this process to a fifth school.

Jonathan Eberhardt: Junior in vet science. There will be a great cost to change the name concerning uniforms, busses....Is this what is best for the students? Could the money be spent on a better learning environment and resources? We can equally represent both the tech and aggie without changing the name.

Jessica Bukhovka: Junior in Design Communications.
Why would we change our name four years later? We are going to spend a lot of money to change the name on letterhead, school, uniforms... Where is this money going to come from?
Citizens will have to pay and this will cause controversy over something that is not broken. We should spend the money on advisory board ideas, recognition, FFA programs and Co-Op Programs. Who gets to vote on this decision? Hopes the name is to remain as Essex Technical High School. We should encourage learning and unity. Don't fix something that isn't broken.

Dylan Jenkins: Junior in Natural Resources, Landscape and Turf Management. Essex Tech is defined by team identity and may reject the new name and continue to use Essex Tech. A shop name was changed, but it is still called by the old name. The same reaction will come from students if the name is changed from Essex Tech. Essex Tech is referred to as a "farm School" without the name agriculture in it. What difference will it make to add agriculture to the name?

Brian Curley: Junior Landscape Interpretive shop. There is a strong will to have the name changed. It can be a gradual process to defer the costs. We can keep some of the "Essex Tech" qualities and still change the actual name. Agriculture is vital to our community. There were three agriculture schools before our merger now there are just two left. We should use Agriculture. It is a title of pride that we are still promoting a unique and diverse field such as agriculture.

Jillian Miles: After three years attending this school there is still clear division between the two schools. Some traditional shops think they are more important than other shops. We need to incorporate both or get rid of both. Bringing back agriculture into our name would bring back the unique history of the aggie. The business of agriculture is being forgotten. Adding agriculture to our name would be a huge statement. Agriculture is what makes our school so unique. Saying there is too much cost is where attrition comes in. Use up what we have and add the new name gradually. Bring back agriculture and make our school unique again.

Svetlana Reed: Junior in Vet Science. We all come from different districts out of district students come here to join our agriculture shops. Changing the name will divide the students once again. Essex and Tech were gathered from all three schools that were merged. What school will alumni say they were a part of? This will confuse the public and cause controversy. Who decides if we will change the name? Will students appreciate the name change or vote against it? Putting a label on our school will not cause any unification of our shops.

Kernan Lampert: Junior in Electrical. No written report. Has been going to Essex tech for 3 years and would like to graduate from the school he has gone to for three years. Kids usually call us a "farm school." Many people have branded themselves as going to Essex Tech. I love that people know I go to Essex Tech and a name change would cause the identity to fade.

Matthew Cunha: Senior in IT. Class of 2018 vice president. Adding agriculture to our name would be a benefit and best for our representation in our community. Agriculture is such a unique

aspect to have in our school. Kids can learn all of these agricultural related things in our school. Agriculture represents one third of our school and one third of our school does not share the name. When people walk into the school they should be able to read agriculture in the name. There is a lot that goes into this school not just the cliché'. We have people herding cattle and doing landscape they deserve to have a share in the name.

Emily Brown: Senior in Horticulture program. No written notes. Spoke to the term "Farm School" and it used in a derogatory way. Introducing agriculture into the name will represent us in a better light.

Mr. St. Pierre: thanked the public for their comments and apologized that the school committee is in this position. The name change was not taken lightly.

Ms. Teixeira: spoke to the public and appreciated them coming forward to speak. There are only three committee members left of the seventeen that changed the name in 2012. It was never intended to leave agriculture out of the name. The word "Technical" also means technical and agriculture programs. It was a new and modern word that meant both. She explained the intent behind naming the school. She also reminded the speakers that their words were very important to the subcommittee.

4. Discussion

Review and discussion of requested documents from Mr. DiLuna as a citizen. Dr. Lupini explained how the request for documents was made and the time line.

Ms. Teixeira: said the documents help make the decision going forward by looking to the past in past minutes. In 2012 it was felt that students were not involved in the naming process. Pointed out in new business on March 12th subcommittee assignments, Athletic Directors were both collaborating, both Principals Morgan and Versalone met with students. The April 26th old business said principals met with class officers and students chose two names.

Mr. O'Brien: stated, "Hawthorne was not chosen for the name because it was unclear. It wasn't not chosen for the aggie piece."

Ms. Teixeira: wanted to reiterate, "The students were involved back in 2012 when the name was chosen. This conversation is what brought the students of the two schools together. Essex was there for Essex County. Hawthorne came with some disagreement because it is not pronounced properly." Ms. Teixeira did some research into Hawthorne in history and he was involved with the witch trials and did not want the controversy. There is a clear representation that the students were very involved with the naming of the school. It was important to the administration because students are very important to the school.

Mr. DiLuna: stated that he does not think all of the requested documents were presented. Asked for communication between superintendent and attorneys prior to the naming of the school. Has not seen the legal advice that was told to the School Committee. Would like to be able to look at the law firm that gave wrong advice. Would like the opinion of the attorneys at the time. The legal opinion that was given in 2017, what was the request?

Ms. Teixeira: reminded, "We are going on history not on the minutes. I have the agendas from 2012. None of the 2012 agendas mention any legal opinion. In 2017 we received an opinion in writing. That did not happen in 2012. She mentioned the names of other attorneys involved. "We never received a legal opinion from them. It does not exist and never happened." The superintendent said the legal counsel said it was the School Committee's right to change the name. "We assumed that the

name was in the language. It was never an issue like it is now. It was never challenged the way it is being challenged now.”

Dr. Lupini: reminded “Our effort was to focus on history and provide documentation on the name of the school. We can find more hours to find more documentation on the name change. What was provided at this point is the context of history.”

Mr. DiLuna: stated, “Typically in a meeting there is documentation or handouts. It is important to know what is being said to teachers, students and school committees.”

Ms. Teixeira: reported, “Back in 2012 we had a name subcommittee; and a member of the agriculture department was on the subcommittee. There was never any minutes taken at those subcommittee meetings. This is unfortunate.”

Discussion between Mr. DiLuna, Ms. Teixeira and Dr. Lupini about subcommittee and deliberation on the name change and what was documented. History was given on the behavior of the subcommittee during these meetings.

Mr. St. Pierre: stated, “This was one piece of a lot of things going on, barns, budget and construction. We did not focus a lot of time or attention on the school name. We attended 2-3 meetings per week. The name change never got to the level of detail you are looking for.”

Mr. O’Brien: feels that hearsay is not valid all we can go on is in the minutes. “All we have is the minutes and we have to interpret what we can from the minutes. We cannot rely on people’s recollections.”

Mr. St. Pierre: asked, “What end does seeking more documentation and minutes get us to?”

Mr. O’Brien: reminded, “There is a letter from Ted Speliotis three years ago regarding the name change.”

Dr. Lupini: spoke to why it took so long to address Ted Speliotis’ letter.

Ms. Teixeira: added perspective to the letter sent September 20, 2015. “We named the school June 17, 2012, three years go by, and four years later after the school is opened the letter came asking them to change the name. Two years later we are talking about the letter. Time goes by and things don’t get addressed.” She is not saying the name of the school is correct,” but how do we go about changing the name? We have students that want both names. How do we proceed?” She does not want it to be “you against us”. “This is a collective decision not just the school committee. Ted Speliotis threatened the school committee to change the name. These were not bad intentions. We need to find out if we did anything legally wrong. Does the school committee have the ability to change the name?” Went on to talk about tuition paid by members and non-members. “There is so much to take into consideration.”

Mr. Hathaway: reminded the Agriculture representatives that the subcommittee voted on the name. “There were two former agriculture representative/members on the subcommittee that voted for the name. What changed?”

Mr. DiLuna: felt the representation was inadequate. “Those reps retired and others were reappointed. How did this happen? The statute is very, very clear. It names the school and the district. It was misrepresented to you by legal counsel to your ability to rename the school. This is why I am looking for the documents.” He recognized that Dr. Lupini was not here at the time. “The law is clear, if we made a mistake we need to acknowledge our mistake and correct it.”

Ms. Teixeira: questioned the law and who has the authority and there are two different laws that conflict with each other? She discussed the two acts and their interpretation. “There is no proof that the law was broken.”

Mr. DiLuna: read the laws and described what his opinion and interpretation is of the law.

Mr. Hathaway: asked why would the school committee have the authority to name the school or the school committee?

Dr. Lupini: told what he believed the representative to say, is that: “We don’t like the name either, we would be willing to work with you for a name as long as the name reflects agriculture. The meeting minutes reflect this conversation.”

Mr. Delaney: asked “Why do we have to spend the money to change or not change the name with legal opinion? We have had counsel come to the same conclusion twice.”

Mr. O’Brien: reminded that counsel talked about how to use capital letters and if they affect the meaning of the name. There was discussion about upper and lower case letters.

Mr. Delaney: thinks the legislation should have spelled out their intent more clearly.

Mr. Hathaway: said they wanted to make everyone happy.

Mr. St. Pierre: considered, “It was too big of task to capture all of the things that legislation could have anticipated.”

5. Discussion of the name. Where do we go from Here?

Ms. Teixeira: talked about Ted Speliotis saying he could pose the question to legislation. In December at the finance meeting we are talking about signs for many of our buildings. Having the signs out there that name our school district. The signs will say the full name of the district school. There will be plans for two signs that say the full name of the district.

Mr. DiLuna: suggested going to legislatures allowing them to rename the school and have them add agriculture to the district name. “The statute is very clear.”

Ms. Teixeira: does not want the school committee to give up the right to name the school. She accused Frank of dictating the name to the School Committee through legislature.

Mr. DiLuna: stated, “You cannot get a legal opinion from the legislature.”

Dr. Lupini: fears going to legislature and people who are opposed would claim it is an unfunded mandate and viewed that way by the auditor. Introduced other documentation that was asked to be provided. “We are working on costs to change the name.” He thanked Brad Morgan and Carissa Karakaedos. “There are a ton of assumptions in here, just trying to get a number to change the name. Roughly, including banners, track, uniforms in the neighborhood of \$350,000, does not include signs, business card/stationary...”

Mr. Delaney: questioned implementation and cost effectiveness.

Dr. Lupini: discussed the feeling of students not having the name of their school on their uniform. Students would prefer not to do this over time.

Mr. St. Pierre: requested that a motion be made on “the full name of the district should be on an inexpensive sign potentially built by students, out front on a temporary basis”.

Mr. Hathaway made the motion
Mr. Dempsey seconded the motion.
No vote was taken. The motion did not pass.

Mr. DiLuna: felt this is contrary to what Dr. Lupini said. “Why do something temporary?”

Mr. St. Pierre: stated “The name of the district is the name of the district and the full name of the district should be on the property”.

Mr. DiLuna: does not agree with temporary signs

Ms. Teixeira reminded that a sign was in the original building budget because we had hoped students would build it. The finance committee has already had this discussion and is looking into the budget to find funds for the sign. The motion was made to recommend it to the full committee. The sign issue is not a new topic and has already been discussed at the finance subcommittee meeting.

Mr. DiLuna and Mr. O’Brien opposed the motion.

This is a recommendation to go the full school committee.

Mr. St. Pierre: feels that the same conversation will be had at the next meeting.

Mr. DiLuna: suggested that the next meeting can involve the discussion of the language of the request of the legal opinion.

Next meeting is January 9, 2018 at 6pm. The meeting date was agreed on.

Ms. Teixeira: made the motion that: the School Committee reach out to Representative, Ted Speliotis, to follow through with his offer to pose the general question to legislature of “Does the school committee have the right to change the name?”

Mr. St. Pierre seconded the motion.
Mr. DiLuna opposed the motion and Mr. O’Brien abstained.
The motion passed

5. Adjourn

Mr. St. Pierre made the motion to adjourn at 7:41 pm
Mr. Perkins seconded the motion.
All in favor

**All documents on file in Superintendent/Director’s office.
Respectfully submitted by: The Recording Secretary