



La Academia Dolores Huerta

A Dual Language Charter Middle School

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SPECIAL GOVERNING COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: 04/15/2013

Meeting Location: LADH

Approval: DRAFT

CALL TO ORDER AT 5:19 PM

ROLL CALL AND ESTABLISHED QUORUM

Members Present: Robert del Plain, Bertha Silva, Norma Martinez Arrieta, John Vasquez, and Saul Hernandez, Eva Telles (arrived late)

AGENDA

- **Motion to approve proposed agenda by John Vasquez**
 - Motion seconded by Norma Martinez Arrieta
 - Approved in the unanimous

- **Discussion of Charter School Center**
 - Robert del Plain summarized proposal by LCPS for “Las Cruces Charter School Center.” Plan uses funding from bond monies from upcoming February 2014 bond election. Today is the deadline to report to LCPS whether LADH would like to continue talking with LCPS in regards Charter School Plan.
 - Mr. Casillas explained that he thinks it is ok to continue talking to LCPS with the understanding revisions need to be made to the initial plan. Mr. Casillas explained he relayed the information provided by LCPS to his staff and asserted some main concerns of the proposed facility:
 - LADH is the major stockholder of the (3) charter schools involved in the plan
 - LADH has been given an old part of the building for remodeling
 - Current space provided for LADH pick up/drop off zone is insufficient
 - LADH does not have an indoor “commons area” to use on an “as needed basis”, i.e. rainy days, special events, etc...
 - LADH has earned a “B” grade from the State of NM – the best grade of all schools involved. He noted that Alma d’Arte received a “D” grade last year.
 - Hard to get to the playground area and have staff members present. LADH is limited to (2) staff members during the lunch session: 1 for courtyard and 1 for playground which is not enough staff members to ensure safety of LADH students.
 - LADH staff members expressed same concerns to safety in staff meeting on Thursday.
 - Mr. Casillas also noted benefits LCPS would attain from Charter School Center:
 - LCPS will receive 2/3 remodeling costs as reimbursement from PFC
 - LADH needs to sign over least assistance agreement which is ~\$92,000/year.

- After 6 years LADH can request to buy/own the facility, but that doesn't mean they will approve to sell. At that point LADH will need a downpayment and if approved maintenance will become the responsibility of LADH.
- Robert del Plain noted Mr. Casillas concerns and related them in terms of importance as:
 - 1.) Safety
 - 2.) Age of Building/Format/Location of building
 - 3.) Pick Up/Drop Off Zones
 - 4.) Parking
- Mr. Casillas suggested to continue working with LCPS and possibly ask LCPS if LADH could buy the Bradley building which is situated off of Amador/Lohman behind Roberto's restaurant.
- John Vasquez asked realistically why go forward?
 - Robert del Plain stated he understands there are problems: J. Paul Taylor has the crème of the design but noted: for almost (10) years people have been trying to get financing for LADH and this is the best option.
 - Mr. Casillas disagreed and explained why: In the past LADH was not established and leadership did not do what needed to be done to move forward. Mr. Casillas continued that we will be well established in 2 or 3 years and a better possibility will come up. Mr. Casillas agreed with Robert del Plain that the process has been frustrating.
- Robert del Plain expressed his thoughts of why the GC should proceed to go forward and work out the details with LCPS
 - He has been here for (4) years and LADH has never been so close to obtaining a new facility
 - The GC should at least look at this more closely before foregoing this opportunity
 - Financing is being given to us through LCPS. Financing has been a big problem in the past.
 - If LADH pulls out of collaborative talks with LCPS now—we do not know what is going to happen in the future.
 - 22,000 sq ft is about the size of the current buildings 1st & 2nd floors combined
If we do this right – we can make it work for LADH
- Mr. Casillas agreed that it would be a good idea to continue to work with LCPS but stressed that “the format as is does not work for LADH.”
- Mr. Casillas noted there was a previous discussion between LADH and Tierra del Sol (TdS) in regards to TdS donating (6) acres to LADH. The LCPS plan is (4) acres total between 3 schools.
- Bertha Silva expressed her understanding of LCPS' willingness to remodel/build to suit and that we need to be willing to go into discussions with an open mind and see if LCPS can meet the needs of LADH.
- Mr. Casillas agreed if they (LCPS) could enclose the court yard and flip the parking lot and playground –that would be ok.
- Robert del Plain reiterated that nothing is cast in stone and we still need to work out the details.
- John Vasquez asked if there is a financing vehicle in place---do we have to work with LCPS?
 - Mr. Casillas replied No—we can get 2/3 back from PSC for remodeling

- Eva Telles discussed the importance of incorporating a Family Center or at least an area for parents as well. She explained parental involvement is a very important of student academic success.
 - Mr. Casillas agrees that parent involvement is critical and with the current plan—LADH would not have that.
 - Eva Telles discussed the idea of a community space to be utilized by all (3) schools for parent involvement. She explained she has experience in setting up parent centers and trainings that would be run by the parents. It's not just about having "events" -there are actually (6) types of parent involvement. Eva stressed parental involvement is very important and is a way to strengthn the school and community.
 - Saul Hernandez asked if there was a way if that is not possible – to make it just for LADH?
 - Bertha Silva stated that the reason kids are stay at a certain school --is because they want to keep their identity and concluded she would not expect parents would want to co-mingle with parents from other schools.
 - Mr. Casillas asked, "If this is a model the district thinks would truly work—(mixing elementary/middle/high schools together) – why didn't they do this with their schools?"
 - Saul Hernandez explained that if LADH fails or succeeds it doesn't matter to them (LCPS).
 - Mr. Casillas asked the GC to please remember LCPS superintendent has not been very positive when speaking of LADH in the past. He explained that LCPS loses if we (LADH) get reauthorized through the State of NM (and not through LCPS).
 - Robert del Plain noted that if we use LCPS' building—we can still get reauthorization through the State of New Mexico. It comes down to dollars and cents.
 - Eva Telles asked Mr. Casillas to clarify if Tierra del Sol is still willing to donate (6) acres to LADH
 - Mr. Casillas responded that was correct. But we need investors because of the \$300,000 they requested as a downpayment.
- **Motion to work with LCPS on a proposed LC Charter School Center by Bertha Silva**
 - Motion seconded by John Vasquez
 - Approved in the unanimous

Facility Representatives will include John Vasquez to represent the LADH GC & Mr. Casillas to represent LADH staff

- **Re-Charter Meeting with Rick Rios**
 - All members present went to work session regarding Re-Charter Plan for LADH
 - No motions were made during this working session
 - Next Re-Charter Meeting with Rick Rios scheduled for April 30th, 2013 at 5:30pm

Minutes Taken By: Norma Martinez Arrieta