

Minutes of the Meeting of the
Educational Advisory Board
City of Plantation
Via Zoom
Held March 1, 2021

Members Present:

Andrew Dolberg
Joshua Freeman
Gregg Goldstein
Colleen Shevlin-Ramer
Michael Taussig
Joy Clark Newkirk, Chair

Members Absent:

Robin Fractenberg

Also Present:

Susan Slattery, City Clerk
Councilmember Erik Anderson
Councilmember Denise Horland
Councilmember Nick Sortal

The meeting was called to order by Joy Clark Newkirk, Chair.

Self-introductions were made and members were shown as being present.

Ms. Slattery, City Clerk, announced her retirement and stated that any questions during future meetings should be directed to the City Clerk. A list of meetings for the year was provided prior to the meeting. Meetings will be held at 7:00 p.m. and continue to be held via Zoom. Once the City is open to the public, meetings will resume in the City Hall first floor conference room.

Elections were conducted for Chair and Vice Chair.

Motion by Ms. Shevlin-Ramer, seconded by Ms. Clark Newkirk, to nominate Andrew Dolberg as Chair. Mr. Dolberg declined.

Motion by Mr. Dolberg to nominate Joy Clark Newkirk as Chair. Ms. Clark Newkirk accepted the nomination. There was no second.

Mr. Dolberg volunteered to be Vice Chair. There was no motion or second; there was a consensus.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - None

NEW BUSINESS

- Overview of Board functions

Chair Clark Newkirk referenced the meeting list and noted they still have April and May for this school year and then they resume in August.

Ms. Slattery, City Clerk, referenced Resolution #12102 and read sections of “Purposes of the Board”. School Principals are usually invited to attend these meetings, but since this was an organizational meeting and a welcome back, they were not invited; they will be invited to the April meeting. It was noted that this Board does not have a budget. Usually, the Board will let staff know what they would like on the next agenda. Meetings are not longer than an hour to an hour and a half at the most because of City Hall time restraints due to custodial staff. Meetings start at 7:00 p.m. and should end between 8:00 p.m. and 8:15 p.m. The Board consists of seven members; members are appointed by Elected Officials and there is rotating seat, which rotates each year to the next available Councilmember. Reappointments are done in January, which is when the rotating would move to the next appointment.

Chair Clark Newkirk mentioned that the Resolution, under Meetings, still shows 3:30 p.m. and questioned if that would be updated.

Ms. Slattery advised that would be changed. Meetings used to be held at 3:30 p.m., but were changed to 7:00 p.m. because the Board felt there would be more participation from parents and students. This Resolution also says that the Board Chairperson is elected at the September meeting; however, that will probably be changed. A Resolution is going before Council to change reappointments to January of each year since elections are held in November, so elections for a Chair and Vice Chair would probably be conducted during the February meeting each year.

Chair Clark Newkirk indicated that because of Robert’s Rules, Board members are not allowed to discuss Education Advisory Board matters, so everything must be discussed during scheduled meetings.

Mr. Freeman questioned what actions the Board has taken in the past.

Chair Clark Newkirk, Vice Chair Dolberg, and Councilmember Horland provided previous actions taken by the Board as follows:

- A School Showcase at Volunteer Park.
- A College Fair at Plantation High School.
- A Beautification Project with Plantation Elementary School.
- The Board helped write new rules for signage at schools and those recommendations changed what the City would allow so schools could display different advertisements to use as a fundraiser.
- Towards the end of the year, the Board was working on essay projects and they were going to do scholarships, but that was interrupted due to the pandemic.

Councilmember Horland commented that many years ago there was funding, but currently the Board can get donations, which they can do through businesses. She mentioned a reading program at the Jim Ward Community Center that the Board hosted in the past and noted that there may be similar opportunities. Councilmember Anderson brought up the ILA at the last City Council meeting and the City Attorney was instructed to bring it back to Council so it would be in place for the next school year. She noted that some Cities are exploring learning pods for the summer for children who fell behind during the pandemic and perhaps the Board could look into that.

Councilmember Sortal mentioned that in the past, every school had an Education Advisory Board member connected to them and every Principal received a call from the member saying they were their contact. He

noted that personal visits would also be a good idea. He commented on a school guide Councilmember Horland was pushing for.

Councilmember Horland indicated that it was determined that the information for the school guide needs to go through the City Clerk's Office. They were also working on the website, which needed to be brought up to ADA compliance. She will work on the form and try to get it to the schools and she will also work with the City Clerk's Office. The information would not be printed and distributed, it would be a Guide to Schools on the website, which is a comprehensive guide that shows offerings of the schools.

Mr. Goldstein mentioned that the Education Advisory Board attended graduations in the past and questioned if that is a directive from Principals or if Board takes the initiative.

Chair Clark Newkirk indicated that the Education Advisory Board takes the initiative for involvement and schools also reach out. The Board assigns three to four schools to each Board member and they are responsible to keep in touch with the schools and provide updated information. As far as school assignments, last year communication increased. Schools will be assigned at the next meeting.

Louis Reinstein, past Education Advisory member, referenced the School Showcase that was started while he was on the Board. The last one was January 12, 2017 and it was a great event. He urged members to look at a Face Book page called "Plantation School News". When he served on the Board, the Administration for the City would not allow the Board to do any social media. Because of some frustrations on the Board and to counteract some of the negative publicity schools were getting, he started "Plantation School News", which has a disclaimer saying it is not connected to the City in any way. He urged members of the public and the school population to submit anything going on in the schools. He requested the Board do the same with their connection to schools they are assigned to and to report any visits to the school and things that are going on. Members can remind people at the schools and different Committees and organizations to report on the page as well; it is a good way to create good press about the schools. There is an Instagram and Twitter feed, but it primarily goes out on Face Book.

Ms. Slattery advised that the City has a very large social media presence with their new website. The list of schools will be put on the next agenda so schools can be chosen at the next meeting.

Councilmember Sortal encouraged everyone to be active and aggressive and tell everyone they are on the Education Advisory Board. He even suggested putting that they are a member of the Board on Face Book.

Ms. Slattery commented that the Board needs to remember, as an Advisory Board member, they are subject to the Sunshine Law. Members cannot discuss business with each other, including email. If an email goes out from the City Clerk's Office, do not hit "Reply to All". If someone has a question for the Board, send it to the City Clerk's Office and it will be sent to each Board member and responses can be brought to the next meeting. She will send something out about the Sunshine Law prior to the next meeting.

Chair Clark Newkirk requested the Sunshine Law, school listing, and an update of the ILA be placed on the next agenda.

Mr. Goldstein questioned if some kind of organizational chart could be provided so members know who is assigned to which school.

Chair Clark Newkirk stated they would know; it would be in the minutes. She indicated that Board members do not have City emails, but can email schools with their personal emails. She gives her personal contact number out so the schools can call her.

Mr. Goldstein requested Ms. Slattery explain how he is appointed by Councilmember Sortal and then goes to the Mayor next year.

Ms. Slattery explained there are seven members on the Board; the seventh seat is a rotating seat, which rotates to a different Elected Official each year. This year Seat #5 is Councilmember Sortal and next year it will go to Seat #6.

Ms. Shevlin-Ramer commented that in the past there have been discussions of scholarships or tutoring and questioned how the Board could start looking into that again.

Chair Clark Newkirk stated that the Education Advisory Board does not facilitate or initiate any programs; the first step would a school identifying it as a need and the Board can help facilitate. The Board does not facilitate or oversee direct programming, but they help bring resources to the schools.

Ms. Slattery advised if a member wants to bring a specific program forward to the Council, as long as there is a consensus of the members, which is at least four members, it could be brought forward to Council or to Administration. A scholarship would have to go before Council because it involves money, and as explained, there is not a budget for this Board. Council would need to put a certain amount into the yearly budget for a scholarship. Anyone is willing to attend a City Council meeting as a member of the Education Advisory Board or as a resident and bring up something under Public Comments. Currently, City Council meetings are on Zoom at 6:00 p.m. on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month.

Chair Clark Newkirk commented there are only a few months left of the school year, but hopefully the Board can do something to let the schools know they are still here for them.

Mr. Goldstein questioned if the Board could send a card to the Principal and Teacher of the Year congratulating them.

Ms. Slattery stated she would check with Administration to see how they would like to handle that.

Chair Clark Newkirk mentioned updating the Education Advisory Board flyers to distribute to the schools and requested this be placed on the agenda. A brochure was created a few years ago and needs to be updated.

Councilmember Horland thanked everyone for serving. She reminded members to build relationships with the schools and to look toward the beginning of the new school year. That might be a wonderful opportunity to come up with ideas and how to promote getting people back into the schools.

Mr. Taussig mentioned that the Board previously discussed a Citywide Spelling Bee with students coming before Council to be recognized. He noted that the Library has a Teddy Bear Brunch for reading and suggested getting with the Library to have Reading with the Kids on Dr. Seuss Day where there could be an awards program or at least a certificate. He commented that there are many trades in the City that are not being met in the public schools. He suggested having a Trade Fair over the summer, possibly with the School Board and the City, so people can see there is still a need for people to turn a wrench and screwdriver to make a living if they

are not into technology or other things. Many Civic Organizations have scholarships and the Chamber of Commerce could reinstitute scholarships that students could receive when leaving high school.

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- Meeting dates for 2021

A list of meeting dates was provided prior to the meeting.

Chair Clark Newkirk advised the next meeting would be on Monday, April 5, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

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OLD BUSINESS – None.

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PUBLIC COMMENTS – None.

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Meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

DRAFT