

SPRUCE PTA GENERAL MEETING – MINUTES

January 15, 2014 – 8:50 AM - Cafeteria

Minutes Approved: 2-12-14

Meeting called to order at 8:50 by Ashley Duncan.

Quorum present (please see sign in sheets).

Executive Board members present: Ashley Duncan, Caroline Rouine, Laetitia Damiani, Danielle Solomon, Charlie Collins, Mame McCutchin, Marjorie Zarin; Alessandra Medigo

Minutes from last month's meeting held on December 18, 2013 were distributed and approved.

Treasurer's Report – Charlie Collins

- See attached Budget Status
- Taking book fair money as credits to spend at Scholastic.
- Parent asked if all the projected expenses will be realized.
- Parent asked if we were on track with Direct Appeal. The answer was yes. Last year at this time we were at around \$20K (low due to Sandy) and raised at total of \$80K.

Direct Appeal – Mame McCutchin

- We raised our projection from \$90K to \$100K because we are doing well. While we have raised \$46K, it is only from 24 families, which is 13% of families.
- Mame asked class parents to message that we are trying to increase family participation rate and that families can set up their donation as a monthly subscription, e.g. \$50/month.
- A graph will be in the lobby soon and on the website to chart progress.
- Parents suggested: a graph, saying what the money buys, posting participation levels on the website, tracking participation by class, distinguishing when we are raising money for specific purposes (e.g. library fund) vs. general funds.

President's Report – Ashley Duncan

- Protesting Noise
 - It has quieted down, possibly due to cold weather, rain, etc.
 - Ashley is in conversations with Pace. They told her that they didn't know that their developer was not going to use non-union. They want a peaceful resolution.
 - January 28th at 6:00 pm Community Board Meeting at Downtown Community Center. You can attend and provide feedback.
 - Ashley attended the last Community Board Meeting, which focused on over-crowding. Two new schools had been promised to Downtown, but there will be only one, which is a loss of 500 seats.
 - At the meeting Ashley voiced concern about our site – all the construction, active drive way, etc. The idea of crossing guards was suggested. However, it is hard to fill crossing

guard positions due to the low wage and lack of benefits. Idea was raised to have Pace students help. Ashley was told parents are not allowed to do security detail.

- Movie Night – Despicable Me 2 on Jan 31 from 6-8pm.
- Coins, Coats, Cans – now through Jan 24th. Make your donations. Send the cans and coins in your child's backpack. It is too heavy, put the child's name and class on the donation and leave it in the front office. Items in need include: canned fruit, vegetables, tuna, packaged cereals, peanut butter (in plastic containers; no glass). We have collected 4 big bags of coats.
- Spring Gala – Donation Forms are on the website under PTA tab. Volunteers are needed for Spring Gala, especially for donations. Donations can come from anywhere, doesn't have to be from the downtown area. Last year we had 375 donation items. Email Ashley if you can provide any amount of help. See volunteer page on website. Parent requested as much advance notice for when their volunteer slots will be.
- Book Fair recap – covered by Charlie
- Green Team – Marjorie updated that we will start having parent volunteers in the cafeteria to help students sort their waste. Sign up to come. Also discussed greening our school supplies. Parents suggested for the beginning of the year school supply list, to have an option to write a check and have the products purchased or have a store in the school. Parent suggested Green Team encourage parents to pack less waste in lunches and try a zero waste day.

SLT – Chris Gowney

- Next meeting Tues Jan 21 3:30 – 5:00 in Library. Items on the agenda are:
 - Quality Review Update
 - Committee Update (list of committees and contacts is on the website)
 - Report Card change
 - Interim teacher survey

Principal's Report – Nancy Harris

- Nancy commented on her last backpack update newsletter and the changes to city administration. Nancy is excited about the new Chancellor, as she has an education background.
- Lobby display case will be changed to celebrate fiction books. Children can bring in a favorite book, hard cover preferred, with a blurb about why they chose it. (Nancy will contribute *The Day the Crayons Quit*, which she recommends.)
- Most grades have had their research celebrations or will be shortly.
- Next research study starts in February.
- Jump start starts on Tuesday, 1/21. Letters going out this week. All 3rd and 4th graders invited for test prep.
- Arts programs are underway – All these programs are funded by PTA.
 - Pre-K: Creative Movement with Kyra, Marquis Studios
 - K and 1st: Song writing with Hector
 - 2nd Grade: Mural making; inclusive program with P94
 - 3rd and 4th Grades: National Dance Institute (NDI)
 - All - Music with Eric. Save the date: February 14th performances by grade throughout the day.

- Plaza
 - Safety – will be focus of next PTA meeting.
 - Signs posted “Active Driveway”
 - Man hole explosion/fire which took place before December break. No one hurt. School called a shelter in. Parent asked if we know why it happened. Nancy does not know.
- Resources for Writing
 - CEP Goals – writing is a focus – Common core focuses on these three writing areas and students will be practicing these genres:
 - Your opinion
 - Narrative, fiction or non-fiction
 - Informational, non-fiction text
 - Nancy and teachers are compiling a bank of samples from Spruce Street students that show writing that meets standards. Nancy provided handouts with examples of writing (not yet from Spruce students). There are more online on the Common Core website.
 - Parent expressed concern that her 1st grader was focusing on poetry at the same time as trying to learn grammar.
 - Parent asked if the rubrics are on the Common Core website. The answer is no, because it is a teacher resource. You can get it from your teacher.
 - Nancy plans to have a bulletin board highlighting children’s writing.

Ashley

- Big Apple nominations for teachers are happening now. Link is in Julie’s email.
- Poster contest information shared by Julie Lam. The contest is for K and above. We are asking students to create a poster about conservation, etc. top 15 will be chosen to enter city-wide contest. Due January 29th. Parent must sign to allow child to enter. Information is on the front desk

Q&A

- None