

Executive Board PTA Meeting Minutes
Friday, September 4, 2015

In attendance: Debra Olson, President; Holly Searl, Principal; Kevin Wood, Fundraising; Allison Rabin, Co-Treasurer; Cherish Medawar, Co-Treasurer; Tena Howell, At-Large Member, Upper Grades; Camila Viegas-Lee, At-Large Member, Lower Grades; Kate Gardner, Secretary

The meeting was called to order by President Debra Olson at 8:55 a.m.

President, Debra Olson

- 17th Street Festival Donation
 - As the 17th Street Festival Kids Zone is not being held at Ross this year, discussion ensued about whether Ross will make a donation or sponsor an event. A unanimous decision was made that Ross will not donate this year.
- 1st General Body PTA Meeting, Wednesday, September 16th
 - Meetings this year are moved from 5:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. in hopes that more parents can attend.
 - We will have different child care vendors providing after care this year; e.g. Labyrinth in November. As the YMCA only provides care for those enrolled, and there is no child care set for the 16th, Tena will ask the JCC.ⁱ
 - Debra sent home a welcome letter to parents with PTA meeting, membership and activity fee information.
 - Discussion followed regarding the agenda for the 1st General Body PTA meeting, e.g. EB Intros, back to school review, upcoming events, & call for volunteers.
- Foundry Volunteer Day, Saturday, October 3rd
 - The UMC wishes to volunteer at Ross during their day of service and as DCPS has scrapped Beautification Day, Debra will suggest some outdoor projects such as weeding, planting, & possible bench refurbishment.ⁱⁱ
- Walk to School, Wednesday, October, 7th
 - Jennifer Touchette will handle this event.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Picture Day, Thursday, October 8th
 - We will use FREED Photography again this year and the date will change to 15th October. It was pointed out that FREED does have staff to assist students, but we may need some volunteers to help with the younger grades.^{iv}
- 1st Open House, Wednesday, October, 14th, 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.
 - We need to change the open house date as there will be testing on the 14th. Principal Searl proposed Wednesday, October 22nd. Debra will inform the Open House Chair and ask Shanti to update website.^v
 - Discussion ensued regarding the possibility of an additional Open House in January due to the timing of the D.C.P.S. Expo Fair.
- D.C. United Game, Sunday, October 18th, 2 p.m.
 - D.C. United reached out to Debra regarding field experience opportunities like the “high five line”. Debra gave them \$100 towards tickets. After discussion, it was decided that

we will send home flyers in early October with a lottery to follow for ticket holders, with additional discussion during the 1st General Body PTA meeting later this month.

- Since proceeds from such sporting events benefit the PTA, it was decided that Debra will pick a remaining day or night baseball game at Nationals Park.^{vi}

Principal, Holly Searl

- Ross Electronics Recycling Event (WFP)
 - Daryl Judy from WFP contacted Principal Searl to see if we are interested in doing the recycling program again this year. As it is a well-run and successful event, with not too much involvement from Ross needed, we will go forward. Debra will pass this on to Kevin for action, e.g. should we expand to include a shred-it truck.^{vii}
- Partnerships
 - Principal Searl reported that we will continue educational partnerships such as Labyrinth Games & Puzzles; Kennedy Center's D.C. Partnership Schools Initiative (Artists in Schools & Performance Attendance Opportunities); D.C. Arts & Humanities Education Collaborative (Arts for Every Student & Professional Development Initiatives); & RESET, but our partnership with the Department of Interior will end in December.

At-Large Member, Lower Grades, Camila Viegas-Lee

- Back to School Potluck Picnic, Wednesday, September 16th
 - Camila is coordinating the event and reported on dessert options for the picnic. As neither Pleasant Pops nor Dolcezza will give a discount or deliver and due to the General Body PTA meeting ending one half hour later, it was decided we will just have fruit (and perhaps popsicles from Safeway).
 - It was recommended that we check the closet for supplies and make sure we have at least 300 of everything (napkins, plates, cups, etc.) with 5 volunteers to set up and 5 to clean up.
 - Camila sent out the Sign Up Genie to home room representatives to recruit parents to volunteer for the picnic. It was also discussed that room representatives are finalizing class contact lists and will provide an opportunity for parents to include or update their contact information at the upcoming Back to School nights next week.
 - It was also suggested that the PTA should staff a table at the picnic to sell Ross gear, PTA memberships, and possibly include a clothing donation.

Fundraising, Kevin Wood

- New Fundraising Initiatives
 - Expanded Christmas Tree Sale Related Activities
 - Allison brought up that this, along with the Auction, are our most successful events and we will need to ensure that both are chaired and properly staffed.
 - Ross Inaugural 5K
 - Location of where the race will wind through the neighborhood to be discussed.
 - Expanded Merchandise w/Ross Logo
 - Items such as visors were suggested.
 - Screen on the Green
 - Community movie night(s) with a concession stand open to sell pizza dinner/popcorn, etc., to support the Ross PTA was well received. It was discussed that October may be a good month (as it gets dark earlier and not too cold). We would need to secure sound and projector.

- This brought up the popular Spooktacular, another October event, which historically has required a lot of effort. To make this year easier, it was suggested to keep the Halloween costume parade around the block, and a few games, but perhaps no crafts/cookie decorating. We will need to draft volunteers for the Spooktacular at the 1st General Body PTA meeting.^{viii}
 - Kickoff Local Inbounds Business Donations Drive
 - It was stressed that we need to talk to *all* businesses around Ross, pitching what makes Ross the special school that it is, using brochures and DCPS statistics. Allison will get Kevin the list of businesses that have given in the past.^{ix} It was noted that Whole Foods and Trader Joe's have been approached previously, but have not donated, although other grocery/food chains, such as Chipotle, will donate proceeds.
 - In order to increase membership, communicate with members & potential members, fundraise, and crowd source ideas, it was recommended that social media site, Facebook, should be embraced and used more to connect with our community in an interactive way. It was suggested to send home flyers to "follow" Ross on Facebook.
- Other Fundraising
 - There was also general discussion of fundraising events that produce the most profit for the least work, and to remind everyone, (via Facebook, Flyers), to continue to raise funds for Ross through programs like "Box Tops for Education", registering member cards at Safeway & Target, and to shop at Amazon Smile. It was pointed out that since the process can involve a few steps, perhaps we should we have a volunteer or room parent to assist with the process.

Secretary, Kate Gardner

- DirectorySpot, mobile directory
 - A review of an online directory that makes group e-mailing possible was provided. It was determined to hold off until our website is updated, possibly early 2016.

General Forum

- Insurance Review
 - Debra will check with Cherish to see whether our PTA insurance has been updated/renewed.^x
- Website Update
 - In progress
- PTA By-Laws Status
 - The by-laws posted on the website are not current (2009) and need to be updated to include the amended by-laws that allow position splits, etc.^{xi}

Meeting Adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

Next EB meeting is at 8:45am on Friday, October 2nd, 2015

ACTION ITEMS:

- ⁱ Tena will ask the JCC regarding after care during general body PTA meetings.
- ⁱⁱ Debra will contact UMB regarding outdoor projects for their Day of Service.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Jennifer Touchette will handle Walk to School event.
- ^{iv} Call for parent volunteers to assist younger grades at Picture Day at upcoming General Body PTA Meeting & Picnic.
- ^v Debra will advise Greg and Shanti regarding the October Open House date change.
- ^{vi} Debra will decide whether to add a day/night event at Nationals Park to the calendar.
- ^{vii} Kevin/Fundraising to help with the Ross Recycling Event with WFP.
- ^{viii} Call for parent volunteers for Spooktacular at upcoming General Body PTA Meeting & Picnic.
- ^{ix} Allison will connect with Kevin & provide a list of businesses who have donated to the school auction.
- ^x Debra will check with Cherish regarding PTA insurance status.
- ^{xi} Debra will check and post more recently amended by-laws.