

Cambridge Kids' Council Meeting: January 20, 2011
Cambridge Public Library, 449 Broadway

Present: Mayor David Maher (chair), Ken Reeves (co-chair), Sam Seidel, Neal Michaels, Jessica Daniels, Betty Bardige, Cheyenne Jones, Barbara Kibler, Pasang Lhamo, Sally Benbasset, Andrea Collymore, Humbi Song, Nancy Tauber, Tina Alu, Susan Flannery, Charlotte Avant, Ellen Semonoff, Mary Wong,

Absent: Louis DePasquale, Dennis Keefe, Jeff Young, Robert Haas, Steve Swanger

Guests: Youth Involvement Subcommittee (YIS), Bridget Rodriguez, John Clifford, Claude Jacob, Allentza Michel, Daniel Ruben, Maya Escobar, Julie Roach

A. Call to Order

Mayor Maher, Chair of the Council, calls the meeting to order at 6:15 pm

Mayor Maher thanks Susan Flannery and the library staff for hosting the Council, and asks those present to introduce themselves. This they do.

B. Updates and Announcements

Mayor Maher asks if any member of the Council has an update or an announcement to share.

Tina Alu announces that the Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee will be providing help with tax return preparation, and that she has flyers.

Susan Flannery adds that similar services are available at the library.

Barbara Kibler announces a joint program between the Cambridge Community Center and the Margaret Fuller House for people who live with diabetes, and invites phone calls from those interested in more details.

Claude Jacob updates on the Reflections in Action program, which is run jointly, and on an annual basis, with the Harvard School of Public Health and the Cambridge Public Health Department. He includes a website for more information, www.reflectioninaction.org, and indicates that mailings have already been sent through the schools.

Mayor Maher notes that the Superintendent of Cambridge Public Schools, Dr. Jeff Young, is not present, and therefore will be unable to talk about the events involving him in the coming days.

Mary Wong reminds that she has sent around an announcement regarding the conflict-of-interest forms necessary for compliance with state ethics laws, and encourages those who have not yet submitted these forms to do so.

John Clifford reminds that the City has called for a Snow Emergency beginning at 11:00 pm. Barbara seeks confirmation that this declared emergency applies only to parking; Mayor Maher confirms this.

Susan wonders if a city employee who has already filed a conflict-of-interest form is required to file another; Mary responds in the negative.

C. Public Commentary

Mayor Maher asks if any of the visitors has any commentary, and receives no response.

Mary Wong asks to share one more announcement, and informs the Council that because it is a public body, it is subject to the requirements of the State's Open Meeting Law, and all members of the Council must be aware of those requirements. She instructs those who do not have a printed copy of this information to check with the City Clerk.

Mayor Maher introduces and welcomes Ellen Semonoff and Ken Reeves, co-chair of the Council, who have just arrived.

D. Review / Adoption of Minutes

Mary Wong seeks a motion to adopt the minutes from the previous meeting of the Council on 18 November 2010.

Action Taken: Neal Michaels moves the adoption of the minutes from the Kids' Council meeting of 18 November 2010. Sally Benbasset seconds this motion. The motion passes without opposition.

The minutes from the meeting of 18 November 2010 are adopted.

E. Kids' Council Membership

Mayor Maher informs the Council that Mary will be speaking for this portion of the meeting.

Mary Wong reminds the Council that, as mentioned at the previous meeting, there are two openings on the Executive Committee of the Council, and that, owing to the nature of the openings, they must be filled by members from the Council who are not elected or appointed officials. She informs that Tina Alu and Sally Benbasset have volunteered for these positions, and that the Council as a whole must vote on their joining the Executive Committee.

Mayor Maher seeks a motion.

Action Taken: Ellen Semonoff moves that Tina Alu and Sally Benbasset join the Executive Committee of the Council. Nancy Tauber seconds this motion. The motion passes by unanimous voice vote.

Tina Alu and Sally Benbasset are confirmed as members of the Executive Committee of the Council.

F. Cambridge Public Library

Mayor Maher recognizes Susan Flannery to speak about the Cambridge Public Library.

Susan asks who is at the new Main Library for the first time. Neil Michaels is the only one present to raise his hand, and he admits his embarrassment for this fact. Susan then introduces Maya Escobar, who works in Teen Services at the Library.

Maya, who says she has worked at the Library for some time and is excited to devote her time to teen services, informs the Council the following:

With the new building, circulation has increased, resources have increased, and traffic has increased. Many teens are coming to the Library to use the whole building, not just the book collections. This includes the new Teen Lounge (which is now known as the Teen Room). Schools, both public and charter, are coming to visit the Library. There are some middle-school-age classrooms coming to the Library every month. I'm trying to increase partnerships with the school librarians, and would like to visit every seventh- and eighth-grade classroom in the City. The Library's Teen Advisory Board continues its work. A formal book discussion group is starting this month. A few big-name authors have visited the Library. There is a panel of young-adult authors who will be visiting in April.

Julie Roach, who also works at the Library, briefly discusses its use by middle-school-age children, and notes that some of them are hesitant to go to the Teen Room. She asks the Council if anyone has questions.

Susan informs that Maya is a graduate of Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, and asks Maya to speak to programs ongoing for CRLS students at the Library.

Maya mentions the STARS program, and efforts to reach out to student government, librarians, and others at CRLS in an effort to collaborate more.

Susan asks the Council if it has any questions.

Ken Reeves brings the Council to the discussions that occurred for many years regarding the ultimate location of the Main Library. He reminds the Council of the following:

There were those on the School Committee who had said placing the Main Library near CRLS would make no difference. The siting of this Library was an enormous struggle, with the leading proposals being the chosen location near CRLS and Central Square. The City Council had members on both sides of the debate. Susan put a lot of work into the planning of this building, visiting other libraries, including that in Newton which had just been built and which we hoped to best. One example of the success of this process is the recent announcement by the Boston Architectural Society of their determination that the Library is the best building built in the Boston area in the last ten years.

Ken then asks about the collaborations between the Library and CRLS.

Susan responds:

Hundreds of students come in every day. This is in contrast to when the Main Library was temporarily located at the Longfellow School, when students would walk past on their way home from school and keep going. While the space is better regardless of location, the proximity to CRLS allows the Library to serve students better. Sometimes it provides something as simple as a place to go. Additionally, the Library has hosted programs for CRLS, particularly when their auditorium was under construction.

Susan asks for the views of students on this matter.

One student notes that CRLS's library is quite small, and this student's courses require resources, both in materials and in people, that are available at the Library but are not available at CRLS.

Another student mentions the value of having publicly-available computers, as not every student has one at home. This student speculates that for this reason and others, the Library has had a positive impact on some students' grades.

Susan expresses her hope that this be the case.

Mayor Maher asks the students present if the environment at the Library is conducive to studying.

One student responds that there is more than enough space.

Another student notices that the Teen Lounge is used for socializing and the students use the private rooms and other spaces for study.

Another student mentions an increased ability to focus on studies in some of the Library's quieter spaces.

Another student recalls growing up in the neighborhood before the new building had been built, and notes being impressed at how well the project seems to have done.

Pasang Lhamo tells of her use of the Library this past summer, when she was working at a camp with fifth-graders. She recalls coming to the Kids' Room, and the helpful staff who assisted her.

Maya mentions that many youth groups from the Mayor's office came over the summer to make use of the spaces.

Cheyenne Jones talks about the socializing that occurs in the Teen Lounge. She has noticed new rules in place, and accepts their value and effectiveness in a library setting, even if it drives some kids away who would otherwise be at the Library.

Susan acknowledges that this is a good problem to have, of too many people making use of the space. She admits that Teen Lounge may not be the best name, which is why there is an emphasis to refer to it, instead, as the Teen Room. She does suggest that the Library is much more liberal on behavior than other libraries, but concedes that the right balance will take time to find.

One student shares his experiences coming to the Library for a college interview or to have a conversation with someone. He appreciates that it serves as a public space.

Humbi Song, who had been a student at CRLS and is now an undergraduate at Harvard, adds that she and other CRLS grads at Harvard have been using the Library as a study space, sometimes discuss the virtues of the Library.

Susan tells of a man who had been wandering the first floor a few nights prior who is a graduate student at Harvard and stopped in because he was intrigued by the building.

Ken, who was also once an undergraduate student at Harvard, tells of walking through Harvard Yard recently and thinking of how wonderful a space the Library is compared to some of the libraries there. He relates that he has pointed to the Library to those who have asked about successful public buildings in the City, and also his delight at some of the features of the Library, including the lecture hall in the basement and the ability to talk and hold a conversation in some sections.

Susan elaborates on this last point, and describes the plan to have different spaces for different uses. The second floor, she states, is meant as more traditional and quiet library space, while the first floor provides a more café or bookstore atmosphere...

A student opines that this project would not have been as successful in Central Square, for being farther from CRLS.

Ken adds that the park outside the Library is beautiful, and he's proud of Cambridge for building new libraries, in contrast to the abandoning of old libraries that is occurring in Detroit, where he was raised.

Mayor Maher lauds the staff of the Library as being open and receptive, and also praises some of the community programs that have occurred at the Library. He expresses his pride in the Library and in its successful location. He also relates that he had seen some preliminary plans for the building, and thought that one which looked much like the old building looked nice. He's glad, he says, that they didn't listen to him.

Susan appreciates that despite the intense feelings on all sides of many debates involving the Library, the entire community has been supportive of the staff. She adds that without a strong staff, a library is just a warehouse.

Ellen Semonoff adds her appreciation for the staff.

A student asks about the sustainability of the building; Susan responds that it has just been given a LEED Silver rating by the United States Green Building Council, attesting to the environmentally-sensitive manner in which it was built. The student asks for specifics; Susan responds that among the sustainable features of the building and its construction are the use of renewable materials, recycled materials, materials with lower levels of off-gassing, and materials that required little energy to be brought to the site, as well as the bamboo floors, some elements of the climate control system, the minimal use of carpeting, and the 350,000 gallon stormwater retention tank on the grounds. The student asks if solar panels were used; Susan responds in the negative.

Mayor Maher adds that the City is committed to sustainable construction, and that all recent municipal construction has become LEED-certified or is in the process of becoming LEED-certified. Also, he notes, the City Hall Annex at 344 Broadway was among the first municipal buildings to receive LEED certification.

Claude commends Susan on her knowledge of the sustainable elements of the building, and also shares his positive experiences using the library and interacting with its staff.

Susan notes that between 1600 and 2000 people come into the Library every day.

Mayor Maher chooses to share some history about the Library:

This building and City Hall were gifts from Frederick Rindge, a young man who inherited \$3.5 million upon his parents' deaths. The mayor at the time, William Russell, approached Rindge about giving back to the City. Rindge built the Library and City Hall, and also the Manual Training School, which became CRLS, and gave them to the City. He didn't want things named after him, though there had been an attempt to name the City in his honor.

Ken adds that Rindge grew up at the corner of Harvard Street and Dana Street. He also notes there is a room in the Library devoted to Cambridge history.

Susan shares that this room isn't open yet, though there is a display near the entrance.

Sam Seidel suggests that the deed which transferred the various buildings to the City could be an interesting addition to such an exhibit.

Ellen adds that one challenge of the deed was its insistence on the display of the Ten Commandments and other religious iconography. She mentions that it has been a challenge to meet the demands both of the community and of the deed. One solution she notes was to put a poster above the display indicating that it was part of the gift from Rindge and did not necessarily reflect the views of the City.

Susan mentions a plan for a future display commemorating Rindge.

Sam recalls the deed explicitly requiring the display of the Ten Commandments, and Susan adds that Rindge's version had Eleven Commandments.

G. Report on Community Feedback

Mayor Maher brings the Council to the discussion about community feedback.

Ken Reeves interjects that he won't be able to remain for the portion of the meeting set aside for discussing school planning, but he wants to state that all the issues discussed in the upcoming report, which he has read, miss the point in not addressing what happens in the classrooms. His concern is that students from minority backgrounds succeed neither in the "good" schools nor in the "not-good" schools.

a. Kids' Council 5 Outcomes/Goals

Mary Wong describes the three community meetings which were held with different groups to discuss and solicit feedback on the Council's five strategic outcomes. The meetings were held at the Margaret Fuller House with residents of Area IV, at Rindge Towers with residents thereof, and with the Council's Youth Involvement Subcommittee.

Mary continues to inform that the full notes from each of the meetings are included in the packet which was handed out to Council members, and that the slide presentations to come contain highlights of those notes. She invites Barbara Kibler to speak of the meeting at the Margaret Fuller House.

Barbara begins:

It was a good meeting. Fifteen parents were there, as well as the Superintendent. The parents had an opportunity to ask questions, and they weren't afraid to speak up. Mary presented each of the five strategic outcomes, and solicited response from those present. For the outcome of children being prepared for school, the parents present expressed their desire that their children have completed their homework and are ready for school in that way on a day-to-day basis. As for a happy, healthy community, the parents want to be able to send their children outside without fear, either for them or their children. Some parents also noted the importance of what children are eating.

Mary emphasizes the stress the parents placed on homework as how to be prepared for school.

Betty Bardige notes the parents are looking at school preparedness in a different context than how the Council had intended, which was having young children prepared to begin school, rather than having all children be prepared on any given school day.

Barbara responds that the parents still thought preparedness was vital, though they were seeing it differently.

Sally Benbasset shares that she found it admirable that the parents would take advantage of the Superintendent's presence. As a teacher, she is familiar with parents sometimes feeling helpless in their children's educations, especially regarding homework.

Barbara supposes these parents would never have sought out an opportunity speak their concerns to the Superintendent on their own.

John shares his memories, including of Ken's presence at this meeting, and that Ken made the same point at the meeting that he has made at the Council tonight, regarding the poor quality of teaching he sees being provided to African American students. John recalls the Superintendent being very upset with Ken upon his mentioning of this.

Barbara recalls there was an argument about this after the meeting.

Ellen Semonoff turns to the issue of homework. She points out the challenge faced by many out-of-school time programs in that parents want their children to finish all their homework but also want the programs to provide other opportunities and programming which take away from time to complete homework.

Barbara relates the story of one parent, who worries that with the two to three hours her child has each night, there isn't time to do that and any out-of-school time programming.

Andrea Collymore shares her view that, from her experience being a parent and listening to other parents, the priority needs to be homework. As she sees it, enrichment activities are great when there is time, but they are an extra to be added once the schoolwork and the learning have been taken care of.

Sally connects Andrea's statement to what Ken had been saying about classroom content. She notes much research indicating that children are given too much homework, and says that what's happening in the classroom is part of the discussion about what's happening out of it.

Barbara shares that out-of-school time program leaders have met recently with the Superintendent on this issue, and that a dialogue is underway. She also is glad that the Kids' Council community meeting happened in Area IV, that there was such an opportunity in that community.

Barbara continues sharing parents' impressions from the community meeting, such as that they want to see their children reading and writing by graduation, which doesn't always happen. They also want to be able to communicate with their children's teachers, she notes, though many don't attempt this.

Mary mentions that many of the parents at this meeting weren't American-born.

Claude Jacob is reminded from this of how difficult this system, and many others, can be to navigate for those who have emigrated to the United States.

Nancy Tauber wonders if there was any discussion at the meeting of how to make parents feel more comfortable approaching teachers.

Barbara responds that this is an ongoing goal, though specifics were not discussed at the meeting. She continues that her staff at the Margaret Fuller House are often the ones providing the bridge between parents and teachers, sometimes attending meetings between parents and teachers. She doesn't see this as the solution, and thinks it's important to keep talking about this problem.

Nancy raises a concern that the school planning meetings are happening and the voices most needed belong to the parents who don't attend. She wonders what can be done about that.

Barbara agrees this is a challenge. She assures that these parents care about their children, but they don't have a voice.

Sam Seidel wonders who usually proposes that a staff member from the Margaret Fuller House attend a parent-teacher meeting.

Barbara responds that sometimes the teacher has the idea, as the teacher will have trouble getting the parents to attend the meeting, and know that the out-of-school time program staff can provide a bridge with which to reach them.

Ellen Semonoff adds that the experience at the Human Services Department is similar, and often her staff will accompany parents to meetings regarding education plans. She offers that often the relationships are formed when her staff speak with parents about behavioral issues.

Barbara suggests that in the social service programs, this phenomenon comes about because the staff develop relationships with the children.

Sally wonders what the role of the Parent Liaisons at the schools would be in these situations.

Mayor Maher responds that different schools assign different roles to their Parent Liaisons, some more active than others, and he is aware of the need to look at this more closely as a systemic issue.

Barbara continues her summary of the meeting:

The parents present had expressed the importance of extracurriculars while stressing the primacy of homework and academics. There was agreement that there need to be more engaging programs for middle-school- and high-school-age kids. There is a youth center, but no one uses it. The parents felt that the resources that exist are not accessible for their children.

Barbara adds that the parents are not aware of the discussions occurring regarding all of these issues, and stresses the need for a new way to communicate with parents.

John shares his recollection that all of the parents mentioned they had never been to a School Committee meeting.

Mary reiterates that these parents seized the opportunity to speak with the Superintendent; Barbara adds they were not intimidated at all.

Ellen suggests that the setting makes a difference, and that in the Superintendent's space, they would have felt intimidated, but in their space, a space they knew, they felt more bold.

Mary adds that the small number of parents in a more intimate setting also may have contributed to their willingness to speak.

Cheyenne Jones speaks briefly to the transition from middle school to high school, and agrees that programs exist, but suggests parents may not be aware of the resources available to their children from older students.

A student considers the problem of the broader community being unaware of the discussions occurring:

I talk to parents in my neighborhood who ask me what I do in YIS. When I explain, most of them don't know what the Kids' Council is. I live in Mid-Cambridge, and many of the parents are professors, academics, moving in and out, but I was still surprised that they didn't know these groups existed.

Mayor Maher thinks this is a good point.

Mary asks Charlotte Avant, who has just joined the Council, to give her perspective.

Charlotte obliges:

I didn't know at first. What is the Kids' Council? What do they do? Now that I'm here, I'm learning more about it, but how do we communicate to parents what resources are available? How do we get them interested? Maybe a survey should be conducted, to find out what parents want and hint at what services are already available. As for out-of-school time programming, my grandson is bored at his out-of-school time program. The programs need to be more engaging for the children involved. What can the Council do to solve these problems?

Humbi Song adds her perspective, that when she had last served on the Council [as a Youth Representative], the Strategic Plan implementation process was just beginning, and one of the main goals was that more of the community-at-large would be familiar with the Council's work. She is curious how that has progressed.

Mary emphasizes the role of the community meetings in that process, and at the same time recognizes the difficulty of representing the underrepresented. She also suggests the Council move on to the presentation about the community meeting at Rindge Towers (Fresh Pond Apartments).

Tina Alu begins:

The turnout was smaller than expected. This community meeting had been paired with a Fresh Pond Apartments tenant council meeting discussing security issues. It was a cold, windy night, there was a fire, shutting down one of the elevators. All told, we had fifteen people, not all of them parents. After the meeting we spoke with the president of the tenant council, suggesting a future meeting focused on parents. She was opposed, arguing that this is a challenge for the whole community to face together. Another stumbling block for us at this meeting was translating for Haitian immigrants. This led to talk not only of children being ready for school in Kindergarten, but also of school being ready for children. Safety was discussed, both because there have been several incidents in the neighborhood lately, and on a more broad level

because of recent issues with bedbugs and other health challenges. As to success in school, those present desired that the schools would do a better job engaging their students and communicating with them. There was also a desire expressed that students get a stronger education in civics.

Mary mentions that Rep. Brownsberger was at this meeting; Tina replies that he was there because of the other topics of discussion, but it was still valuable to have him there.

Tina continues:

The last strategic outcome, regarding stable, supportive families, brought a lot of comments. Among the issues raised were the need for a living wage, the stress of paying back rent, the impact on stability that money stress can cause, and the need for better information on how to access community support.

Ellen grabs onto this last point, and discusses some of the continuing efforts her department has made to communicate with residents of the Fresh Pond Apartments. She shares her conclusion that people don't seize onto the information when you present it, but only when they need it.

Sam wonders, if there's a room full of people asking, "How do we keep ourselves informed?", what the answer would be.

Tina points to a different issue around which the residents of Fresh Pond Apartments are organizing, and notes that they have come up with the idea of having floor representatives to coordinate a response to rodents and trash collection. She knows the City can never have the resources to hire people for such tasks, and likes the idea of empowering the residents to represent themselves.

Barbara latches onto this community organizing idea, and returns to the meeting at Margaret Fuller House, suggesting that a parent or grandparent could step forward from that community and pull in the rest of the community.

Claude appreciates the importance of the City listening to its residents, and of the residents listening to the City, and wonders what the three different issues, of rodents, security, and schools, might share in terms of approaches to solving them.

Tina notes that these two meetings have been with parents, but suggests meeting with youth from these communities, as well, to learn their views and tap into their potential to communicate with the community.

Mary says that there have been discussions on how to follow up with these meetings. She suggests perhaps going back to these communities and meeting in more focused groups to discuss some of the questions which were raised at the original meetings.

Abuchi Agu begins by talking about the process used at the YIS community meeting:

As the membership of YIS has turnover from year-to-year, this meeting discussing the five Strategic Plan Outcomes was useful in introducing the new YIS members to what the Council is. We wrote each outcome on a large sheet of paper, and went around writing on each sheet one thing which would indicate progress toward these goals.

Mary points out that this is similar to how all the community meetings were run, though, at the two other community meetings, she had the luxury of Barbara and Tina as notetakers.

Abuchi continues, sharing some of what was written down:

Stability is important, socially, mentally, physically. It's valuable for expectations school to be made clear. Healthy and balanced school meals with sufficient portions can lead to healthier children, as can confidential and affordable health services. Good ESL programs will help students succeed, as will consistent information about what support is available for students. Different classes and different tools can help meet the needs of different students. For activities to enrich, they first must engage, such as youth centers having activities that interest youth. Home stability can be greatly increased with income stability, and parental involvement can help a student feel grounded in school.

Claude asks how many students are involved in YIS; Mary answers that there are currently 19, though there had been 22.

Mayor Maher thanks the presenters, and the Council applauds them.

b. School Planning Process

Mayor Maher expresses his hope the meeting can still end on time, and promises to be brief in his remarks on the school planning process.

Mayor Maher shares the following about the process:

There were three planning teams. One looked at controlled choice, one looked at facilities, and one looked at programming. Closing the achievement gap or redesigning the curriculum were not among the mandates of these teams. They hand their reports to the Superintendent. He will work with his team to develop a Design Plan which is to be unveiled February 1. It won't answer every question, but it will set a framework of the direction forward. The report will include notes on how the curriculum will then be developed, but it will not include specific points to be included in a future curriculum. The changes will be significant, and will begin taking effect in September 2012, giving us the next year to begin planning how to implement all these changes. We're finishing a "Week of Public Engagement" on this matter. There were meetings at City Hall, at the Area IV Workforce office and in North Cambridge through the Cambridge Housing Authority. The population which attended the meetings was not representative of the population in our schools. For example, the largest meeting, at City Hall, had 75 people, two of whom were people of color. We used our normal methods of communication, but also put up doorhangers with the help of the Housing Authority and tried other ways to reach out. The other meetings were slightly more representative of the school community, but 60% of the families in the schools are families of color, and we weren't seeing proportions anywhere near that in the meetings. That being said, these meetings were fascinating, providing opportunities for parents to sit down and talk with the Superintendent, and he responded to questions and delved into some of the issues. Certainly, those for whom the system currently works are protective of the status quo. At one meeting, Susan Richards, who some of you know, came out and said that this is about making Cambridge's schools better for everyone. Of course the achievement gap is the driving force behind all of this. The purpose of this drawn-out approach is to thoughtfully and holistically consider how to make the system more valuable to all of its students. There will be many opportunities in the coming weeks to see what plan comes out of all this.

Nancy shares the following timeline:

The Superintendent will hold a town hall meeting for feedback on February 7, and then another on the 8th. There will be a School Committee meeting on February 15th to discuss the recommendations, and at the regular meeting on March 1 we will vote on the plan.

Mayor Maher adds that on January 25 at 11:12am, the Superintendent will meet with students at CRLS.

Mayor Maher speculates on whether there has been enough opportunity built in for teacher input to the plan, though he is proud that some representation from the teachers and from the union has been a part of this process from the beginning and are fully behind the plan. He wonders if the current 1940s-vintage school structure can meet the City's current needs. He states his enthusiasm for the plan, and his hopes the community gets behind it.

Sam wonders if a 21st-century school structure will come out of all this.

Mayor Maher, by way of response to Sam, notes how increased cohort sizes allow for a greater range of options to be presented to students, as presenting a wide range of option to, say, ten students is cost-prohibitive.

Nancy mentions that the Superintendent has also met with representatives of out-of-school time programs, and that every facet of the community is a part of this discussion.

Mayor Maher raises one more point, on the topic of out-of-school time, that in the current system, the different schools have different start and end times, meaning those students can't participate in the same out-of-school time activities.

Jessica Daniels wonders if a space larger than the Sullivan Chamber has been considered for the meeting on February 1.

Mayor Maher responds with his concern that the meeting be adequately televised. He goes on to say that this is a community-wide initiative. He hopes people will find that it is worth it. He believes we can do better, and we can do more.

Betty returns to Ken's earlier point. She recalls some of the issues that have been investigated in preparing this plan, and wonders whether, and hopes that, there will be a point at which the community can step back, look around, and consider if these changes will get the outcomes we desire, and consider if there's anything currently being ignored.

Mayor Maher again says that the plan to be presented is a roadmap, and there will be much more work ahead to implement the plan.

Betty wonders about the dual mission of the schools, excellence and social justice. She questions if any of this plan will be addressing social justice.

Nancy reiterates the education team wasn't looking at specific curriculum pieces, but surmises that this curriculum question, when it is addressed, is when social justice would be considered.

Mayor Maher relates a conversation he once had with an outside consultant when he was on the School Committee. According to the consultant, Cambridge Public Schools was the most decentralized system with which he had ever worked. Mayor Maher suggests that one of the challenges will be finding a way for the various schools to collaborate more readily.

Nancy shares a fortune she just got in a cookie: “Nothing is permanent except change”.

Mayor Maher thanks the Council, and asks for a motion of adjournment.

Action Taken: Nancy Tauber moves that the Council meeting adjourn. Tina Alu seconds the motion. The motion passes without opposition.

The meeting is adjourned at 8:23pm.

Meeting Documents: 1) January 20, 2011 Kids' Council meeting agenda; 2) minutes of the Kids' Council meeting on November 18, 2010; 3) Conflict of Interest Law: 2010/2011 Board and Commission Member Acknowledgement of Receipt form; 4) Cambridge Kids' Council Members list; 5) Cambridge Kids' Council 5 Desired Outcomes: Report on Community Feedback (handout and PowerPoint presentation); 6) Cambridge Public Schools Week of Engagement: Planning Process and Calendar, 7) Areas of Similarity and Overlap Across 5 Outcomes; and 8) CEOC Free Tax Preparation Service flyer.