

Farragut/ Knox County Schools Joint Education Relations Committee

Minutes from February 3, 2015

- I. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mark Littleton at 4:05 pm. Members present were Tony Carasso, Mike Singletary, Lee Wickman, Gary Palmer and Jennifer Hatmaker of the Town administration. Guest Alan Sloane was also present. A quorum was not declared until 4:25.
- II. Minutes from January 6 were presented but not approved because there was no quorum initially. A new draft will be submitted at the next meeting for approval.
- III. Chairman Littleton asked for any additions to the agenda but there were none.
- IV. Discussion
 - a. Ms. Wickman attended the Farragut High School PTSO meeting in January. They were very excited about the idea of youth engagement in the Town of Farragut. They also expressed a need for local businesses to be willing to create internships (unpaid) in order to satisfy Business Academy requirements for students. In addition, they noted that the school is in need of more trash receptacles.
 - b. The Youth Engagement Program discussion began with a draft of the information we plan to present to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. The draft was prepared by Chair Littleton. There was general agreement that there were many unanswered questions including how to recruit candidates and whether or not they would have voting rights. The BOMA should decide where to place the youth and which committees would be the best choice for student involvement. Mr. Singletary suggested that the candidate should be a Farragut resident and include Hardin Valley Academy. Mr. Palmer commented that we are not bound by Knox County Schools and that he would recommend that we also recruit students from private schools. Ms. Wickman asked the question what about home schooled students? Mr. Carasso thought we might be surprised at the number of home schooled children in Farragut. He noted that of the 18 children in his Sunday school class, 3 of them are home schooled.

The committee wished to add a sentence to the proposal draft. Mrs. Wickman moved that the committee amend the recommendations as highlighted by Ms. Hatmaker on the working draft. The motion was seconded by Mr. Carasso. The motion carried and there was no opposition. The working draft contains the highlighted corrections and an addition made during the meeting. It is included as the last page of these minutes. Mr. Singletary suggested that the mayor come in and review the recommendation prior to presenting it at the Mayor and Board of Alderman meeting. Mr. Palmer thought we had thoroughly discussed it within our committee. He did think it was a good idea to transmit the draft to the BOMA so that they would be aware of the recommendation prior to the meeting. He will place it on the BOMA agenda for the meeting on Thursday, February 12.

The consensus of the committee was such that we were all satisfied with what was in the draft proposal. Ms. Hatmaker agreed to send out a corrected draft to the committee by email. Chair Littleton committed to writing a cover letter to be sent to the BOMA. Ms. Wickman committed to sending out a reminder note about the BOMA meeting. Each committee member was encouraged to attend the meeting Thursday February 12 at 7 PM.

IV. There were no Action Items identified.

V. A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. Wickman and seconded by Mr. Carasso. The motion passed unanimously and there was no discussion. The meeting ended at 5:04 PM. Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 3 at 4 PM.

February 3, 2015

DRAFT

To: Farragut Board of Mayor and Aldermen

From: Farragut/Knox County Education Resources Committee

The Farragut/Knox County Education Resources Committee (ERC) has pursued for many months the topic of Youth Engagement in our community. Our intent is to bridge the gap between classroom education and the administration and governance of our community. We now have a recommendation for the Farragut Board of Mayor and Aldermen (BOMA).

Recommendation

The ERC recommends that BOMA officially amend the charters of various Farragut committees to allow the addition of one, non-voting, Farragut resident high school student to each committee, assigned per committee calendar year and limited to one year of service.

The ERC recommends that the youth be identified from any of the public and private high schools that serve Farragut residents and that the principals of those schools facilitate their selection processes.

Background

The ERC is chartered to be a liaison between Farragut and the Knox County Schools that serve our town by identifying ways that the town can support and improve local schools. We have discovered that several municipalities in our nation are enhancing their local educational and governing processes by active various methods of youth involvement. Our committee has been approached by leading citizens regarding the topic of youth involvement. We have been encouraged to investigate and recommend whether the Town could be more actively involved in helping students understand the mechanics of community governance.

We find a variety of models at work in various cities. Most of these models require the development of an oversight group to define, champion and facilitate the youth involvement. While an oversight group could be part of a long-term plan, we do not recommend that as a first step. We observe that Farragut is unique in its progressive engagement of citizens via the Town Committee structure. We propose that by capitalizing on this existing structure, youth involvement can occur within the framework of the committee charters and committee leadership.

Benefits

Because strong communities must have strong schools, BOMA has long pursued agendas to enhance and improve education in Farragut. The existence of the ERC and BOMA's yearly financial contributions to local schools are just two examples. It is well-accepted that practical applications to classroom instruction are invaluable to students. The surprise in our research was the dual benefit of Youth Engagement to both the students and the communities. On a local level, the Knox County School Board has long maintained a non-voting position for a student representative. The benefits of this position to information flow and student perspective are well documented.

Summary

Farragut has a favorable environment for businesses and families. Our schools are a core component of that environment. The ERC believes that Youth Engagement can be reasonably managed within the framework of existing infrastructure and is a logical "next step" to enhance our community. We request your approval of our recommendation.

Mark E. Littleton
Chair, 2014-2015
Farragut/Knox County Education Relations Committee