



Special Board of Trustees Meeting

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

building, pre, appraisal, pre k, people, space, school, orleans parish school, purchase, students, architect, mathis, year, emily, max, point, board, question, city, appraiser

SPEAKERS

Susan Chapman, Grant Ligon, Max Correa, Melanie Tennyson

Note: this transcript is incomplete due to an error with the auto transcription software, which did not capture the end of the meeting.

M Melanie Tennyson 14:50
Grant, Carol. Max, Sharon, and Larissa

G Grant Ligon 14:51
Larissa. Okay, gotcha. Okay, good.

M

Melanie Tennyson 14:57

So we're missing Chad and Jade.

G

Grant Ligon 15:00

Well, at this point it's 6:08, we'll go and call the meeting to order. This is the September 10 special board meeting for ISL. It's a one item agenda so we have gone through and sort of that who is in the roll call we'll add the others to the list when they come. I want to thank everybody for coming tonight. I just have one agenda and that is A. P. Tureaud site. So I'll just go ahead and turn it over to Melanie and explain what we're looking at and get into the details of it.

M

Melanie Tennyson 15:30

So, the AP Tureaud elementary school building which is in what they call the south Seventh Ward, I think is the most accurate description used by like city planner type, which is bounded by Elysian Fields, St Claude, St Bernard, like a triangle, there, was formerly the Homer Plessy building, for people who maybe weren't familiar with that site. It's been empty for about five or six years now. Is the one building that Orleans Parish school board has put up for either long term lease or purchase this year. Orleans Parish school board have always has to give charters the first right of refusal on all of their properties. And so, it's often quick we don't get a lot of advance notice we get, you know, something pops up that's how we got the Dixon building and how we were able to move into Dibert. Anyway, came up, we saw it, took us a couple of tries to get in there and look at it because we always, you know, have our finger, try to keep our finger on the pulse of any school buildings that are available. Five of us were able to go in and see this school building. And we're actually pleasantly surprised. We didn't anticipate, actually I don't think it, I know, as we were going, that we were going to walk away and go "Wow, you know this is a fabulous location, and a building with really great old bones." The building had been vandalized internally. So it looks much different than the pictures we first saw; people went in, they stripped all that copper out of it. But anyway, so we went, and we were very excited about it. I brought it back, told Max, who's on our who's worked with us on facilities and Grant and the board we went back we looked again. We walked through it with an architect, this time to get their perception and point of view and they, they, too, thought that the building was in really good shape, much better shape structurally than they had anticipated. The architect we brought with us was from Mathis Briere, who had worked on our Uptown renovation. The work that we did to supplement NOLA Public Schools work, they've also done the Encore building they've worked at. They've done work at NOCCA, doing some work for Lycee. They've done a lot of school buildings around the city. Anyway, so they were excited to see what great shape it was in and told us we were

not. We weren't, we were right to think that it would be a good school. A good building for a school; it's in good shape, worthy of renovation. We have a couple of ideas for the building we we're not set on one course right now. The first and foremost pre k has come to our minds we've always talked about having pre k have never had this space. Pre k have room requirements and outdoor requirements and a lot of very specialized needs for those young children. There's a tremendous demand in in our city, the state, the country as a whole but in New Orleans in particular for high quality early childhood education. And we would like to be able to step up to the plate and help. Having another building would allow us to do that. Additionally, being an immersion school the earlier we can get kids into immersion, you know, the better. And we are currently the only language immersion school in the city that does not have pre k attached to our program. We believe collectively I, I know the principals and I spoke with Tressa Northington, who is one of our kindergarten teachers who has a doctorate, that she completed in the last couple of years in early childhood education about the opportunities for children when they have early intervention early in pre k four, and C. But really, closer to, I'll come in, you know, I'll come and speak. When she did her research at our school 60% of our students came to us, not kindergarten ready right so she said in her class in particular that year, she had 55% of her students and she said it takes at least the first third of the year just to get as many of those students into the routines of school would like to be in school. foundational skills, and that having pre k four would really allow us to accelerate that learning. The principles in particular Miss Rosie, and I were talking, we all believe that being able to get kids earlier and get them wrapped the wraparound services they need, whether it's speech or occupational therapy those types of services will also help us to help students earlier and accelerate their learning right so not only are we, filling a need for families. Kids Learning, and then there's our personal goal of getting back to being an A rated school and the only way we believe, not the only way but having pre k could significantly impact that if we got two kids earlier and gave them those foundational support that they need. So that's why we're. That's why we love that particular idea. Now how we do that. How we bring pre k in with this building we could do that in a variety of scenarios and I don't know that that's the purpose of tonight's meeting if we are able to purchase the building, I think we could like really drill down into various struck ways we could structure, our different grade levels and have pre k at this school, and use this space to do that. I've talked to with Emily and I have spent time with Mike Dunn, our have done financials our consultant, and he has done projections, based on, last year we felt like COVID was a little wonky this year and so we use last year's projections and we feel like we are financially in a good place to add pre k we met. We meeting, Emily, Susan, and I met with the people at LDOE today - that might be assistant superintendent Taylor the queen of pre K - and got a lot of information about the different types of pre-Ks we could have, whether that's LA4, which comes with dedicated, annually dedicated pre k funding; we could have sliding scale opportunities for families, and we want to make sure we, you know, are still a diverse

by design school. So we know more about that and with all of that in mind, using like a half LA4, our students being half LA4 and half of them being sliding scale students we - Mike - did the numbers, and we would still have a small surplus of - he came out with \$85,000 - quick kind of the quick and dirty thing, so we believe it's financially feasible, and we believe that it's a great, great way to use those dollars terms of cost of the building. They're offering it at \$1.2 million. That was the appraised value about two years ago or three years ago. Prior to them removing like every copper pipe and all of the chillers and the wires. I mean they got every infinitesimal scrap of copper they could get out of that building, so I believe that the new appraisal which Orleans Parish school board is required to provide within six months of a date of purchase will be even less, and that we can make an offer of 85% of their appraisal appraise price but going with the 1.2 million right now, which the architect at Mathis Greer told us thinks is a steal. For that price say, you know, 85% of that as close to a million dollars or something like that. But anyway what I'm here to do tonight is to ask for your authorization to submit a letter of intent to purchase on behalf of the Board and the school. We have the letter from the bank, our bank letting Orleans Parish School Board know that we are financially solvent, and good for the purchase price, and that would move us to the next level of the process and that would be, we'd have to do title searches. And then negotiate, along with negotiating the purchase price and then we do know that some of these really old buildings that were built in New Orleans were built on land that are sometimes they were you know donated and tracks that criss cross and it can take some time to untangle that it's not impossible, but, but I know a couple of schools that have hit at those bumps in the road. I've spent time with Emily and Lee Reed, an attorney who has handled many of these types of projects for other schools, and he is there to help guide us through it, but kind of the big picture. I'm kind of lost in all the details. Are there any questions that might help me get back on track or give you more information?

M

Max Correa 27:32

Melanie, this is Max. So I'm not super familiar with this type of real estate transaction but I imagine that that second step involves all the inspections and if any red flags come up there, then we can pull out without having major costs or, or how penalties or anything like that right.

M

Melanie Tennyson 27:57

Yes, we'll have a substantial window and I'm not sure how long it will take from beginning to end, but our letter of intent at this point is non binding it's our intent to purchase which will move the next pieces along.



Max Correa 28:18

At which point, do they provide the appraisal and the final price I guess that we would settle on.



Melanie Tennyson 28:24

So they're working on that now that was something that they sent us the demo. The price of \$1.2 million Max and then they came back to us and they said oh my goodness like we realize now that this was too old and we need to get something newer. And in the meantime, we've gone to our bank, and we work with Charles Gaspar there, and he is ready to, to help us get an appraisal. Many of the appraisers that people use like are ones they work with, so we're not going to do an independent appraisal until we get this one to see the same, you know,



Max Correa 29:06

though, it could be that it appraised the neighborhood appraiser, even though it's missing stuff maybe it might be different but anyways that's not the question at this point



Melanie Tennyson 29:15

Yeah, I mean real estate values are going up there. But we'll see. I don't think it will drop the value of the property; might offset the damage that was done to the building, so I don't think it's gonna be a huge shift. Either way, you know I don't game changing at the end of that I mean,



Max Correa 29:35

maybe a comment, not a question but here before COVID when we're working on facilities we were, we were thinking of how the, the investments in this area enhance our mission at ISL, and that is to provide an A highly.. I don't know it by heart - but challenging education in emphasizing language immersion, so I like how it aligns your thoughts of pre K or what we might do. Along with that, we also had a significant amount of space needs in all of our campuses. So going from green space to office space to classrooms to art space, and maybe even space especially added at some point was also something that we discussed. So the question of whether we need space or not, also in my mind is kind of clear. So the real question is, is this a good location. does it align to our mission? And, yeah, is ... a good deal compared to the space that we could get elsewhere.



Melanie Tennyson 30:44

Yeah, I think so. When we talk about how we could move at grade levels, are things where we could actually have more space, we could have more green space? There's a variety of ways we could match, right? So yeah, we don't know, but I definitely think it does, it gives us more space, I think, in terms of location. It's really terrific, when you think that we're a Type 2, and where interstate 10, you know, cuts across. Then we have the 610 coming in from the east and the west. We have a lot of our .. right now, 47% of our families come from Jefferson Parish. We have people who come from Chalmette and St Bernard Parish; they can come right up Claiborne and St. Claude now, and the access to 10 east and west from this building, Claiborne ramp is right there.. So that was something that I hadn't thought about when I first went to the building and I went, 'Wow, this is like, this is the access is really well located.' The other thing is the number of last year, the year before the. There's a data group in the city put out data and.