



City of Seattle
Seattle Department of Neighborhoods
Bernie Matsuno, Director

Laurelhurst Elementary
School Design
Departure Committee

Members

Ann Hicks-Thomas
Carin Towne
Joel Domingo
Karen Thiers
Kaylene Anderson
Mark Thompson
Mia Wise
Pete Verretto
Richard Ruidl

Ex-Officio Members

Steve Sheppard – DON
DON Holly Godard – DPD

Laurelhurst Elementary Development Standards
Departure Advisory Committee
Meeting #1
Meeting Notes
March 17, 2015

Members Present:

Carin Towne	Karen Thiers	Kaylene Anderson
Mark Thompson	Mike Barrett	Mia Wise
Pete Verretto		

Members Absent

Anne Hicks Thomas Joel Domingo

Ex-Officio Members Present

Steve Sheppard - DON Holly Godard – DPD

Others Present

See Attendance Sheet

(Editor's Note: 105 persons signed the attendance sheet and the room count was 159 including staff and Committee members.)

I. Opening of Meeting and Introductions:

The meeting was opened by Steve Sheppard from City of Seattle, Major Institutions and Schools Program. Mr. Sheppard welcomed all in attendance and noted that he would be facilitating the meeting. He directed attendees' attention to the handout packets available at the sign-in tables. Brief introductions followed.

Mr. Sheppard briefly outlined the purpose and agenda for the meeting for the formal record. Mr. Sheppard also provided his contact information in case individuals would like to submit their comments instead of speaking publicly in tonight's meeting.

II. Brief Description of the Process:

Mr. Sheppard stated that this process is governed by the Seattle Municipal Code Section 23.68 which specifies how the meeting is run. Mr. Sheppard gave a brief overview of the process. He noted that Seattle does not have a school zone; instead, the city allows schools in all zones, subject to the development standards of the underlying zone. These development standards are commonly referred to as "zoning". Since most schools are in

residential neighborhoods and are zoned “single family”, this can present challenges. Schools are not single family homes and often cannot meet the underlying zoning requirements. Thus, the Land Use code contains provisions that allow the Seattle School District to request exemption from the provisions of the Land use Code. They may request exemptions or “departures” from many of the provision of the code.

The Committee is meeting tonight for the purpose of developing a recommendation concerning the School District’s requested departures for exemptions to several provisions of the Seattle Municipal Code related to land use.

It is understood that most people place a high value on our public school and are often pre-disposed to grant the School District great latitude. However, while the benefits of schools fall broadly to the wider community, the impacts of specific changes at the school site fall mostly upon those who live nearby. For this reason when the City receives a request for departures from the underlying zoning, a key part of the process involves a meeting or meetings before a committee composed of neighbors of the school. Such a committee has been formed for this project. It consists of two persons who reside or own property within 600 ft. of the site, two representatives at the general neighborhood who do not necessarily have to reside within the 600 ft. of the site but in this case one of whom does so, two persons who represent the parents of the students of the school, a representative from the Seattle School District, and a representative at-large who is involved with city-wide education issues. Two alternates were also appointed.

At this meeting, the School District will present their specifics proposal and the departures sought. The Committee will take public testimony; after which it will begin its deliberations. The Committee may do one of the following: 1) recommend granting the departure as requested; 2) recommend approving the departures but with either modifications or specific conditions, or 3) recommend denial of the departures. Mr. Sheppard noted that any conditions identified must be clearly related to the requested departure and enforceable on the District.

Mr. Sheppard emphasized that the Committee’s decision tonight is a recommendation only. The decision will be put into a report form that Mr. Sheppard will produce and circulate to the Committee for their approval. It will then go to the director of the Department of Planning and Development who will issue the decision. The decision of DPD is appealable both to the Hearing Examiner and from the Hearing Examiner to the Superior Courts.

Following the Districts Presentation and public comments, the Committee will develop its recommendation. The Committee may develop recommendations at this meeting, or if either time does not allow, or if there is additional public testimony desired or additional information needed, the Committee may hold up to two additional meetings. If the Committee concludes, they have enough information from the School District, and conclude that no further benefit would be derived from hearing additional public testimonies; the Committee could establish their recommendation; in that case this would be the only public meeting/hearing.

III. Presentation on Departures Being Requested:

Mr. Richard Best, Director of Capital Projects for Seattle Public Schools was introduced to lead off the District’s presentation. Mr. Best noted that the Seattle Public Schools faces enrollment and physical capacity challenges throughout the geographic region. Last summer, about 30 portables were installed throughout the School District to accommodate overflow enrollment. In addition several schools are being renovated with significant size increases. Nonetheless lack of space needed for students remains a problem. Portables remain a necessary part of the overall solution.

At Laurelhurst Elementary School, the School District is proposing that additional portable classrooms be allowed. In order to accommodate the portables, The School District is requesting modifications to the zoning to allow greater than allowed lot coverage up to 45%.

The location of portables and thus the approval of this departure request is important to accommodate:

- general enrollment growth,
- special education,
- before and after school child care program, and
- parks use of the gymnasium.

The current plan is to add 1 to 2 portables within the next two years, 1 portable this summer and another one in the following summer to address the enrollment and special education needs.

Mr. Best also noted the Washington Supreme Court case regarding McCleary further complicates the issue and put further stress on facilities to meet needs. If the McCleary decision is enacted, it will require a reduction in the number of children per classroom in the Kindergarten to 3rd Grade population to about 17 per classroom. This is substantially lower than today and will probably require another 350 new classrooms be added district-wide.

The district has looked at several options including: 1) portables; 2) closing-in the covered play area for the classrooms, 3) recapturing space currently devoted to the existing gymnasium, and 4) adding a second story to the existing building. None of the latter three provide near-term solution so that even if chosen would likely require that portables be utilized for some period.

The School District determined that adding portables is a more cost effective solution for enrollment and special education needs. Mr. Best acknowledged that this is not viewed favorably by the neighbors that is why there is a meeting like this. Mr. Best also recognized that adding portables will have a significant impact on playground space but will propose re-stripping the areas that will be impacted.

Mr. Best introduced Stuart Stovin of Harthorne Hagen Architect to provide a background on Laurelhurst Elementary School and the development of Laurelhurst overtime and discuss the specifics of the proposal. Mr. Stovin briefly went over the history of both the Laurelhurst neighborhood and Laurelhurst Elementary School. He noted that portables have been used at the site for decades. He then provided illustrations of the proposed portable locations and impacts to the surrounding landscape and play areas and current striping.

He noted that up to four portables are being considered. If all were located on the site the total lot coverage would be 41.3%; while in the short term of adding 2 classrooms will increase lot coverage would be 39.8%. In both cases this is above the 35% allowed. He mentioned that the need and balance as well as mitigations to allow these portables already exists.

Mr. Stove also provided the Committee illustrations of street views and potential locations for the portables as well as the different types of portables

IV. Committee Clarifying Questions: (00:22:24)

Mr. Sheppard opened discussion to Committee clarifying questions.

Members asked for more information concerning growth projections, particularly for the Laurelhurst attendance area. Mr. Joe Wolf, planning coordinator for the School District, responded that Laurelhurst's projected student population is a stable. No additional significant growth is anticipated at this time or in the near future.

Members asked for clarification concerning uses that would be affected by the portables, and partially how the proposal will affect the current hard-surfaced play area (Kickball Area). Mr. Stovin responded that any portable location would likely reduce the size of that area, but that it would be re-stripped and remain usable. There was a brief follow-up conversation during which members expressed concern over this loss of space.

Members asked if other schools in the north-east service are exceeded lot coverage. District staff responded that in most cases they were in compliance with lot-coverage requirements. But that it varied for each site.

Members also noted that there had been some discussion that the loss of the hard-surface area was somewhat mitigated by the potential use of the adjacent park using the existing overpass. This is somewhat remote to the school and has not always been utilized. District staff responded that this is a site based decision made by the school principal.

Members asked what would happen in the event that the Committee recommended denial of the departure and the City concurred. District staff responded that other solutions would have to be found. The next best scenarios would to be: use the space in the gym, or relocating the before and after school child care off site and utilization of their existing portables.

Members noted that District staff had indicated that no growth was anticipated in the student population in the area and that if this is the case, why portables should be added over the objections of the neighbors. Why is the School District asking for portables?

V. Public Comments and Questions

Mr. Sheppard opened the discussion for public comments and questions. He noted that a great many persons had signed up to comment.

(Editor's Note: The comments shown below are summaries of statements provided. They are not transcriptions and have been shortened and edited to include the major points raised. Full comments are retained in the files in taped form.)

Comments from Kris Fawcett: Ms. Fawcett noted that she is a PTA board member and she has a 2nd grader at school, and strongly opposes the portables and the departure process. Mr. Best had focused on accommodating daycare, gymnasium etc. She noted that there was a major regional hospital that has already added congestion to the neighborhood. Additional portables will create parking and traffic, shrink valuable outdoor space. She noted the School District's admission that there will be no more kids for the next couple of years. In that case no portables should be needed. The School District should come up with a better option. She also commented that portables creates negative impacts and safety to the children and community.

Comments from Molly Black: Ms. Black stated that she has a 2nd grader at Laurelhurst Elementary School and encouraged the Committee to request the Seattle Public Schools provide more information including illustrations of the portables and their specific locations.

Comments from Christi Nagle: Ms. Nagle commented that the Committee should ask the Seattle Public School's offer and confirm the specific request that were put forth. No amount of changes will mitigate the loss of open space. She noted that almost all nonadjacent schools have ample sites. These sites would much better accommodate any additional enrolment. She mentioned how these will impact housing and open space that the neighborhood uses. She was disappointed at Mr. Best had argued at other recent processes to maintain open space to the District's standard, but was not doing so here. She provided comments given at the Wilson Pacific departure process stressing the importance of maintaining open space and stated that the same arguments was valid at Laurelhurst..

Comments from Miriam Muller: Ms. Muller commented that this proposal would negatively impact the livability of the area. There would be loss of views, loss of light and play space, and the use of playground space will be impacted. This will also change of character in the neighborhood and it is out of scale regarding the design of the portables. She stated that she strongly opposed this proposal.

Comments from Cary Lassen: Ms. Lassen stated that she was concerned how this proposal would degrade the character of the community. Portables are unattractive and do not blend with the architecture of the neighborhood. She requested that the Committee unconditionally deny this departure.

Comments from Charles Frisher: Mr. Fisher stated that the current proposal is ill advised. The City and School Administration has not properly planned for growth. This proposal will simply steal much needed play space that his two boy's use. By the portables and that the existing portables isolated from the main building has poor circulation. He noted the since enrollment is not expected to change in the next few years, removing the play area is a serious injustice to our children. The strong show out at this meeting is an indication of how little support exists for this action. He asked for a show of hands of anyone in favor of this proposal.

(Editor's Note: There were about 159 persons in the room by head count. None indicated approval.)

Portables are really permanent, and one located will be there for many years. He urged the Committee to vote against the proposal

Comments from Liz Becker: Ms. Beck noted that she has had Children at Laurelhurst for 7 years and 3 years in a portable. Portables are necessary but offer an inferior and sub-standard teaching and learning experience. It is a shame that the District's poor space planning has put this neighborhood in this position. The Seattle Public Schools wants to compromise open space and take out the precious playground space. She presented a petition to save the Laurelhurst playground signed by 400 community members and separate letters with 100 compelling testimonies, noting that the school playground is a precious community and neighborhood resources that is being used consistently. She urged members to read each letter and reject the proposal.

Comments from Elizabeth Graham: Ms. Graham stated that she has been a teacher for 35 years and worked in portable classrooms and commented that the environment of the portables for children are different. Portables are like trailer parks for the school yard and they do not look good. She commented that recent research indicate that entire learning for children benefits with active play out in the playground.

Comments from Rob Fawcett: Mr. Fawcett lives about 300 ft. from Laurelhurst and he has 2 daughters that goes to school there. Building codes are established for several reasons including safety. He noted that this is not in my backyard issue, it needs to be addressed city-wide. He asked the Committee to deny this request. It does not make sense of the education issue and would like not to commit Laurelhurst to these problems created the by the District and by the State.

Comments from Karina Kunins: Ms. Kunins commented that she agree with all of the speakers and noted that the children that goes to Laurelhurst at one point have paved open space where they can ride their bikes. She noted that she is on the playground committee and having an open space, protected area and a safe bike ride to school is the reason why the community would like to preserve the space.

Comments from Laurelhurst School Children:

Various community members asked if brief comments could be made by the children of the school who had been unaware that they had to sign in. Mr. Sheppard agreed and asked if anyone disagreed all agreed.

Sara Straits and Sarah Nukes came forward. The noted that they represented the Laurelhurst Elementary for Active Play (L.E.A P). Both stated that they are trying to keep their play space. Sara stated that she was a fifth grader. Younger kids will not have the same play space as they did. The

children commented that they do not like the idea that the school's smallest playground space will make it even smaller.

They presented a petition signed by 191 children form the School.

Editor's Note: The students received a protracted standing ovation.

Comments from Allison Rider: Ms. Rider commented that she agrees to what everyone had said.

Comments from Brooks Romano: Ms. Romano noted that the architect had stated that they were requesting about 45% lot coverage. This would allow to up to 9 additional portables, and once the door is open, you could not close it and lose control of the open space. Portables should be the last, not first, resort, she noted that all other options should be reviewed and examined.

Comments from Jack Unbetend: He commented that he respectfully concur what is being stated so far.

Comments from Tonya Clegg: Ms. Clegg that she is the playground supervisor. The playground is heavily used and often overcrowded during recess. It requires a high degree of micromanagement by staff. Zit is already unpleasant this proposal will only make the situation worse. It should be rejected.

Comments from Ann Buratto: Ms. Buratto concurred with the comments of Ms. Romano's.

Comments from Robin Tarte: Ms. Tarte commented that planning does not constitute lack of planning that the Seattle Public Schools exemplifies poor planning history with all of these evidence shows lack of foresight and analysis from the District. The District failed to measure impact, safety, traffic, and parking issues.

Comments from Berger A. Dodge: Mr. agreed with the positons of the previous speakers. She commented about not very clear who is the ultimate decision maker. Is it one person or several people as part of the decision?

Mr. Sheppard responded that this Committee will make a recommendation and he will write a report that will be forwarded to Ms. Holly Godard and the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) for analysis and will issue a finding. The finding can be appealed to the Office of the Hearing Examiner (OFE) but the decision is made by the DPD director.

Comments from Janiel Eggleston: Ms. Eggleston read a letter from a Special Education teacher Jill Theory, Special Education Representative for Laurelhurst #Elementary School, describing the negative impact it will create to kids that have special education needs. She generally stated that:

Laurelhurst have two classrooms of students with emotional and behavioral sensibilities and one for children who are sensitive to the environment. These children have low self-control. To expect them to further adapt to already congested spaces is inappropriate. They already struggle with overcrowding. On top of this they will be affected by the loss of play space. Instead we should be creating more structured play space. The District should not use special education to justify this action and the City should deny the departure request.

Comments from Meghan McKeever: Ms. McKeever stated that she has a 2nd grader at Laurelhurst and a practicing physician. As a physician she stated a concern over the obesity epidemic am9ohnjg students. Her son was at a portable last year and she noted her concerns regarding open space. Outdoor free space plays is critical and an important part of the educational experience.

Comments from Mark Hoffman: Mr. Hoffman stated that he is the parent of both current and former Laurelhurst students, and a class of 1982 alumni. He noted that the District has not presented a very compelling and clear need for this proposal. The District needs to provide further justification

for this action sufficient to override existing zoning requirements. He noted that since the enrollment figure for this location is flat, a more compelling issue is necessary to grant this departure request.

Comments from Craig Taplin: Mr. Taplin stated that he is the parent of a 1st grader and future kindergartener at Laurelhurst, and a physician at Seattle Children's. He offered his medical opinion of the needs for open play area. He noted that in 2012, in this Washington State about 25% of children were either overweight or obese. This is the overriding public health issue today. The Center for Disease Control is recommending an increase in vigorous physical activity and has issues standards for this. We do not meet these standards. The elimination of this open space is in direct conflict of the CDC guidelines for physical activities. He urged the Committee to reject these proposals by the School District.

Comments from Jeannie Hale: Ms. Hale, president of the Laurelhurst Community Club stated that the Committee had three choices including making a decisions tonight. The Laurelhurst Community Club strongly recommends that you reject this action at this meeting.

Comments from Gayle Christensen: Ms. Christensen stated that she has son is in the 1st grade and her biggest concern is what is best for the children and that research on portables indicated that this is not the best learning experience for the children. She asked the School District to be more flexible and more planning and do other than the portable.

Comments from Dianna Dukes: Is a parent and community member and has a breath of experience with playground and play spaces use and planning. Alternatives do not appear to have been researched sufficiently and none provided to the public. She noted that there is a for-profit child care agency operation on the site, and that if space needs are so critical, then consideration should be given to recapturing that space, not adding additional portables. She also noted about her concerns regarding not in my backyard perceived the by the Seattle Public School as setting precedent and she hopes so because this is what an educated community does by asking questions and the service that they do.

Comments from Steve McCracken: Mr. McCracken stated that he has children at Laurelhurst. This is not a questions of not in my backyard, it is about facts and date, lot coverage and percentage data. He stated that he saw no compelling evidence to support the need to put more portables on this site and he does not see any material facts to support or do this in Laurelhurst.

Comments from Janine Dodge: Ms. Dodge stated that she is concerned with the impact to the neighborhood and the community. She noted that adding portables would increase the appearance of bulk and that there is no buffer zone, this creates impacts on traffic and parking and parents already does not have a designated drop off space. The current character of Laurelhurst is open space and adding portables constitutes less inviting and also creates safety issue such as impact on the line of sight across the playgrounds. She also noted that special needs kids programs need playground space as well as classroom space. The District needs to create a thoughtful long term plan for growth.

Comments from Linda Chau: Ms. Chau is the co-president of the Laurelhurst PTA and she noted that she got in touch with Seattle Public Schools in July of last year requesting some answers regarding the plans and have not received any response. A survey was sent out to the school community and 82% responded that they do not agree with the plan to locate additional portable classrooms being proposed by the District. The school site is already deficient for open play space compared to other north east cluster.

Editor's Note: This concluded public comment from those who had indicated an intention to provide testimony. Mr. Sheppard then opened the floor to those who did not pre-sign.

Comments John Holtz: Mr. Holtz commented that there appears to be no immediate need for this project and it would tremendously impact and change the character of the entire neighborhood.

Comment from Angela Finney: Ms. Finney stated that she has lived in the neighborhood for 12 years and was here tonight to provide support for the community and she supports all the comments that was presented and noted that it is very clear what the space is meant for the children and would like for the District to explore more options and work together with the community. She noted that the community center is closed after 2PM and that this space should be better used and considered for some of the school programs and urged the Committee to reject this departure request.

1:48:27 Comments from Gretchen Swapp: – Elementary schools are sometimes about developing human relationships. This is done in part on the playground. Children do not need more buildings here, but retention of the outdoor open spaces. Where are other options including filling in the open space between the gym and main building or use of the community center. This is not the only solution.

Comment from an Anonymous Person: Served on the PTA board. The person commented that the School District is encouraging community engagement and that is why the community is here to provide feedback and it shows the community really care about this issue.

Comment from Collen Bakalier: Ms. Bakalier noted that she has lived in the Laurelhurst neighborhood for 30 years and commented about the great job the fifth graders did at this meeting. She stated that there are many transportation problems that affect this sight, and that this and the addition of special needs groups presents a problem. There are too many problems associated with this proposal – look at the big picture.

Comment from Michael Vernmeyer: Mr. Vernmeyer stated that he has a kindergartener and recently moved to this neighborhood. The involvement by the neighbors in this process is encouraging. He cautioned that the neighborhood not come off as “Not in my backyard”. However it does not appear that there was inadequate engagement of the neighborhood concerning this and other broader issues related to the school. He asked whether a mock-up on site could be developed using trucks to illustrate the impact of the proposal.

Comment from an Anonymous Person: The commenter challenged the District to come back with a more compelling alternative

Comment from Jean Yagan: Jean made a comment that this meeting is sponsored by the City of Seattle Department of Neighborhood as the School District is asking the City for zoning departure and would like to thank DON for listening to the neighbor’s concerns and impacts and that an unneeded zone change will degrade this area in many ways.

Comment from Meg Hoffman: Ms. Hoffman stated that she attended Laurelhurst Elementary School and is now is in 8th grade. A playground is much more than a place to play. It is a place to develop friendships and sportsmanship. Putting a portable on that site would harm this functions.

Comment from Lara Jenkins: Ms. Jenkins noted that she has two children at the school. It is unfair to have so few persons involved in this decision.

VI. Committee Deliberations:

A. Determination whether one or More Meetings should Occur

After a brief break, the Committee re-convened for Committee deliberations.

Mr. Sheppard noted that a quorum was present and that therefore official Committee business can occur. He noted that the Committee has heard testimony from the public. He noted that the first decision of the Committee whether you believe that sufficient information that was presented by the

School District and testimony from the neighbors to proceed with deliberations, or alternatively that additional information from the District is needed or additional testimony. If you conclude that the former is the case you can proceed with a recommendations tonight. If the latter is you conclusions you can schedule additional meetings. This decisions will require a motion and vote.

It was moved that:

Sufficient information has been given and sufficient public testimony received to proceed with an immediate determination of the Committee recommendation and that only this meeting will be needed.

The motion was seconded.

Discussion of the motion proceeded.

Members noted that the School District did not present any compelling evidence concerning the need for this action. More information might be needed. They asked what would occur is the Committee made its decisions tonight but the School District decided to appeal the Committee's Decision. Could they and introduced new information,

Mr. Sheppard responded that any appeal to the Hearing Examiner is "De Novo" and that therefore new information may be presented.

Mr. Sheppard noted that the Committee's recommendation is one of the factors DPD will use in making an initial decisions. He asked Ms. Holly Godard from the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) to elaborate. Ms. Godard stated that she will use the Committee's recommendation as a major factor in making her recommendation. She would discuss this with the Director of DPD prior to publication of the DPD decision.

Members asked if they were expected to give their rational and/or recommend conditions on any approval. Ms. Goddard responded affirmatively.

Members noted that many neighbors were concerned with traffic in the area and that additional information on general traffic was needed. Mr. Sheppard responded that in the event that the Committee sought additional information, that it be directly related to the decision at hand and not general information.

Richard Best noted that children are presently using the LASAR portable and that therefore the traffic before and after school is already impacted by this use. He noted that in the past up to five portables were located in this area. He noted that the code allows this Committee to allow departures from the underlying zoning. Other members noted that the discussion is veering from the issue at hand: whether we should have more than one meeting.

Members noted that it is clear that the community is 100% disagree with the departure. The only additional information might be from the District. However the District admitted that there is no enrolment need for additional portables. District staff responded that there are currently students utilizing the LASAR portable and that this is a repurposing issue. The needs growth was projected last year and the use of the LASAR portable based upon that projection. While there is no major projected enrolment currently projected, the recapturing of the space lost to the LASAR use is only to accommodate previous decisions

Members responded that if that were the case then nowhere near a 45% lot coverage departure would be needed. From previous discussions it appears that the 45% coverage would allow up to 9 additional portables on-site. If the departure for this 45% was approved, and then only one portable was located on site, what would prohibit the District from coming back in the future with nine portables? It was noted that if one portable was located then the required departure would be only 39% and that if four were authorized, the departure would only have to be 41%.

Richard best noted that there was public testimony that portables never are removed and suggesting other remedies including inclusion of Laurelhurst in the future levy. He noted that portables have been removed recently elsewhere.

Staff responded that either rebuilding, or remodeling Laurelhurst is proposed for the next BEX levy to accommodate 440 students and that this proposal would be in the levy that will go to the voters in February 2019 with possible construction in about 2020 to 2025.

There was a brief discussion of lot coverages at nearby schools in northeast Seattle. Most schools in the area are within the lot-coverage requirements. It was also noted that in almost all newly built or remodeled schools pre-school day care is included. LASAR presently fulfills that purpose. It was noted that if the agreement with LASAR was extended this might obviate the need for an additional portable. Members agreed that this might be acceptable.

District staff noted that the departure is for 45% but that the District is not anticipating using that entire percentage. It was noted that with one portable, the percentage would be 39%.

After brief further discussion the question was called. The Committee was polled. The votes were as follows:

Mia Wise	Yes
Pete Verretto	Yes
Kaylene Anderson	Yes
Carin Towne	Yes
Mike Barrett (sitting in for Mike Jenkins)	No
Mark Thompson	Yes
Karen Thiers	Yes

The vote was six in favor, one opposed. A quorum being present and the majority of those present having voted in the affirmative; the motion passed. The Committee recommend to move forward with a decision at tonight's meeting therefore passed.

B. Discussion of the Merits of the Proposal and Development of the Committee's Recommendation

Discussion proceeded to the major question at hand.

It was moved that:

The Committee recommend that the departure for greater than allowed lot coverage be denied in total and that no additional portables be located at Laurelhurst Elementary School.

The motion was seconded. Discussion followed

Mr. Sheppard noted that based on the discussion, he will write a report and circulate them to the Committee members for comments. He requested that members carefully focus on the review criteria listed in the land use code and summarized those conditions as follows:

1. Departures shall be evaluated for consistency with the general objectives and intent of the City's Land Use Code, including the rezone evaluation criteria in Chapter 23.34 of the Seattle Municipal Code, to ensure that the proposed facility is compatible with the character and use of its surroundings. In reaching recommendations, the advisory committee shall consider and balance the interrelationships among the following factors:

a. Relationship to Surrounding Areas. The advisory committee shall evaluate the acceptable or necessary level of departure according to:

- (1) Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area;
- (2) Presence of edges (significant setbacks, major arterials, topographic breaks, and similar features) which provide a transition in scale;
- (3) Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk;
- (4) Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation and parking in the area; and
- (5) Impacts on housing and open space.

More flexibility in the development standards may be allowed if the impacts on the surrounding community are anticipated to be negligible or are reduced by mitigation; whereas, a minimal amount or no departure from development standards may be allowed if the anticipated impacts are significant and cannot be satisfactorily mitigated.

b. Need for Departure. The physical requirements of the specific proposal and the project's relationship to educational needs shall be balanced with the level of impacts on the surrounding area. Greater departure may be allowed for special facilities, such as a gymnasium, which are unique and/or an integral and necessary part of the educational process; whereas, a lesser or no departure may be granted for a facility which can be accommodated within the established development standards Mr. Sheppard briefly summarized the two issues being reviewed: a) the physical effect of the portable placement, view and traffic; b) sufficient need is demonstrated.

Each Member was asked to discuss their rationale for their potential vote.

Pete Varretto: The community has been clear that these structures do not fit into the neighborhood. They clash with both this building and the neighborhood itself. The location and design of the structure do not reduce the appearance of bulk and instead add bulk to the site. There will be impacts on traffic, noise and circulations and to the extent that it increases population on the site will add traffic, the largest impact is the loss of much needed open space. This space is used extensively both during school and at other times. The need for the departure is questionable. The District has presented scant or no information to justify why this is necessary. Alternatives are lacking.

Karen Thiers: The District failed to go through the criteria and did not actually try to convince the neighborhood that this departure was necessary. There were no compelling arguments given. She noted that many neighborhoods noted the lack of borders and general open space. There will be impacts on the efficiency of play space use, lines of site and other issues. The arguments in favor were unconvincing. The adjacent park was identified as a mitigating element, but there is no funding or practical was to use this space during the school day. For all of those reasons, and in light of the overwhelming neighborhood opposition, this proposal should be totally rejected.

Kaylene Anderson: The neighborhood was articulate and convening; the District was not. Safety, broken sightlines, adverse effect on our sense of community and particularly that there was no rational need presented, lead to the unavoidable conclusion that this should be rejected. The proposal fails to meet any of the criteria in the code.

Mark Thompson: This proposal adds bulk and dramatically impacts the availability of open space. No compelling educational need was given. In addition the loss of space would probably require loss of usable active spaces. There should be other options.

Mia Wise: The addition of even one more portable to the playground will have a significant impact. This proposal miserably fails to meet any of the criteria listed in the code. This proposal angers many including the speaker. This school site is too constrained with already inadequate open space. Outside programs

Carin Towne: Portables are not appropriate to the character of the neighborhood and other proposals at other sites should be looked at. This proposal meets none of the criteria in the code. This adds bulk, reduces much needed open space, disrupts safety by restricting lines of site, and would negatively affect adjacent homes. This is the most constrained site in the area. Other schools have much more ample sites and structures. Ancillary uses should go elsewhere.

Mike Barrett: The District needs to solve capacity needs. We see no immediately needs but we arrived at this table because of past need issues. How would we solve future unanticipated conditions? The District looked at removing the covered play area and further re-proposing inside of the school, looked at other locations. After all of this we arrived at the present proposal. The District recognized that it is impossible to see everyone's perspectives and having this meeting, and comments from the public and the kids that will be very important to resolve issues. Seventeen schools have had portables added. If the site were being redesigned then both the site and building could be laid out much more efficiently. He noted many constraints to use of the site including the gym and the footprint of the overpass landing. More than 6% of the existing lot coverage is attributable to these uses. Because of these constraints this Committee can grant greater departures. The District initially chose a 45% coverage that would allow up to 9 additional classrooms. The District request is presently asking for only one additional classroom at a 39% level and would ask of voting down from 45% to 39% coverage.

Mr. Sheppard asked the Committee if the change in the departure request from 45% to 40% would make any difference in the Committee's decision. Committee members responded that this would make no difference.

3:02:00 Holly Godard asked if there were conditions that could be added to the approval of a departure that might make this proposal acceptable. She offered the following as examples:

- That the authorization be time limited and be totally removed in five years
- Additional landscaping
- Specific reconfiguration of the playground.
- Pointing of the portables, etc.

Members responded that there would be no conditions that would make this desirably. This is about preserving the play space and keeping the site compatible with the neighborhood. The place is already heavily used.

Steve Sheppard noted that from comments made, it appeared that many member were poised to vote against the recommending proposal. He asked that when voting on the motion on the floor members vote in the affirmative if they wished to deny in total without identifying conditions to be applied in the event that one or more portables were authorized, and vote in the negative if either: a) they wished to recommend in favor or authorization of one or more additional portables on site, or hold additional meetings to further discuss possible conditions.

The question was called. The Committee was polled.

Karen Thiers	Yes
Mark Thompson	Yes
Mike Barrett (sitting for Mike Jenkins)	No
Carin Towne	Yes
Kaylene Anderson	Yes
Pete Verretto	Yes
Mia Wise	Yes

The vote was six in favor, one opposed. A quorum being present and the majority of those present having voted in the affirmative; the motion passed. The Committee thus recommend denial of the departure request in total and that no additional portables be located on the Laurelhurst Elementary School site.

Mr. Sheppard informed the Committee that he will be writing up a report to be forwarded to them for review and then go to DPD.

VII. Adjournment:

No further business being before the Committee the meeting was adjourned and no further meetings scheduled.