

## **Westlake PTA Meeting**

**February 13, 2014**

### **Board Members and teachers in attendance:**

Clyde Curley, Principal  
Jeanie Darling, PTA President  
Mel Sweet, PTA Treasurer  
Papaya Van Dyke, PTA Secretary  
Terry McInerney, PTA Arts Co-Chair  
Jane Heyse, Teacher

Approximate attendance: 20 people

Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.

President, Jeanie Darling, opened the meeting and called for order.

### **Safe Routes to School**

Jeanne La Page and Piet Canin from Ecology Action and Cheryl Schmitt from the city of Santa Cruz presented information about the Safe Routes to School Program. Ecology Action has been working with city schools to look at transportation at all schools in California and improve routes to schools. They seek to encourage kids to walk and bike to school to increase exercise and reduce congestion on streets.

The city has already received a grant to begin improving safe routes to Westlake, including some of the following improvements: (1) adding sidewalks where there are gaps; (2) improving methods for slowing traffic, such as narrowing certain intersections to slow cars; and (3) adding medians. Construction on this project will begin at the end of summer.

Ecology Action is continuing to work on plans to go forward with additional improvements in creating safe routes to schools. They have collected data at Santa Cruz schools, and held community forums in October about routes used to get to city schools. They also did walking and biking audits in November. A consulting group, Alta Consulting, has created a list of recommendations which they are now sharing with the public. The list is attached. Alta has highlighted ten locations for infrastructure changes, which identify obstacles to walking and biking, as well as encourage low-cost options for transportation. These projects have now been identified for potential funding opportunities so that Ecology Action or the city can submit applications for grants.

The walk and bike audit held in November looked at pedestrian and bike challenges, driver behavior and physical challenges in getting to Westlake. Attached to the minutes is a handout detailing how students at Westlake and other Santa Cruz schools get to school. At Westlake, 64% of students live within 1 mile of campus, and 67% of students get to school in cars. This is a higher percentage than other Santa Cruz schools.

Some examples of changes proposed by Ecology Action include: (1) opening the west side gate entrance to Westlake on an automatic timer to allow access to the school; (2) improving the wide intersection at Bay and Nobel to decrease the crossing distance and improve entry and exit from the bike path.

They are also working on education and encouragement, programs like the Bike Smart program for 5<sup>th</sup> graders to encourage safe biking. Ecology Action encourages comments or feedback on their website: [saferoutessc.org](http://saferoutessc.org).

### **Review of Last Minutes by Papaya Van Dyke**

Secretary, Papaya Van Dyke, reviewed the minutes of the last PTA meeting, which was held on January 16, 2014.

#### **\*\*\* MOTION**

Motion to approve the minutes was brought by Terry McInerney

Motion was seconded by Jane Heyse

Minutes were approved as presented unanimously

### **Principal's Report**

Mr. Curley reported on several events:

He expressed his thanks to Coach Zell of Playworks for helping to create such a successful program at the school this year.

Classes are currently using the Second Step program which is a violence prevention program emphasizing social skills. Students are focusing on problem-solving in the spring.

Mr. Curley expressed his appreciation for the enrichment programs that have been offered this year, and all the efforts put in by Gabrielle and Deana to set these up.

He noted that the recent music "informances" were a positive experience for teachers and parents, showing everyone the music instruction program at Westlake.

The Warriors Read to Achieve program has started, and students have read over 30 million words so far.

Science Fair was a success, with over 150 projects, over 200 students participating, and 12 projects headed to the County Fair. Mr. Curley thanked Michael Usher, Chris Parsa, and Kerstin Wasson for their work on this year's Science Fair.

Walk to Read is continuing, and teachers will be looking at this at the end of the next trimester to see how this is working.

A student art display is up at Agile Monkey downtown.

A local control funding formula meeting was held today, which looks at how funding will be supported in the schools.

Mr. Curley attended the first meeting of the Natural Bridges Advisory Committee as an observer. Several questions have been raised about the re-opening of the school: (1) Should all grades open at once? (2) Should there be some grandfathering of students? (3) Will this school be a magnet or neighborhood school? The members of the committee are proceeding to work on these issues, and the committee will be facilitated by Michael Kaufman. The parent representative for Westlake is Tim Madsen.

Trimester assessments will be starting soon.

Mr. Curley discussed plans to reduce paper waste by creating a list-serv shared with the PTA as a way of distributing information to all parents by email. Parents can opt out if they would like paper versions. Carrie Haber is working on this, and they hope to start in April. This may be a means to disseminate more information more frequently. The possibility of using Constant Contact was discussed, which would allow the school to see how many people are looking at this.

### **Playworks Update**

Sarah Zell, the Playworks coach, provided an update on the program. She is running organized games during recess for kids. Between recess and lunch she does P.E. with classes. Parent volunteers are welcome to help. She has trained 5<sup>th</sup> grade playground leaders to assist with running the games. The new equipment has been great.

### **Treasurer' Report by Mel Sweet**

Mel reviewed the budget report and also provided a snapshot of the budget, copies of which are attached. The direct appeal is currently at about \$47,500. This is approximately \$5000 less than last year, and there may be some matching corporate grants still outstanding.

The Party Hearty dance grossed approximately \$2000, for a net of approximately \$500-600.

Tax donation letters were completed and distributed last month. The tax return for 2012 has been filed.

Mel also reviewed the check register, a copy of which is attached. The check register includes checks written from January 15, 2014 to February 13, 2014.

### **\*\*\*MOTION**

Motion to approve the budget report and the check register was brought by Tim Madsen

Motion was seconded by Sufi Fox

Motion approved unanimously

### **Arts Committee Overview**

Sufi Fox reported on the upcoming Wildcats and the Arts, which will be held on Friday, February 28 after school. Art card sales will be starting soon. Dorothy has found a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade dance teacher to fill an opening.

### **Art Auction Update**

Carrie Haber gave an update on the Art Auction. They still need volunteers to contact some businesses that have not yet responded. She is working on a video project to show at the dinner with still photos and footage from the Life Lab. There will be live music at the auction. The auctioneer will be Doug Woolard and there will be a Master of Ceremonies. The Early Bird ticket price may be extended until March 1, or until the night of the auction.

### **PTA News and Program Updates**

Jeanie reviewed several current programs, as follows:

- a. Wildcats and the Arts afterschool arts is coming up on February 28.
- b. Movie night for the 4<sup>th</sup> grade Columbia trip is scheduled for March 7.
- c. The Goodwill truck will be coming to Westlake as a fundraiser from March 28-30, on the lower playground. Each truck that is filled will raise \$1000 for the school.
- d. Nominations are now open for the 2014-15 year for the PTA Board. A breakfast will be planned for prospective members.
- e. International Day will be held on Tuesday April 15, followed by International Night on Wednesday April 16.
- f. Scoops for Schools will be held on April 22 at Mission Hill Creamery.
- g. The Walkathon will be held in mid to late May.
- h. The PTA plans to work on cleaning up the storage on the stage.
- i. Valerie Quandt, the Mission Hill Middle School principal, will be at next month's PTA meeting to answer questions. Parent visit night at Mission Hill is scheduled for March 12.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.