

Blossom Park School Council
Meeting Minutes – November 18, 2021

In Attendance:

Susan Fattal: Chair

Naoko Nakamura: Treasurer/Secretary

Caroline Theriault: Principal

Carmelina Falcucci: Vice Principal

Seynab Hersi, Zeina Hosny, Masa Alfarawati, and Sedra Alrajab: Student Representatives

1. Welcome and Approval of Agenda and Minutes:

- Susan welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- Agenda and minutes from last meeting were approved.
- Mrs. Tammy Draper will be joining our School Council as a teacher representative. However, she will not be able to attend today's meeting.

2. Assigning new Treasurer and Secretary Positions:

- Naoko will be leaving us soon. The treasurer and Secretary executive officer positions need to be reassigned. Ayan will be our Secretary, and Nabi will be the Treasurer.
- We will arrange for having an appointment at TD to manage the transfer of signing authority.

3. Chair's Update:

Garden Tower and Workshops:

- Susan coordinated with Growing Futures in Parkdale Food Centre to get their available tower delivered to school. They will provide necessary materials to start us off and will provide a demonstration workshop on how to operate the tower.

- School will coordinate with them on the Solutionary Workshops. We will have 9 workshops for \$700. The school will cover the cost of the workshops.
- Susan asked if there are still other teachers who are interested in having another tower.
- Carmelina told the council that the tower arrived around a week ago and is now in the main office. Karin from Growing Futures provided info and the seeds.
- The tower was moved from the main entrance area to avoid the draft from the main doors and the movement of the students in the area; students would need to be careful and vigilant around it.
- Carmelina suggested not to hesitate and get another tower if there is an available one.
- Susan mentioned that we are still on the waiting list of ONFE. They'll probably start working on their towers in January. We'll hear from them if there is one available for us.

Donation Page:

- OCDSB set up a donation page for us on Charitable Impact as a Giving Group. We promoted the page to our families and received \$290 from 6 people in the first 5 days.
- One week later, we were informed by the financial department in the OCDSB that they now have an agreement with another donation platform, micharity.com, and recommended moving to the new platform. Charitable Impact has been used for 5 years by the Board as a temporary measure.
- Micharity also issues donation receipts for tax purposes.
- Susan suggested staying on Charitable Impact for a couple more months before making the move, if possible, to manage parents' expectations and arrange for a smooth transition. Changing platforms in such a short time might create confusion as we have to withdraw the donated amount and start from scratch.
- The Board seem to have already created the page for us on Micharity along with a donation link on the main school website page. So, we can make the move whenever we are ready.

Family Pizza Days:

- Every Thursday is now Family Pizza Day with Halal Pizza. We will receive 10% of the purchases. Families need to let them know they are from Blossom Park.
- 5 people participated on the first day. We received \$20, which are deposited in our account. No one participated in the second week.

- We will test it for a while and see how it goes.

Technology Use Policy Feedback:

- Susan sent the OCDSB the Technology Use Policy Feedback form, and included the suggestions we discussed in our meeting. She also sent the policy revision committee an email requiring action. She stated that there is an urgent need for interim guidelines for the students. Clear and straightforward directions and guidelines need to be drafted to be discussed in the class. Students need more information about their responsibilities while using the technology.
- Susan is working on two documents for students (K-grade 3) and (grade 4-6) written in a simple language and modified according to age group, based on OCDSB consent form expectations. She will share it with the school soon.

Teacher & Staff Appreciation Day:

- The date is moved from December 2nd to December 10th.
- The student representatives, Carmelina and Susan had a meeting to plan and discuss the logistics. The event will be a Virtual Appreciation Assembly on December 10th from 1:40 PM-2:30 PM.
- It will start with a slideshow, followed by a Kahoot. We will send a Google Form to teachers and Staff to get some information; the students will work on the Kahoot with Susan; Mr. Gibson will help later and host the Kahoot.
- Wall of Appreciation: the wall area near the library will be filled with appreciation messages and drawings from the students, parents and staff on sticky notes. Parents will be sent a Google Form to collect the messages.
- Susan will work on DIY cards for the teachers on behalf of the School Council.

Web Page Log-In Issue:

- There was a log-in issue on our web page. OCDSB created a temporary log-in page and password for us until the problem is resolved.

2. Treasurer's Update:

\$21.01 was added to our account (interest credit + Family Pizza Night Fundraising). The available balance is \$3,848.56. With the outdoor education fund saving \$200, the total balance is \$4,048.56.

3. Principal and Vice Principal's Update:

- Tower Garden arrived about a week ago and was assembled by students in our ELD class.
- Ms. Jehan offered to be the lead teacher involved with the Tower Garden and Solutionary workshops. We will have more information about the workshops later.
- The school website has been updated and reconfigured. TWITTER account is in full swing. New photos are being added.
- Susan supported the new website changes and suggested promoting it to parents.
- Cyberbullying presentation was provided to all junior intermediates students this week.
- Anti-Racism presentation planned for all junior intermediate student is coming next week (part of health curriculum).
- Parent teacher interviews took place last week via Google Meet platform; they went well. Currently, we can't have in-person interviews.
- Staff Appreciation Day is scheduled on Dec. 10th. Bulletin Board is set-up, and students are working in the library during 2nd nutrition break. Ms. Natyshak will be there to supervise them.
- Email to staff regarding stickies will go out on Dec. 1st.
- Susan brought up the idea of the possibility of having a Picture Day at school, as it was discussed during COW meeting; there is a chance it will happen. More information may be provided after January. All safety protocols will be in place.

4. Students' Update:

- Students are preparing for the Appreciation Day.
- Seynab will work on a poem to be included in the slideshow.
- Masa will come up with an idea for a video to be included in the slideshow.
- The bulletin board near the library will be decorated and ready for the appreciation messages.

- Sedra asked a question about the possibility of designating a room for prayer, as praying in class is not that convenient due to noise.
- Caroline clarified that designating a room for prayer is not possible right now due to COVID protocols; safety is a priority when making such decisions. The back area of the class can be used as a praying area for now.

5. Matters for Discussion:

OSEG Fundraisers:

- We have been contacted by Ottawa Sports and Entertainment Group. They own and operate Redblacks Football Club and Ottawa 67's Hockey Club.
- They suggested two fundraising possibilities. They can sell us 67's game tickets for \$15 each, and students can sell the tickets to their friends and families for \$25 each. This fundraiser can extend to include a community skate afterwards. Minimum number of tickets to be purchased is 50 tickets.
- Another possible idea is Themed Skate Day; we can rent their rink and have a themed skate day such as hosting a Christmas Skate Day for our families.
- Principal thinks it is a bit pricey for our community. She suggested checking if they may accept to donate the tickets to us to contribute to the community. Our families find money for popcorn and other things, but they will probably not pay for this.
- Vice Principal likes the idea of the Skate Day. However, the majority of students do not own skates. So, she's not sure if it would be an equitable offer for our school.
- Naoko thinks since our school is so small, we would need about 3 schools to get together to make the project profitable.

Ottawa Art Gallery Tour:

- Susan shared some information regarding free virtual school tours at OAG.
- Students view images from OAG exhibitions via a live-streamed slide show discussion. Then, guided by an OAG gallery educator, the students will be led in engaging discussion, have the opportunity to ask questions and reflect on the topics at hand. A short art activity will be included in each session for free as well.
- Information about the tours can be passed on to teachers to book their time slot session based on their schedule.
- Such an activity can be part of the art class and a way to break the routine and let the students experience art and appreciate it.

- Naoko asked if on-site tours are allowed during the pandemic.
- Caroline responded that they are not allowed for now.

Parents' Questionnaire:

- Parents were sent a questionnaire to ask about how the school can support their kids, to suggest topics for discussion and what social media platform they prefer our Council to have. Only one parent participated and they chose Facebook.
- Susan pointed out that currently there are two Facebook pages in our Council's name. Ashleigh, who was previously a member, created one of them a couple of years ago. Susan will contact Ashleigh and ask her to delete the page, and will find out who aerated the other page. In case we decided to create a new page, that will lead to a lot of confusion. She will try to find out who created the second page as well.
- Vice Principal: I would prefer communicating through the web page. It is a platform to inform parents. With Facebook, we would really have to monitor and take it down if you see any inappropriate activities. I suggest that we look at other schools' websites and see what their councils are doing. Get a feeling of 3-4 schools' as examples.
- Susan: I fully understand Carmelina's concerns as it is very important to ensure the platform is safe for our community. I have already looked into many of the schools' websites and contacted 2 schools. I contacted Vimy Ridge last year and learnt about their Facebook closed groups, and last month I contacted Sawmill Creek also regarding their closed group; they have 50 parents in the group. I've also learnt that First Avenue school use Instagram to promote their pizza days and other activities, and it has been serving them well.

I keep updating our web page and calendar and including all necessary information, but I'm not sure if our parents are visiting the page. With social media, we reach out to the parents who wish to participate, which is more practical. Social media would be used provide information, links and reminders such as pizza days or link to donation page. For example, Sawmill used their Facebook page to promote last year's Science night's limited spots. Within an hour, those spots were gone.

- Vice Principal: Facebook seems to be more suited for the older generation. Students mainly use Instagram. Twitter could be even better as you can retweet.
- Principal: We can use all 3 of them.

- Susan: Most of schools seem to use Facebook. I will keep researching.

School's Current Outdoor Inventory:

- Caroline shared with Susan a list of the outdoor inventory items at school. We have 5 picnic tables, 2 benches and five rocks.
- Susan asked if they are fully utilized in their current location, and if there is a possibility to rearrange or relocate them.
- Principal: I don't often see teachers using them as an outdoor class. Teachers basically use outdoor space for physical activities.
- Vice Principal: We relocated one of the picnic tables last Friday.
- Susan: Are they all secured? Do we need to hire a contractor to secure them?
- Principal: We don't need a 3rd party professional company to do the relocating work.
- Susan: I suggest that we contact Daniel Fornier, a project manager at OCDSB, who we contacted last year. We could discuss the possibilities with him or even invite him to one of our meetings.
- Vice Principal: I can provide a PDF file of the map of our ground and location of equipment. City of Ottawa offers a program for trees, which could work with us. It has to be done before June, 2022. Trees can create shades. Currently we don't have enough shade for any outdoor seating.
- Susan: I will try to contact some logging companies as well that might want to donate some tree logs to us. We are trying to estimate the cost of the equipment that we need to purchase.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 15th at 5pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10pm.