

Members of the Board,

I am writing to you to formally submit my resignation as a member of the Facilities Planning Advisory Committee. I do not take my decision lightly, nor is it a hasty reactive choice. While I am truly saddened that I will no longer be able to be an advisor in this very important process, I feel that my participation is no longer needed and I would like to focus on other priorities where I can indeed make a positive impact. In an effort to give the Board a better understanding of my reasons for leaving, I have outlined a sequence of events below. I understand that a few of you are new to the process of school board and I hope that you are open to research and information in all of your further decision making so that this kind of situation does not occur again. I will continue to support our school district in every way that I can moving forward. It is my hope that this letter will serve as encouragement to the Board members to provide strong leadership for the District and informed and educated decisions on what will impact the future of the children in our community.

Narrow mandate

The Committee was set out with a very narrow mandate, to explore the modernization or rebuilding of North School, without any background on how the Board came to the conclusion that indeed North School was the only option. This created a situation where the Committee was forced to work backward to justify moving forward. Many questions were asked not only by the public, but also by each of the Committee members as to why other options were dismissed. As you can see now, a thorough exploration of ALL of the possible options can lead to more flexibility, not to mention instill a sense of participation and trust amongst the community members who want answers (ie. the Community Center). The fact that the Committee was being asked to consider only two options at North School without ever having solid information on the lot lines and contractual agreements between the school and the city, made for poor decision making. For example, when the FPAC announced to the Board that rebuilding North School would be preferable over modernizing, we did not know that the school owned all of the property in the park up to the basketball courts. In addition, we had no information on whether or not the school could actually build on this grassy area. We were

guided through this process by an architectural firm that was also going to submit an RFP, again, leading to questions regarding conflict of interest.

It seems that after this mandate was met, the FPAC had met its obligation and should have been disbanded, as no further mandate was given. After requesting on several occasions to have a standing committee with a **regular** meeting schedule to discuss ongoing business, this request was denied. The FPAC continued to convene, only as necessary to approve of agenda items that were not written by the head of the committee to justify decisions over which we had no control. This in turn created a perception that indeed we were a "rubber stamp" to the direction that the District wanted to go. After not having met in over 4 months, the FPAC was asked to squeeze in 3 meetings at the end of August to quickly approve of an architect. After personally having done research on how to choose an architect and create a rubric for it, my work was disregarded by the two school board members who would be making the ultimate decision, without any experience whatsoever. Furthermore, the rubric which was given to FPAC and not created by its members, was worthless when we were going over the RFP's. It did not even reflect the items requested in RFP.

Vision and strategy

The FPAC and the Board must work on an envisioning process that is consensual, articulates values and priorities and defines parameters. It also requires broad community input, which has been denied until only recently. Extensive participation in this process ensures transparency and buy in from the stakeholders. The FPAC was never allowed to lead the process, but rather we were given limitations at every meeting, working from the top down, not the ground up. When ideas were presented, discussion was not allowed if it did not fall under the agenda. Discussion of anything other than what was on a narrowly written agenda was a "courtesy" according to the District. There was a predisposition of particular outcomes. This has created a situation open to criticism and failing to engage the public. Having a sufficient amount of time is also a very important element in this process. It allows for debate, consideration of all opportunities and for thorough understanding. The integrity of the public engagement

process has been compromised as a result of impromptu meetings and ad hoc agendas meant to address only the immediate need to approve the next step. Transparency does not simply involve open meetings, but rather involved discussions that bring forth factual information on why certain decisions were made, with proper research and input from everyone in the community.

The vision is what informs the basis for moving forward with the process of building. And the FPAC and the School Board have yet to design a vision for our District that encompasses the City, the community and the parents. Curriculum is also an important factor in the overall design and need for more space. Yet, we have not met with the Curriculum committee, nor have they themselves had a meeting in over a year. There is currently a "perfect storm" of opportunity that could be tapped, that is the Hermosa Beach Community Dialogue. Residents are engaged, they are creating a vision for our city and the school district should be heavily involved in participating and ensuring that the schools are a priority. This momentum can be piggy backed upon, with members of the community fresh on what they see as priority, including carbon neutrality and creating a brand for themselves.

The Gym Debacle

Because of a very controversial and poorly strategized proposition for the school district years ago, the greater community does not trust the school board or its ability to spend money wisely. The only way to pass a bond for the schools is to build trust. I believe that the only way to do that is to have a very strategic and well thought out plan of action. The District has a long way to go. It was my impression that the FPAC would be driving this process, but clearly that has not been the case. The Gym project will continue to haunt the District for many more years to come if the board does not make amends. As far as I am concerned, I do not think that it would be any skin off the back of the board to simply admit that mistakes were made and offer to meet with concerned parties to devise a tool that can ensure that these mistakes will not be made again.

I close with the description of the purpose of forming the FPAC:
"To develop a long-term vision for the district's buildings, examine the condition of current facilities and identify short and long term maintenance priorities...to provide direction regarding the best use of district facilities for students, staff, and the community." I am sad to say that in the year and a half that the FPAC has existed, it has not accomplished any of the above. There is no long-term vision, the condition of current facilities and maintenance priorities will be done by the architects and as far as providing direction for best use, it was never on the agenda. I have spent countless hours researching and educating myself on how to be an effective FPAC member but it seems to have been in vain.

I wish the school district success in the future and it is my hope that amongst the board members, a leader or two will rise to the occasion and guide the rest of this process so that it can engage, motivate and encourage our community to support our children's needs.

Best of luck,