

Board of Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, April 19, 2016
Our World Neighborhood Charter School
Elementary School
36-12 35th Avenue, Astoria, NY 11106
7:00 pm

The Trustees present were:

Jeanette Betancourt, President
Melissa Chin, Vice President
Charles Gaudagnolo, Treasurer
Maura Fitzgerald, Secretary
Rich Bogle
Olubunmi Emigli
Sarah Espanol

Also present were:

Brian Ferguson, Executive Director
Yvette Strachan, Executive Assistant
Anna Evenhouse, PTO Co-Chair
Manu Bhagavan, Parent, Prospective Board member

Jeanette Betancourt, President of OWNCS Board of Trustees, chaired the meeting.

Board Business

Jeanette Betancourt

Ms. Betancourt reminded the Board that the next Strategic Planning meeting has been scheduled for Saturday, May 21. She also informed the Board that Mr. Bhagavan, who was present at the meeting, had been interviewed by herself and two other board members. Mr. Bhagavan, in addition to being an OWN parent, is a professor of History and Human Rights at Hunter College, and the CUNY Graduate Center, and is an associate of the Human Rights Program of the Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute and former Chair of the program. Prospective board member Ellen Quish has also been interviewed by three members of the board.

Director's Report

Brian Ferguson

Mr. Ferguson gave a summary of recent political developments affecting NY State charter schools including the appointment of a new NYSED commissioner and the outcome of the latest legislative sessions. Proposals that passed included modifications to rent support, and per pupil funding. Mr. Ferguson went on to review the school's approach to advocacy. He recently met with James Merriman, CEO of the NYC Charter School Center, and maintains some involvement with the NYC Coalition of Community

Based Charter Schools. He plans to meet in the fall with state senators who have students from their districts enrolled at OWN, and noted that they have been very supportive of the school.

Education Committee

Melissa Chin and Sarah Espanol

Ms. Chin and Ms. Espanol reported that the Committee engaged in very fruitful discussions on the new Science, Social Studies and STEAM curricula this month, and the professional development required to support our teachers to roll them out. They also began a discussion on technology for the coming fiscal year. Several programming and budget questions arose and they will resume the discussion next month and report back.

Facilities Committee

Rich Bogle and Brian Ferguson

Mr. Bogle informed the Board that the school has scheduled a meeting with the EDC on Friday morning, May 6. The goal of the meeting is to ascertain whether the EDC is open to our construction project, and to request a long-term lease (or built-in auto-renewals), so that we can seek project financing. OWN will clarify that, due to different financial circumstances, additional analysis, and identification of alternative financing options, we are no longer asking for any rent concessions to make the project possible, as we did in the past. Should the EDC indicate a willingness, we can bring more concrete information to them relatively quickly.

Mr. Ferguson reported that he has begun the process of seeking a building for OWN2 by meeting with the NYC DOE about possibilities for co-location. He said he had a really good meeting with Mr. David Frank who was both nice and knowledgeable, and who was already aware of our replication application. However, Mr. Frank was promoted shortly after the meeting so will no longer be our contact. In the meantime, however, the conversation confirmed that District 27 is overcrowded and that a new charter would release pressure from the DOE schools, a fact that will influence any decisions regarding our required application for co-location.

Development Committee

Jeanette Betancourt and Brian Ferguson

Ms. Betancourt informed the Board that the Committee did not meet this month due to some confusion about scheduling. The Committee members requested that reminders go out with a little extra lead time since the meeting is not at a routine time.

Directors Report

Brian Ferguson

Mr. Ferguson stated that, in preparation for the upcoming charter renewal application, we will need to review and update the By-Laws and school policies to ensure they

incorporate any desired additions such as open meeting procedures and a Cyber-bullying policy as well as clarifications to the parent complaint policy. He noted that a legal review has already been done in preparation for the replication application. He also informed the Board that since each Committee is required to have three participants, we need to add a member to the Finance & Administration and the Audit Committees. Melissa Chin, who has business management experience, agreed to join the committees.

Mr. Ferguson was also very proud to share the news that OWN alumnus Tyler Blake, who is about to graduate from high school at Frank Sinatra School of the Arts, had a film accepted into the *Our City, My Story* student film competition at the Tribeca Film Festival.

PTO

Anna Evenhouse

Ms. Evenhouse reported that the Free Art Saturdays program has wrapped up for the year. She described it as very successful and was particularly appreciative of the wonderful help from students of Frank Sinatra high school.

She let us know that a number of OWN families attended a meeting at the Museum of the Moving Image about the upcoming \$2.4 million renovation of near-by “Bear Park” to share their input. She said that there is also an online survey that is open until Thursday. The renovation is scheduled for completion by February, 2018.

Ms. Evenhouse said the PTO is very happy to continue the tradition of providing breakfasts on testing days and meals for teachers on Parent/Teacher conference days. They are also planning student and parent Social Media Safety awareness and education meetings. Last but not least, she updated the Board on plans for Multicultural Day on May 14. The planners have been seeking the consent of neighbors to close off the block for the day and she stated that they have been very supportive.

Ms. Betancourt called an Executive Session to consider the board candidates. A report on their business follows:

Upon motions duly made, seconded and carried, the Trustees:

RESOLVED to elect Manu Bhagavan for a term ending in 2018; and

RESOLVED to decline the candidacy of Ellen Quish, with sincere thanks for her willingness to volunteer her services to OWN.

Respectfully submitted by:

Maura Fitzgerald, Secretary, OWNCS Board of Trustees