

MEETING NOTES

Tuesday, December 15, 2020

Virtual Meeting

1. Welcome

Assistant Superintendent Tim McClure welcomed the committee and made opening remarks about the virtual meeting format.

Superintendent Ryder Warren thanked the committee for their continued commitment to the process and noted the district's appreciation for their hard work and guidance which will be invaluable as the district reevaluates the 2020 bond. He noted that the district's growth is still strong, and NISD will need to work very hard to gain trust and consensus as we re-present a bond to the community.

1. November 2020 Election Results & District's Immediate Next Steps

Mr. McClure presented a summary of the November 2020 Bond and VATRE results, in which slightly over 55,000 voters participated.

He shared with the committee an overview of the steps the district has taken since the November 3 election. The district has conducted a post-election online survey, hosted a Stakeholder Feedback Meeting, launched a Thoughtexchange for LRPC members and reconvened the LRPC.

2. Demographic Update

Mr. McClure introduced Michelle Box with Templeton Demographics to share the latest quarterly demographic report. The district currently enrolls 25,399 students, a growth of 300 students from last year. Historically NISD has grown over 1,000 students per year. This slowdown demonstrates the COVID-19 effects that schools have felt across the nation. This slowdown in enrollment was seen mainly in the younger elementary grades of Pre-K and K where many parents have delayed enrollment.

Ms. Box shared an economic update noting that even though COVID has had an impact on unemployment rates, it has not had an impact on the housing market. NISD is building nearly 2,400 new homes each year and this will continue for the foreseeable future with another 40,000 future lots identified.

Ms. Box shared the top ten most active subdivisions, number one being Pecan Square in the Lance Thompson Elementary zone. It was noted that the district has six elementary school zones closing more than 200 homes each year which equates to 50-60 new elementary students. The district housing overview shows how widespread the growth is in areas throughout the district. Templeton's forecast of future housing activity projects the district will build approximately 12,000 homes over the next 5 years, equating to about 4-6 elementary schools.

Even though COVID had an impact this year, Templeton forecasts the district will feel a surge next year that will make up for it and then go back to growing about 1,200 students each year. These projections show an approximate growth of 6,700 students over the next five years for an enrollment of approximately 32,000 students in 2025. Enrollment forecasts by campus show both elementary and secondary campuses at or nearing capacity.

Questions:

1. What are you projecting is the impact of the economic downturn in the rate of growth?

Ms. Box responded: DFW continues to be a very diversified, professional economy overall. We are optimistic with these growth projections because the housing market has continued to show strength. Demand is still pent up from the past several years. Population growth in DFW has not showed any signs of cooling.

Mr. McClure added that is one of the main reasons we do a quarterly report so we can keep a pulse on any shifts.

3. Timeline for May Election

Mr. McClure shared a timeline for the May general election which is May 1, 2021. The deadline for the Board of Trustees to call for a May election is Friday, February 12. He shared a calendar outlining the steps planned between now and the deadline including additional LRPC meetings, planning workshop with the Board and recommendations to the Board.

4. Feedback Review

Mr. McClure next outlined the feedback the district has gathered from the community since the November election. He shared that a prevalent comment he has received is that community members felt that the district was not being sensitive to the current environment and the impact COVID-19 has had on the state of the economy. He noted that the bond was recommended almost a year ago prior to knowing the impact of COVID-19 and was slated to go to voters in May 2020 before it was delayed to November. Now the LRPC has the opportunity to review the recommendation to make sure it aligns with concerns in our community about the economy, growth and education.

Survey:

The district launched an online survey and mailed a postcard to every voter who voted in the November election with a QR code to participate. It was also pushed out through district channels and social media. Mr. McClure shared the demographic breakdown of respondents of the survey, noting that a large majority were NISD parents, and then walked the committee through the results of each survey question.

Respondents were split between agree/disagree on the statements regarding the total bond dollar amount, trusting the district to spend it wisely and concern over taxes. A majority of respondents did show an understanding of the district's growth and the need for new schools. A majority of respondents said they strongly agreed with the need for replacement schools, renovations, Pre-K additions and recreational facilities at new schools. Respondents were mostly neutral on statements regarding updates to existing recreational facilities, updates to the NISD track and field complex and NISD's buildings being too extravagant. A large majority of respondents strongly agreed that funding is needed to provide technology devices.

Mr. McClure then shared a graph that compared how respondents said they voted for each proposition with whether they agreed with a concern that the bond would raise property taxes. It demonstrated that there was an alignment with their concern and whether they voted against the bond and VATRE. He also showed how respondents said they mainly received information on the bond and VATRE and how they prefer to receive future information from the district.

37% of respondents said they would support a future bond of the same amount (\$986 million), 34% said it would depend on what is included, 8% would support a greater amount, 8% a lesser amount, and 14% said they would not support a future bond.

Mr. McClure then shared the analysis of the open-ended responses provided by Hanover Research, a third-party group. Hanover developed themes of the 1,152 open-ended responses and quantified those themes in their summary. The concern for property taxes was the most frequent theme with 32% of open-ended responses. Other themes included concerns for district financial management, that expenditures are not needed, for an over-emphasis on recreational facilities, and for the impact of COVID-19 and the economy.

Chat Questions:

1. What is the total number of registered voters in NISD?
Approximately 79,000 registered voters. NISD is still awaiting updated numbers from Tarrant County.
2. What is the typical vote count in past bond elections?
Turnout in 2017 was 4,763 voters.

Stakeholder Feedback Meeting:

Mr. McClure shared the process for the Stakeholder Feedback Meeting. Community members were identified and invited to participate in a listening session. Comments from the participants were recorded and categorized in the meeting. Participants then had the opportunity to rate the categories based on how strongly they felt about each item. The Stakeholder Feedback Meeting Summary outlines eight themes/statements that captures the main takeaways from their thoughts and feedback: Distrust/Criticism, Communication, Not Needed/Frivolous, Taxes & Debt, Timing, Technology, Athletics and Ballot Structure.

LRPC Thoughtexchange:

Mr. McClure then shared the feedback received through the LRPC Thoughtexchange. 32 LRPC members participated, providing 51 thoughts and 549 ratings. The thoughts resulted in nine top themes, with "Communicate & Educate" receiving the highest rating. Key Thoughts were shared for the top themes.

Key Takeaways:

Mr. McClure shared that the four key internal takeaways from gathering all of the feedback from the various sources: Communicate & Educate; Taxes & Debt; Projects & Timeline; Distrust & Criticism.

5. Re-evaluate Recommendation

Mr. McClure reminded the LRPC members that the committee previously defined consensus as two-thirds majority which will continue for the group's decision-making moving forward. He also shared the district's new construction forecasting schedule which the LRPC used previously in making its recommendations. Mr. McClure noted that the delay in voter approval will push the first two years of planned construction and projects in later years could be accelerated to catch up.

Mr. McClure explained the Recommendation Re-evaluation exercise that will take place in small groups. As a first step in re-evaluating its previous recommendation, LRPC members will review the project prioritization list that formed the 2020 bond and identify projects as "Keep," "Postpone" or "Discuss."

LRPC Member Comment:

I had an issue with the prioritization format from last time. When we ranked it 1-5, we were able to assign a lot of "5's." A better way could be to identify "have to have" and "nice to have" first and then limit the percentage of 1-5 so you have to make tough choices.

Mr. McClure responded that it was good feedback on the exercise and could be looked at later if and when the ranking is utilized. Tonight's discussion is a first review and will not involve the 1-5 ranking.

Committee members were then divided into small groups to discuss and perform the re-evaluation exercise. A google spreadsheet was used to capture each group's discussion.

Chat questions needing follow-up:

1. Did some of these items already get taken care of? Small items, etc.
2. Are we thinking 5 year or 3 year for May?

6. **Wrap-Up & Next Steps**

Mr. McClure reconvened the committee as a large group once the small groups completed the exercise. He said the administration will dissect the results and bring them back to the committee next meeting.

Mr. McClure assigned homework to the LRPC. He asked them to discuss the work of the LRPC with at least five community members and report back their feedback, as well as think about one thing they would like to see implemented differently in a May election. A link to a google form was provided for LRPC members to input the community feedback they receive.

Mr. McClure re-shared the future meeting dates. The LRPC will meet again on Thursday, January 7 and 14. All meetings are currently scheduled to be conducted virtually. He and Dr. Warren thanked the committee for their time and commitment and wished them a Merry Christmas.