

Town Meeting

2-19-15

TOWN MEETING

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Precursors - none

Announcements

- Eleanor, acting as administrator on Frank's directive, reminded TM that the hiring committee for a new librarian would have its first meeting next Tuesday (2/24) at lunchtime in the library. A sign-up sheet is on the wall outside the main office.

Consent Items

- Erin and Christine (both 10th) had posted a consent item concerning Cabaret but said they were tabling it until next week.
- Throw Back Dance: Bennett (12th) spoke for the class of 2015, saying he had all necessary signatures, approvals, etc., and was asking consent for a "Throw Back" Dance to be held on March 6. A question was raised as to the definition of "throw back," and Bennett said it meant that all music and dress would be pre-2005. **Consent given unanimously.**

Motions

- Dave Soles made a motion to allow the Frisbee teams to use the gym during Friday TA for four weeks in the lead-up to the spring (outdoor) season. The Frisbee teams already use the gym after school most days of the week, but a volleyball team has had a long-standing agreement to use it at 5:30 on Fridays, so he was hoping to gain the lost half hour by starting practice at 3:30. He said that he had spoken to Sally, and that she had said it was okay with her but that she thought it should go before Town Meeting.
 - o Paul asked if they could go outside if the weather were good, and Dave Soles said they could. Paul also asked about the specific times the gym would be needed, and Dave said he anticipated having the gym cleared and ready to start by 3:30.
 - o Margaret S. asked how many kids would be displaced by the practice, and Dave answered that he wasn't sure.
 - o Eleanor suggested that those who usually use the gym should be encouraged to attend Town Meeting, and Paul said they should be encouraged to join Frisbee. In any case, Dave will make announcements today and tomorrow. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Discussions

- Margaret S. said she wanted to bring up a discussion about several aspects of Town Meeting: the broadcasting of minutes live and the role of the secretary, the time of Town Meeting, and the increasing tendency among some teachers to use TM as a catch-up time for students. Two weeks ago TM voted to broadcast minutes live, and last week this caused embarrassment during the TM attended by the superintendent and Dr. Hobbs. Indiscreet comments were posted along with the minutes, and it took some time for them to be taken down. She also said attendance at TM was not what it once was, and she wondered if it might not be a good idea to switch TM back to the second block on Thursdays the way it was several years ago, since the current schedule allows people to come late to school on Thursdays.
 - o Eleanor reminded everyone that many regular TM attendees were missing due to the Harvard Model Congress trip and suggested it might be better to wait to make any formal motion. She said that the time switch on Thursday had been made to accommodate students going to the Career Center, but she now wondered if that had been wise, given that very few (if any) Career Center students seemed to attend TM. But she pointed out that last week's meeting, held after lunch when everyone should have been in school, had, in her opinion, been very poorly attended given the importance of the meeting (the superintendent discussed the new principal hiring process). So she believes some major discussion of Town Meeting and its significance is definitely in order.
 - o Liz agreed that discussion needed to take place and added that she, too, had been very disturbed by last week's minutes' debacle. She said the job of secretary was very important as it essentially created and recorded the history of our school. It used to be written by hand and then typed up manually, and those old records can still be accessed and studied. She said that last year a discussion had been started about changing the entire block schedule for HB, and that one of the ideas had been to allow more time for student/teacher meeting outside the regular class structure. The idea was abandoned, but maybe it was time to once again

take a serious look at our scheduling and priorities. She said that when she first started teaching at HB, she had been counseled not to schedule meetings, etc., during TM, but that teachers currently seem to be ignoring that “rule.” She said that what we teach here is dictated by the school board, but that how and when we do it is up to us.

o Gabe (6th) asked if we changed the schedule would B block come first on Thursday. Bennett answered that it would depend on what TM voted.

o Jennifer said that she, too, had been horrified by what happened at last week’s meeting and questioned whether it really was a good idea to post the minutes live. She wondered if anyone looked at them and suggested that it might encourage more people to skip the meeting. If increasing attendance is a goal, then people should be compelled to actually attend to find out what is going on.

o Ben (11th) said he reads the printed minutes posted in the hallways if he cannot attend a meeting.

o Further discussion and motions tabled until next week when regular attendees will be back from their trip.

· Eleanor brought up discussion of the Assassins game. She said she enjoys the game and likes watching students have fun, but that certain recent incidents indicated that maybe things were a little out of hand. Yesterday a female student was barricaded in a girls’ bathroom by males for an extended period of time, seemingly unhappy about it. Other students were not able to use the bathroom, and when a relatively new HB teacher tried to intervene, the students involved didn’t pay any attention. She thought maybe it would be good to send a message to the organizers via Facebook to perhaps look into easing back.

o Mark Dodge said that he was slightly less positive about the whole thing than Eleanor was, and that he doesn’t like the game interfering with class time. He said that it seemed to him that the game had become more out of hand when teams were introduced and that it might be better to return to individual participation.

o Dave Soles said that he loves Assassins, but that he, too, found it disruptive during class time. He said that regarding the incident yesterday, the student had had the option of getting tagged (assassinated) and that doing so was part of the game, and the event should have been a teachable moment. He agreed, though, that the team structure had diminished the original idea of the game and perhaps should be rethought.

o Rachel (6th) said that she had once been at a camp where the counselors had played, and the game going on made her uncomfortable.

o Jacob (9th) said that getting trapped was part of the game as is the inevitability of having to surrender.

o Nancy Caruso said that other students, particularly middle school students, shouldn’t be made to feel uncomfortable by blocked bathrooms, etc., and that the game was impinging on the rights of others in the school

o Bennett (12th) asked if we could make changes to the game by Town Meeting decisions.

o Eleanor suggested again that no important decisions be made while so many participants were out of town. She also said that she felt that it would be more in line with general HB procedures to make suggestions to the game organizers rather than impose rules from above. Better to say, “Here is the problem. Fix it,” than tell them what to do.

o Agreeing with Eleanor, Bennett made a motion to table the discussion until next week. **Motion passed** unanimously.

Chair: Bennett Weinschenk

Co-Chair: Adam Sherinian

Secretary: Jacob Hall