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Minutes of the Yeoville Community School Working Group
November 12, 1992

Present: Mahommed Tildy, Barbara Watson, Dawn Butler, Br. Neil McGurk, Betty Ngakane, Thembi Mutloatse, Br. Joe Watson, Jackie Stevenson, Lottie Damhuis, Lydia Sibeko, Susan Stroud

Apologies: Sr. Margaret Theresa Woodbine, Marc Gonsalves, Ms. Modise, Meg Pahad; Sr. Jenny Burton and Sr. Cathy O'Gorman do not expect to attend all of the Working Group meetings but will be sent the minutes.

Chair: Br. Neil McGurk convened the meeting at 1:00.

1. New member of the Working Group: Br. Neil welcomed Lydia Sibeko as a new member of the Working Group; Lydia is on the uniform committee.

2. Review of the Minutes from the last meeting:

Edith Hind School: Br. Neil explained that he has not been in contact with Dr. Teichler or others about the school because he believes that it would be a strategic mistake to appear to be too eager. At present there are a number of issues being negotiated with Pretoria, and Drs. Paine and Davies may feel that they have gone too far out on a limb. Br. Neil is still confident that Edith Hind will eventually be offered, but it doesn't seem likely that it will open in January. Dawn suggested that adult work might begin earlier if the re-opening of the school is delayed beyond January. Mrs. Fisher from the School Board has told Br. Neil that staff at Edith Hind have been instructed that no equipment or supplies should be removed from the school. Br. Neil meets with Minister Marajs on November 16 and will raise the issue of Edith Hind.

Hiring of teachers at Yeoville Community School: Questions were raised about the registration of teachers with the TED, e.g., the issue of foreign qualifications, transfer of housing subsidies and pensions if a teacher was formerly registered with the DET. Lotu'e reported that she has made efforts to contact Mr. von Lockenberg at the TED about registration of teachers, but he has not responded yet. The school has received an overwhelming number of resumes for teaching posts. Br. Neil suggested that a list of the most promising applicants be drawn up so that action could be taken quickly when registration is sorted out. Lottie will organize a list of questions to put to the TED.

3. Report from the uniform committee: Jackie, Betty and Thembi reported on the meeting of the uniform committee meeting (minutes circulated). Betty explained that the minutes reflected suggestions that will be taken to parents for reactions. The basic rationale is to take into account the uniforms of high schools in the area and to match as much as possible while keeping costs down. Br. Neil suggested that Matla Trust be approached for resources with uniforms, and if they are unable to help that the business be given to shops in the immediate community. Jackie Stevenson suggested that a swap shop be started at the school. There was considerable discussion about the cost and appropriateness of requiring blazers in a junior primary school versus track suits for winter wear and shorts and t-shirts for warm weather.

meeting of the Working Group, members of the uniform committee members will present options (costed out) and will have contacted Matla Trust.

4. Report on the visit to Yeoville Boys School: Br. Joe reported on the productive visit that he, Jackie and Barbara made to Mr. Swain at Yeoville Boys School. Mr. Swain is interested in the polyclinic, was helpful sharing his experience with acquiring furniture and equipment from the TED, and generally about running a school in the Yeoville community. Barbara explained to Mr. Swain that the original plan for the Yeoville Community School was to standard 5, but that it had been scaled back to standard 2. Mr. Swain agreed to take all boys from the Yeoville Community School into Yeoville Boys for standards 3-5. While that is important as a stop gap for the immediate future, there will be no difficulty in filling both Yeoville Boys School and expanding the community school to standard 5.

Mr. Swain is agreeable to leasing the field to the Yeoville Community School (and changing the position of the gate), and willing to forego rent immediately in January appreciating the difficulty we may have in finding funds. Br. Neil estimated that the cost of fencing the field will be expensive, . possibly R20,000, but there might be private sector interest in helping with the costs. Apparently the cost of water has very high; we should consider turning the water off on the field except when needed. The sense of the meeting was that R300/month is a reasonable amount. A committee consisting of Barbara, Jackie, Fr. Joe, Fr. Sean and someone from Yeoville Boys will be formed to draw up a proposal for the use of the field, a budget, and to negotiate a fee for the use of the field and formalize the agreement with Yeoville Boys School.

5. Report on the enrollment of students at Yeoville Community School: Br. Neil summarized the profile of students for the school as the Working Group has agreed: 1) all Batlagae Trust students - estimated between 60-100 children; 2) children from the Yeoville community; 3) children from the other areas such as Berea and Observatory, close to Yeoville, and 4) others, e.g., from the townships. Word of mouth has brought many applicants to the school already - it will be difficult to turn them away if they are not from Yeoville. Jackie has cut off applicants for grade 1 at this point. When parents inquire about a place at the school for their child, they should be asked where they live and only if they are from Yeoville should they be invited to fill in an application. Jackie reported that she will be doing an assessment of the students on Saturday, November 14. Br. Neil suggested that a report be prepared by Jackie and other members of the selection committee for the next Working Group meeting that profiles the students, including where they come from.

6. Report on the polyclinic: At the last meeting of the Working Group, Batlagae Trust was asked to assume responsibility for funding and setting up the polyclinic. At a meeting held on November 5, the Batlagae Trust Board discussed the financial commitment needed to establish the polyclinic and concluded that there was not the funding available at this point to open the polyclinic in January. The costs involved in opening the clinic in January are for salaries for two staff people and operating expenses. Br. Neil reported that Sacred Heart College is prepared to put up R35,000 received from the German embassy this year as a founding donation for the first three months of operation.

There was consensus that it is important to start the clinic as soon as possible when the school is opened, and there needs to be some guarantee of funding in order to make commitments to staff. Barbara Watson will be moving from Sacred Heart to the polychnic full time. Br. Neil cemented that the relationship with Batlagae Trust has created some risks for the Sacred Heart College budget, but that he is prepared to assume those risks in order for the polyclinic to be established. An aggressive fundraising drive by Badagae Trust for the polyclinic must be organized immediately. John Samuel is presently in the US approaching foundations for support. Br. Neil will check with the German embassy about using their donation for this purpose.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:15.