

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT**

July 9, 2019
District Office
380 Nova Albion Way
San Rafael, CA
94903
5:30PM

Attendance

Trustees

Brad Honsberger

Alissa Chacko

Marnie Glickman (Participated via teleconference from Via Garzotto 8, Rovinj, Croatia)

Megan Hutchinson

Brooks Nguyen

Absent

None

Administrators

Ms. Becky Rosales – Interim Superintendent

Call Meeting to Order

The special meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Dixie School District was called to order by President Brad Honsberger at 5:35pm at the Dixie School District Office. A quorum was present.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was said

Approval of the Open Session Agenda

Ms. Hutchinson motions to approve the open session agenda

Ms. Chacko Seconds

All Approve the open session agenda via roll call. (Nguyen, Honsberger, Chacko, Hutchinson, Glickman)

Ms. Rosales Reads a letter regarding public comment guidelines.

The public is informed regarding the process for Ms. Glickman's remote participation.

Public Comment on items 2, 5 and 6 on the Open Session Agenda

None

Mr. Honsberger introduces Ms. Rosales . He then shares a brief history of the name change effort and thanks the committees, community, staff and students for their work on the matter. He concludes by thanking Dr. Tom Peters with Marin Community Foundation for their generous financial contribution for the name change work.

Mr. Honsberger says that based on the number of speaker cards, the district name change discussion will be allowed 2 hours of discussion and the school name change discussion will be allowed 1 hour

Open Public Hearing: Petitions Proposing District Name Change

Mr. Honsberger opens the public hearing at 5:44

Speaker #1 is not present

Speaker #2 Says that whatever name is selected we should all shake hands after this is over and move on to talk about other district business. He explains that the Miller Creek petition was not designed to subvert the naming committee.

Speaker #3 Says that Creekside or any name would be fine. They ask that the board deny the Miller Creek petition and trust the process that had been arranged for the naming committee.

Speaker #4 Asks that no district money be spent on the name change. She wanted to know where additional money needed would come from.

Speaker #5 Says that she is the Great Granddaughter of James Miller. She shares that her Great Grandfather was an immigrant who came from Ireland. He was an altruist who did many good things for the community.

Speaker #6 Expressed a desire to unify. Shared that Kenne means "one". It represents our cultural heritage and local culture. It has a broader meaning also, it means "to know".

Speaker #7 Recommends that we use the City of San Rafael's process and create a line. She said that she was surprised by the Miller Creek process. She asks the board to stick to their process and consider the petitions from the advisory committee.

Speaker #8 Shares that she lends her support to the Miller Creek name. She loves the creek named Miller Creek, the School named Miller Creek and even the road named Miller Creek.

Speaker #9 Says that they would rather the district not have the same name as one of its schools. They appreciate all the things about James Miller but it is a fact that he did name the school district Dixie and it is a divisive issue.

Speaker #10 Thanked the trustees for their support. They expressed their support for the name Creekside for the district and Big Rock for the school. Asked that the board keep the process they voted on.

Speaker #11 says that she researched the name James Miller herself. She did not find a smoking gun. Mr. Miller did extremely good things. But, the name Miller Creek is really about a creek and a middle school. She adds that Ms. Glickman said the name Miller Creek is inclusive at previous board meetings.

Speaker #12 asks if Ms. Glickman can hear him. Ms. Glickman responded that she could hear him. He said that he prefers the name Kenne because enough is named after Miller. He shared that he believes there would be a strong influence on the kids being on land named from the Miwok Language.

Speaker #13 Asked the board to choose unifying names and reject any individual's name. There are too many human flaws. Asked the board to honor the process they set up and name the district Creekside and the school Big Rock.

Speaker #14 Shares that they were a member of the committee. Urges the board to adopt Creekside. They liked that Creekside was a name chosen by the children.

Speaker #15 Quotes an IJ article regarding James Miller stating that he was a supporter of minorities. He donated his land. He stayed true to his friend's dying wishes to build an orphanage. The speaker went on to say that both sides have united in support for the name Miller Creek. They are tired of the divisiveness and wants the school board to get back to the work of the district.

Speaker #16 said that the naming committee received baseless accusations about James Miller which is why the name wasn't considered. Said that Miller Creek is a unifying name.

Speaker #17 Said that they support the name Miller Creek. He shared that he researched Mr. Miller and there was no historically factual information pointing to his displacement of Native Americans. He concludes by saying Miller Creek represents school, creek and community.

Speaker #18 Said that they served on the naming advisory committee. They took the job seriously. The committee did its job and came up with three choices for the board. He added that the 4th petition (Miller Creek) is also part of the process. They said that the creek is a treasure that unites us all and checks all the boxes. The creek can be trusted and it is named Miller Creek.

Speaker #19 Showed the board a picture of Miller Creek. He said he was on the advisory committee. He said that they did follow the process, they picked the path of least resistance. He showed the board a Miller Creek Middle School diploma and jar of Miller Creek water. He shared that teachers use Miller Creek as an outdoor classroom to inspire students.

Speaker #20 Said that she is a teacher for the district. The advisory committee met during May which is the month many teachers call "The 100 days of May". She notes

that she volunteered to serve on the committee and was not paid. She asks the board what the point was of all their work if they don't choose from the names submitted by the committee. She says that the committee followed the process that was given to them. She warns that if this continues, she will do what she can to publicize. She concluded by saying that this is not a dirty little secret that can stay in.

Mr. Honsberger says that if people wish to also speak on the school name, they are welcome to do that.

Speaker #21 says that she is from Marin Green Party County Council. She states that Marin Green filed a complaint and has heard nothing back. Says that Miller Creek petition is an act of retaliation. She claims that there has been collusion between board members to advance political interests. She asserts that any such board members should not be allowed to vote. She concludes by asking for an investigation of the Dixie Education Foundation.

Speaker #22 asks the board to please reject the name Miller Creek and choose a name recommended by the advisory committee. Says that Miller Creek is a thinly veiled substitute for Dixie. Claims that the We are Dixie people subverted the process.

Speaker #23 Asks that the school and the district have different names. Prefers the name Creekside for the school district.

Speaker #24 Says that Miller Creek is a natural waterway that students study in Science class and write about in English class.

Speaker #25 Asked that people unite around the name change.

Speaker #26 Recently moved to the district and was worried about the name having an effect on people of color. Says that he believes changing the name creates a more inclusive environment. Doesn't think that changing the name to Miller Creek would be inclusive. Likes Creekside or any name chosen by the committee.

There is a check to see if anyone in Croatia is interested in contributing public comment. There is not.

Speaker #27 States that Miller Creek is not lasting so it does not fit the criteria. Says that James Miller benefited from systems of slavery. Asks the board to please choose one of the names submitted by the committee.

Speaker #28 Strongly disagrees with changing the name to Miller Creek. He doesn't feel we should name the district Miller Creek because there is already a school with that name. He likes the name Kenne because it means "one".

With no further public comment, Mr. Honsberger closed the public hearing at 6:51pm. The board then took a 5 minute break.

The board resumed the meeting at 7:01

Ms. Rosales asks the members of the community to please avoid side conversation while the board discusses the petitions.

Discussion and Action: Possible District Name Change

Ms. Glickman thanks everyone for participating and extends a special thank you to the naming committee and school facilitators.

Mr. Honsberger notes that the board has 4 petitions to consider. He adds that Ed Code 35001 allows the community to generate petitions for district name change.

Ms. Hutchinson says she has read through the repository of information. She shared a few comments about the process. The process has been difficult and messy. Each side will say follow process when it suits. She says that she supports the name change because she believes it is the correct choice. She appreciates the community for continuing through what is not comfortable.

Ms. Nguyen thanks the public for all of their comment. She finds the challenge is in that they have a lot of support for the petition that came in regarding Miller Creek. She has taken everything in and read all the comments and emails that have been shared and is very happy to be at this point.

Mr. Honsberger expressed that it is impossible to make everyone happy. The goal is always what is best for the kids. The fact that ed code says it is up to the board to make these decisions is tough. This doesn't happen often and so there is a lot to figure out. He says that he has been considering the representation that is unique to the community that we live in.

Ms. Chacko agrees with what has been said. Having sat on committees, she says that committees don't always go how they look on paper. We've had to turn back committee work two or three times and say please try again. The advisory committee worked hard. The three names are sufficient but they don't seem local lasting or inspirational. The petitions had many names from both sides and some I had never seen before. I am leaning toward the name Miller Creek.

Ms. Hutchinson shares that Creekside seems like a reasonable suggestion. A few speakers mentioned the name Kenne and she is concerned that we don't have actual acceptance from the Miwok community to use that name. She expresses that she is also concerned about cultural appropriation. She is not very much in support of the

name Laurel Creek. She is concerned that is not an actual place. Of the committee names, Creekside seems the strongest. Regarding the Miller Creek petition, there are a lot of things named after James Miller. If the board resolution indicates that the name Miller Creek is in recognition of the waterway and not the person, it would be stronger. The resolution would need to say we are honoring community and the outdoor classroom and not intending to bestow honor on any person living or dead. Creekside and Miller Creek make the most sense.

Ms. Glickman says that she is not in support of the name Laurel Creek for reasons Megan shared. She is interested in how others feel about Laurel Creek.

Motion: Ms. Chacko Motions to deny Kenne as the name for the district
Second: Ms. Nguyen seconds

Mr. Honsberger says he wouldn't support Kenne for the school district
Ms. Glickman says Keen is inspiring, local and lasting. It connects with the past and she is not ready to dismiss Kenne.

Roll Call Vote Motion to **Deny** Kenne as the name for the district
Ms. Hutchinson: Aye
Ms. Glickman: No
Ms. Nguyen: Aye
Ms. Chacko: Aye
Mr. Honsberger: Aye

Kenne petition is denied: 4:1

Ms. Glickman asks if Laurel Creek resonates positively with anyone on the board.

Ms. Nguyen says that she likes how it sounds but the community is not behind it.
Mr. Honsberger says that it does not connect with the community.
Ms. Glickman says that she is not supportive of Laurel Creek for the reasons Ms. Hutchinson stated.

Motion: Ms. Glickman motions to deny the Laurel Creek Petition
Second: Ms. Chacko seconds
Roll Call Vote
Hutchinson: Aye
Glickman: Aye
Nguyen: Aye

Chacko: Aye
Honsberger: Aye

Laurel Creek Petition is denied: 5:0

Ms. Chacko says that she likes Ms. Hutchinson's solution to Miller Creek, i.e. noting that the district would be named for the Miller Creek waterway, not a person. Creekside could be placed on any school. Miller Creek is something we can identify with. While we could send it back to the committee, I don't think that is a good option. I would support Miller Creek over Creekside.

Ms. Hutchinson recalled that the process that the Health and Wellness Committee brought to the board was sent back for re-work. So there is precedence. Because the board stayed at arms- length, they didn't have the chance to check and make sure the community outreach was more extensive. The naming advisory committee did hard work that was not pointless, it was helpful. The Miller Creek petition arose because of how people felt about the final 7 names selected. I would be fine with Creekside but could not support Miller Creek as a way to honor James Miller. She went on to say that if they were to choose Miller Creek the resolution would have to be clear that the name is about the significance of the creek to the community and the district.

Ms. Glickman says that she hears Ms. Chacko and Ms. Hutchinson say they are ok with Miller Creek as long as we are clear that we are not naming it after the man. I have concerns about that from a marketing perspective. I can see logistically how we add that to a resolution, I don't see how we communicate that to our students and neighbors. I support Creekside.

Ms. Hutchinson expresses that we will need more communication and explanation out to the public.

Ms. Nguyen says that she likes the name Creekside but Miller Creek is supported by the public.

Ms. Hutchinson says that members of the community have said that Miller Creek is a thinly veiled form of Dixie. I don't think that dismissing the name of the waterway is necessary. She says that she thinks it is unfair to call Miller Creek a thinly veiled Dixie. The name will not define us.

Ms. Chacko expresses that she shares Ms. Hutchinson's opinions about the name Miller Creek.

Mr. Honsberger says that the naming advisory committee generated a lot interest and data and their work was very useful.

Ms. Glickman expressed that she wanted to make another argument for Creekside. We have two watersheds in the district, Miller Creek and Las Gallinas. Creekside is more inclusive.

Mr. Honsberger says that Miller Creek is on the table not James Miller.

Ms. Chacko says that the district was formed where the current bus yard is and that is Miller Creek. Historically our district was formed in the Miller Creek watershed.

Motion: Ms. Glickman motions to adopt the Creekside petition
There is no second.

Motion: Ms. Chacko Motions to deny the petition for Creekside.
Second: Ms. Nguyen seconds

Ms. Glickman says that she voted for Miller Creek in February. Since then they've all gone through many discussions and hours about this. The board came up with a process and there were many people involved, many volunteers who did exactly what we told them to do. She says that she doesn't support Miller Creek because the naming advisory committee voted no twice and the board voted against it once. She thinks Creekside is more inclusive. She goes on to say that it is the best way for the board to move forward in a unified way including all the creeks; Miller Creek and Las Gallinas. Then they should use marketing to add on whatever they want to make the district distinctive. She concluded by saying she does not support Miller Creek, she supports Creekside.

Ms. Hutchinson asks Ms. Glickman if she would feel differently if the committee had brought the board Miller Creek.

Ms. Glickman says yes.

Motion: Ms. Chacko Motions to deny the petition for Creekside
Ms. Nguyen seconds
Roll Call Vote:
Hutchinson: No
Glickman: no

Nguyen: Aye
Chacko: Aye
Honsberger: Aye

The Creekside petition is denied in a 3:2 vote.

Ms. Glickman says she would like to explore the possibility of sending this back to the naming committee for one more meeting.

Ms. Chacko says that she would like to resolve this. It has been a year and they have an August 22nd date for the MCC funds. She says that they knew it was a tight timeline with the subcommittee. She wished they had been able to check in with the subcommittee a few times.

Ms. Hutchinson said that she asked for a subcommittee report but was not sure that was ever conveyed.

Ms. Glickman says that if the committee recommended Miller Creek, she would think about it differently. She shared that she had a concern about disregarding the recommendations of the naming committee and what that would mean for the next committee.

Ms. Chacko says that she hears Ms. Glickman. It makes the Board think more about the process. She thinks this was rushed and they started with a long document that was boiled down to bullet points. Ultimately she says that she believes the name Miller Creek did come out of all the work.

Ms. Nguyen shares that she has the most respect for the advisory committee and understands the work they put in was a lot. She thinks the number of signatures on the Miller Creek petition is significant.

Motion: Ms. Chacko Motions to accept the petition for Miller Creek with the resolution updated to say we are honoring the watershed.

Second: Ms. Nguyen seconds

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Hutchinson: Abstain
Ms. Glickman: No
Ms. Nguyen: Aye

Ms. Chacko: Aye

Mr. Honsberger: Aye

The petition to name the school district Miller Creek Elementary School District with the amendment that the name Miller references the watershed is accepted.

Mr. Honsberger called for a brief recess at 8:10

Mr. Honsberger called the meeting back to session at 8:17

Public Comment on the Elementary School Name Change

Mr. Honsberger asks that people please keep comments to 2 minutes

Speaker #1 says they are in favor of the name Big Rock because the kids like it.

Speaker #2 says they like the name Big Rock because it is distinctive.

Speaker #3 says she likes the name Big Rock because it has a positive connotation.

Speaker #4 says they like Big Rock because the kids chose the name and it is all about the kids.

Speaker #5 says the injustice is deeply disturbing. We know what Dixie means and we cannot pretend any more that Dixie is anything else. You just selected a name that only speaks to half the community and you subverted your process. They go on to say that they support Big Rock and it is about the kids.

Speaker #6 says they were on the naming advisory committee. Says they worked together well. Everything was selected by students and put to a vote. They had three very clear winners: Lucas Valley, Big Rock and Creekside.

Speaker #7 Hopes we can find a name everyone can get behind.

Public comment closed at 8:27pm

Ms. Hutchinson says that she loves that all three names came from the kids. Any would be great.

Mr. Honsberger shares that the board does not have to vote on each name up or down. This is different from the petition process.

Ms. Glickman says that she has a concern about Lucas. She thinks it's simpler to avoid naming things after humans.

Motion: Ms. Chacko motions to adopt the name Lucas Valley for the elementary school currently known as Dixie Elementary School.

Second: Ms. Nguyen seconds the adoption of the name Lucas Valley Elementary School

Ms. Hutchinson says that we have some very alert historians in the community. She thinks that if there was dirt to dig up on Lucas, the chance was there.

Ms. Glickman says that she is suggesting a no vote for procedural reasons. They haven't had a chance to talk about Creekside.

Ms. Chacko says that if Marnie wants to discuss Creekside, she will pull the motion.

Ms. Chacko pulls her motion to adopt the name Lucas Valley

Ms. Glickman says that Creekside is a name that she thinks is beautiful and the staff has a positive association with an outdoor classroom and Ms. DiBenedetto

Ms. Nguyen says that she found four other schools named Creekside and would rather go with something more unique.

Motion: Ms. Chacko motions to adopt the name Lucas Valley

Second: Ms. Nguyen seconds

Roll Call to adopt the name Lucas Valley Elementary School for the School known as Dixie Elementary School:

Hutchinson: Aye

Glickman: No

Nguyen: Aye

Chacko: Aye

Honsberger: Aye

The board votes to adopt the name Lucas Valley Elementary School for the School known as Dixie Elementary School 4:1

Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda

Speaker #1 Asks to understand the complaint process. The last complaint against a board member came in and someone immediately got assigned. Another complaint came in and there has been zero action. Wonders why they didn't both come to the board.

Ms. Rosales reminds the speaker that the board is not permitted to respond on items that are not agendaized.

Speaker #2 Says that Marin Greens filed a complaint emailed on June 24th that makes allegations regarding the June 24th meeting. In direct response to the item on the June 24th agenda we felt it was politically motivated and we ask the board to investigate.

Says that they don't appreciate the out of sight of public meetings and will not sit idly by and let it continue.

The next meeting will be a special meeting of the board on July 23 with closed session starting at 6:00.

Ms. Nguyen motions to adjourn the meeting

Ms. Hutchinson seconds

With no further business to discuss the meeting adjourned at 8:55

Respectfully Submitted for Board Approval:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Becky Rosales', written in black ink.

Becky Rosales, Interim Superintendent
Dixie School District