

Humewood Parent Council Meeting Minutes

DATE	Monday, March 5, 2018
TIME	7-9 pm
FACILITATORS	Janine G, Natasha G
SECRETARY	Janelle W
ATTENDEES	Rae Ann F, Cheryl B, Erin S, Janelle W, Anne and Stephanie from OPAL, Lori L, Marisa M, Janine G, Elisse G, Lori E, Ali S, Anna R, France C, Rachel B, Carly L, Julie W, Avi M, Natasha G, Sam B, Tanya B, Lisa and Moe B, Christine S, Rebecca D, Karen R, Allison C, Rebecca W

1. **Welcome and Introduction – Janine**
2. **Approval of Agenda – Sam moved to approve, Anna seconded**
3. **Approval of November Meeting Minutes:** approved by Anna, seconded by Cheryl B
4. **Declarations of conflict of interest – none at this time**
5. **OPAL Presentation (Anne and Stephanie: our OPAL mentors)**

Chester – pilot school has been successful

Why OPAL – kids aren't getting enough physical activity, most notably after age 5

- Outdoor Play Canada says that outdoor play - with its risk - is essential
- Childhood has changed, but our developmental needs have not
- Play is:
 - o Defined as a right for children by the UN
 - o The most active, engaged form of learning
 - o How they learn about each other, how to be social, how to gradually develop risk taking strategies and judge boundaries
- Self-direction, imagination

What is OPAL

- TDSB partnership adapted from OPAL UK program
- Focus is on 3 areas
 - o Animating/activating the school yard – introducing loose parts during play times
 - o Working with the type of environment the school has
 - o Supervision and social support – creating new school policies (ie. All-weather play, having a clothing library for equal access)
- Problem solving and sharing responsibilities with students (ie. play rangers monitor activities and help with clean up)

Lori Litman added (from the OPAL symposium)

- o Encourages creativity, self-direction, teacher talked about kids being more focused in class because no longer sorting out playground issues, kids not as often left out because there are so many spaces to go to and things to do.

Questions/Open Discussion

- Where are we in terms of rolling this out?
 - o Delivering loose parts next week
 - o Dependent on the team at Humewood whether the school is ready

Julie Whitfield

- Loose parts are currently used in the early years garden for kindergartens at lunch
- Eventually would like a storage unit on the field for the parts. Interim: parts stored in stairwell accessible to the east yard.

Play policy – prompts developed: Is everyone having fun? Is this safe? Is it inclusive?

- Allowed to throw snowballs, build structures, physical contact during play

- After March Break
 - o all-weather recess for all
 - o Freedom Friday's – let kids play wherever they want during recess (not lunch)
 - Lots of benefits in terms of older students interacting with younger students
 - o Play Rangers – students (likely get volunteers grade 4+, could have one class do it for a certain amount of time)
 - o All-weather fashion show
 - o Loose parts drive – can be focused, ie. Kitchen items one month, etc.
 - Some items last, some require regular replacement
 - Parents may fund some parts: ie. Speakers to animate space with music
 - Needs to be enough stuff so no conflict, aim is to have 4 items per student
 - Can't be sharp, breakable

Lori – it's a process requiring much communication and collaboration with teachers

- A board will be a permanent fixture in the school with OPAL Play Policy and info re: 3 prompts & weather.
- School wide safe word will be created for students feeling unsafe

Storage – lots of handy parents to build shelves/cubbies for chuck storage. Everything in a trolley and into the shed is best to minimize clean up

Ropes – are they safe for all?

- Might be something to consider only for certain age groups

Another option: Not everything has to be gross motor

- Focus on kitchen items and small world play: figurines, animals that can be fit in a bin

Are the 7/8's engaged in this?

- This age group is just being explored, ie. Attempting an after school activity that may involve skateboards because they still need self-directed play
- Small cliques – needed something on the playground to keep them social and inclusive
- Julie feels that Humewood 7/8's would buy into this: especially with Freedom Friday's

UK – puts netting over equipment to keep loose parts clean and animals out

Anne and Stephanie are impressed by parent engagement!

6. **Financial Report** – Erin S & Tanya B

- No access to bank account yet
- Just got access to financial records, but don't have anything yet

1. Snowball – Rebecca and Cheryl: thanks so much!

- Rebecca's expenses came in very low

2. Wine survivor – Lisa and Moe: thanks so much! They require \$ to buy bottles

- netted \$2,900!

- o Lisa and Moe thanked everyone for all the support!!
- o May do it in the fall next year and sell tickets at curriculum night/fall fair
- o Buy one for teacher as an option

Discussion re: cost of square and ECWID – it is over \$1,000 per year, so treasurers are looking into more streamlined options, but at this point things are working well

Blue Jays: March 20th is deadline

Cheryl – Ben from Roast ran Superbowl pool and raised \$850

Echoage – parent council would have to apply as a charity, then there is still a waitlist.

7. Principal's Report – Julie Whitfield

Snowball – thanks so much for such a great event. Very inclusive, good energy, great decorations, fast clean-up. Overall very well done.

March 28: EQAO fun night – for everyone! Come out regardless of if kids are in grades 3 or 6

April 11: Kindergarten concert at 5:30

April 12: Humewood's got talent

May 3: School play: Once Upon a Crime (Cumbaa, White).

- Was open to all to audition – starts in the fall.

Funded by PRO Grants: Valerie Tih – booked for April 10

- OPAL Parent Day in June

Shelly Laskin would like to come in to June meeting and will be available for questions.

Maplewood/Humewood and Valewood/Humewood are very dangerous intersections – is there a committee of parents that could help with this?

Discussion suggestions:

- Kiss and ride? Going north must use Cherrywood, going south must use Humewood. Must be 2 per shift in case of absence and for the support.
- Put calls into the city for support - ask in a respectful, polite, urgent way

Humewood and Maplewood – the hedge is on city property, could it be cut down?

8. Chair's Report – Janine

Looking for a committee of parents to spearhead making drop-off safer. Will ask Jim about putting something on the council website to ask for a parent who is interested in spearheading an initiative to improve crosswalks around the school.

Valerie Tih – next in our speaker series: How to Talk So Kids Will Listen

- Date TBD

After 4 – today is first day for registration. 2 weeks to register

Blue Jays – book by March 20

Few issues raised by parents:

1. Mobile planetarium day letter sent to families used language that may have been perceived as exclusive.
 - Response: all students participated
2. Playground equipment – when will it be fixed?
 - Response: Temporary fix for now and a notification is in. It will be repaired.
 - Looked at a field enhancement a couple of years ago, but now with OPAL in mind, we might want to re-look at other options.
3. Basketball nets – \$ was approved for this, why aren't they fixed?
 - Response: they are dated so were removed and will be replaced by spring. Avi Mani is waiting for reply to email re: replacement.
4. Language graffiti inside slide.
 - Response: caretaker attempted to remove

5. Lack of diversity on council

- It is open to everyone, council will work harder to advertise and ask as many people as possible.
- Past strategy: bring a friend! Wasn't sustainable
- "SAC" is written on the sign, maybe people don't know what that means
- Twitter and email will be more directed – PARENT COUNCIL specific

Toronto Star Article re: Funding gap

- Is Humewood open to donating a percentage of funding to a school with less?

Discussion:

- Starter idea: pick one event and donate a percentage raised from that event
- Initiatives we have or are currently doing:
 - o Artist in the school program for Rawlinson, half pumpkin drive revenue is donated to The Stop, Out of the Cold we donated winter wear

Ideas for more directed donations: donate kids' books to neighbourhood school and overall formalize the donations by recording percentages

Motion to Adjourn: Moved by Anna and seconded by Sam

ACTION ITEMS:

- Any parent interested in coordinating a committee to work towards safer drop off?
- OPAL – Collection of loose parts: save your stuff!