

Mendocino Unified School District

# 7-11 Committee Report

A Report of the 7-11 Committee's procedures and findings.

Written by The 7-11 Committee Members

Date of the report 9/29/2009

# MUSD 7-11 Committee's Final Report

## Appointment of Committee Members

At the meeting of November 20, 2008, the Board of Trustees appointed the 7-11 Committee to determine;

1. If the Historic Grammar School site and the 4 and ½ acres on which it is located is surplus property (see map appendix A ).
2. What the community feels are the best uses of the property.

The specific responsibilities of the Committee are found in MUSD policy 3280 which implements the state education law provided under section 17387 of the State Education Code.

The following community representatives were appointed by the board to serve on the committee.

- Gail Dickenson. Gail is the High School Principal and served as the Chair of the 7-11 Committee. She lives in Caspar
- Elise Boyle. Elise has been a teacher at the High School for over 15 years. She lives in Fort Bragg.
- Gail Daly. Gail lives across from the site, is an active volunteer with community organizations, a long term member of the community and had daughter who went to school at the grammar school and granddaughters who attended classes at the Rec. Center.
- Harold Hauck. Harold served on the Mendocino Historical Review Board, is an active volunteer with community organizations, has children who have graduated from MUSD, and is a resident of Mendocino.
- Ken Matheson. Ken was the High School Principal and Superintendent of the district from 1976 to 1999. He had 3 children and one grandchild who attended the schools in the district. He lives in Little River.
- John (Bones) Newstead. John is the CFO of the Branagh Information Group and President of the Mendocino Center for Circus Arts. He is very active in the programs offered by the Recreation District and has children in the district. He lives in the Comptche area.
- Sam Waldman, Sam is a local architect and has had children in the schools. He lives in Mendocino.
- Elaine Wing Hillesland. Elaine owns and operates an Inn in the town and has a daughter in the district. She lives across from the site.

# MUSD 7-11 Committee's Final Report

## The Committee Process

### The Committee Proceedings and Accomplishments

Beginning on Tuesday January 27, 2009 the 7-11 Committee conducted a series of meetings to develop strategies for accomplishing the goals of the committee. The agendas and minutes of the meetings as well as most of the reports that were reviewed by the committee can be viewed at the web site <http://7-11.mcn.org>.

- Studied enrollment reports from 1999 to the present and the enrollment projections for the next 3 years.
- Studied the building projects and maintenance needs for the district now and into the future.
- Learned about the history of the use of the property for the last 30 years.
- Received a report of the Mendocino Coast Park and Recreation District about how they have leased and used the building and grounds for the last 23 years.
- Passed a resolution to recommend to the MUSD Trustees that the property be declared surplus. (See Appendix B for a copy of the resolution.)
- Developed and circulated a questionnaire which was mailed to 3000 homes and made available in schools and other places around town. It was also available and could be completed on line at the 7-11 Committee Website. (See Appendix C for a copy of the questionnaire document.)
- Held a Community Meeting on September 13, 2009.
- Analyzed the results of the Questionnaire and the Community Meeting.
- Completed and submitted the final report to the Board on October 15, 2009.

The 7-11 Committee approached the task of surveying the community with the following objectives:

- That the public have information about and free access to the Committee in order to communicate community ideas and views;
- That a community survey be developed that allowed for differing views and creative ideas for possible uses of the site;
- That the community survey be distributed widely so that all segments of the population with a stake in the 7-11 committee recommendations were given an opportunity to express their viewpoint;
- That the results of the polling be made available to the public; and

## MUSD 7-11 Committee's Final Report

- That the public be informed that additional input would be accepted at a Public Meeting on the subject, that was held on September 13, 2009.

Information about the committee's activities was delivered to the community via (a) two articles in the local Mendocino Beacon newspaper; (b) the committee's website (<http://7-11.mcn.org/>); (c) Public Service Announcements on three local radio stations (KOZT, KMFB, and KZYY); (d) emails to local listservs; and (e) televised committee meetings on the local community access channel (MCTV channel 3 & 65).

Access to the 7-11 Committee was provided via (a) publicity above about the meetings and process underway; (b) a standing timed public comment agenda item at all meetings; and (c) a publicized email address for correspondence to the Committee ([7-11@mcn.org](mailto:7-11@mcn.org)).

Notices concerning the public meeting were posted on the committee's website and the Mendocino Unified School District website (<http://MUSD.mcn.org/>). Physical notices were posted at all of the Mendocino school sites and at the district office.

### **The Community Survey**

7-11 committee members spent considerable time creating a mailer to be presented to the community. The final version was available online at the committee's website; and paper copies of the survey were available at the Mendocino High School, the Mendocino K-8 school, the Mendocino Library, Corners of the Mouth grocery, the Mendocino Unified School District office, the Old Historic Grammar School (Mendocino Rec Center) as well as being mailed to virtually every household in the district. The survey was mailed to (a) all households known to have students in the districts; and (b) all registered voters whose registration information included an address within the district. In all, 3,173 mailers were sent, resulting in 403 responses, or a response rate of 12.7%. (Appendix C is a copy of the mailer/survey document.)

A summary of the responses received by the Committee is included in Appendix D and E of this Report. Appendix F is a spreadsheet of all on line responses with the respondents names removed to preserve each respondents privacy.

Notice was also given in the mailer of the public meeting to take place September 13, 2009.

The mailings were sent beginning in August with an indicated response date of September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009. The response date was later moved to September 18<sup>th</sup> to be sure that community members who heard about the survey due to the public meeting could respond. To facilitate a response, the mailer was designed to be re-folded, sealed, and mailed back to a preprinted address. The mailer also included mail and email addresses for the committee.

The survey document was also available to community members to complete on-line from the 7-11 Committee's web site, <http://7-11.mcn.org/Images/Questionnaire.pdf>. One hundred and seven (107) people completed the survey using the web site. Because the online survey responses are computer readable, an Excel Spreadsheet was created from these responses which include not only the tabulated numerical data, but also the individual comments of the respondents.

# MUSD 7-11 Committee's Final Report

## The September 13, 2009 Community Meeting/Public Hearing

The meeting began at 2:00 p.m. Gail Dickenson welcomed those in attendance, asked all to sign-in on the designated clipboard to record their presence, gave a synopsis of the purpose of the meeting (which was to gather ideas for possible uses of the Old Historic Grammar School Site), handed out agendas and introduced the 7-11 committee members.

Harold Hauck then explained some of the realities through which all ideas and suggestion would be filtered and asked that they be kept in mind. Discussed were regulations set forth by the State of California, the Coastal Commission, the Mendocino Historical Review Board, and the County of Mendocino Planning Department (including the Mendocino Town Plan). He also mentioned the fiduciary responsibility that the Mendocino School Board Trustees have to the School District.

Ken Matheson summarized the committee's activities up to this date. Gail Dickenson then introduced Thais Mazur, our facilitator. Thais explained the "café style" process and delivered some thoughtful and thought provoking words to encourage those gathered to be creative, to listen to one another and to respectful of each other so that all may be heard.

The large group was broken down into five small groups. One or two committee members were in each group to help facilitate. One person in each group acted as a scribe. Large sheets of paper were used by each group to record ideas and suggestions. The small groups met for 45 minutes.

Everyone then gathered together again and a representative from each group presented the conclusions of their group. Thais led a short discussion. All ideas were reviewed and analyzed by the committee and became part of this final report.

### **THE POLLING DATA, INTEREST IN THE SITE, & THE PUBLIC MEETING**

Of the 3,173 surveys mailed to residents of the community (plus parents of students who attend MUSD schools but do not live within the district), we received 403 responses (a 12.7% return rate). The overwhelming consensus among the responses (387 vs. 16) was that the Old Historic Grammar School site should continue to operate and function as a community and recreation center (see Appendix D and E). It should be noted that many of the respondents took the time to include thoughtful and often lengthy comments with their surveys. Most of the comments/recommendations focused on ways in which the programs and services currently operated by the MCRPD could be enhanced or expanded to reach a broader cross-section of the community and/or address additional needs of the community (see Appendix E and F).

The most frequently cited a suggestion was to establish a dog park. Many comments included specific ideas to increase programs and services to seniors and teens as well as offering a wider range of adult education opportunities. There were also recommendations regarding increasing the use of the facilities as a venue for private and public events to increase revenue that would either help offset the costs of the MCRPD programs or provide more revenue for MUSD (in lieu of either raising the amount of the lease to MCRPD or selling the property).

## MUSD 7-11 Committee's Final Report

These survey responses will be forwarded to MCRPD for their consideration in future program planning.

On Sunday, September 13, 2009, a public meeting was held to give an opportunity for community members to voice their views in an open forum separate and in addition to the written responses of the survey. The meeting was attended by approximately 50 citizens (35 people actually signed in but an informal head-count indicated 47 citizens were in attendance). The comments at that meeting substantially echoed the responses to the written survey with, again, an overwhelming consensus that the Old Historic Grammar School and surrounding property should continue to operate as a community and recreation center. There were many expressions of appreciation for MCRPD and the programs they have operated in the community for many years.

The conversations and recommendations that came out of the 'café' style small group break-out sessions generally focused on expanding the programs & services offered by MCRPD rather than restricting or losing them. There was also a strong theme regarding the desire for the community & recreation center to continue to be responsive to the changing needs and desires of the community it serves. A number of participants suggested the formation of a citizen's advisory committee to work with MCRPD to help develop and enhance programs and services offered through the Community and Recreation Center over time. Also expressed was a fear that MUSD might sell the property for profit to a private enterprise which might result in the loss of the existing center and associated recreational programs and space in the community.

Of the 403 surveys returned, 96% indicated that citizens wanted the use of the Old Historic Grammar School site to remain the same as it has for many years, supporting the continuance of the Mendocino Recreation & Community Center.

It should be noted that some individuals, a very small minority (4%), acknowledged future MUSD facility needs. Five responders indicated that they would support District Office and/or MCN offices being housed at the Old Historic Grammar School site. Nine responders suggested either selling the entire property or subdividing and selling the currently undeveloped portion of the property to provide funding for the needed high school renovations and other future MUSD facility needs. Of these, three specifically recommended the building of "affordable" housing on that portion of the property to serve as revenue for the school district. Two individuals suggested that parking be expanded specifically so that traffic could be restricted in the village during high tourism weekends.

Given that these responses were so few in number and are in such contrast to the overwhelming majority of the responses from both the returned surveys and public meeting, we believe they would fall outside the "limits of tolerance" of our community as most citizens who provided input were adamantly opposed to any options that would change the nature of the current community use of the facilities and surrounding properties.

# MUSD 7-11 Committee's Final Report

## Summary and Recommendations

Pursuant to section 17388 of the California Education Code, the Mendocino Unified School District Board of Trustees empanelled a District Advisory Committee/7-11 Committee for the purpose of performing those duties outlined under Education Code 17389.

The 7-11 Committee members were advised that the intent of the Legislature is to have the community involved before decisions are made about the deposition or change in use of school district property that is no longer used for classroom space. The 7-11 Committee process was designed to avoid community conflict and assure that any proposed changes to existing building or land use policies and practices are compatible with the community's needs and desires.

The 7-11 Committee has determined that the community is almost unanimous in expressing its needs and desires about the future use and management of the Historic Grammar School/Community Recreation Center. An overwhelming 96% of the people responding to the 7-11 Committee's Community Survey want the use of the building and site to remain as they have been for the past 23 years. The Committee interprets this overwhelming majority vote as an extremely strong statement from the community that it will not tolerate the building and site being sold or used in any way that takes away from its present purpose and use.

The community did express support for additions and improvements to both land and building use. Expansion of children, teen, adult, and senior education and recreation programs are desired. There are suggestions to improve the kitchen facilities and other amenities to attract more people and generate an increase in facility rental and program fees. Land use improvements desired include the implementation of a fenced dog park, creation of a skateboard park, tennis, bocce ball, basketball courts, and an enlarged community garden.

The 7-11 Committee recommends that the MUSD enter into a long term (10 + year) lease of the property with the Mendocino Coast Recreation and Park District, and that this lease be structured in such a way as to be financially beneficial to both the MUSD and the MCRPD over the term of the lease. We also suggest that program, site, and facility management remain as MCRPD responsibilities.

We further recommend that the MCRPD establish a Community Committee to help implement many of the suggestions given by people who attended the September 13, 2009 Community Meeting and those who completed the 7-11 Committee's Survey. We also suggest that the MUSD provide the MCRPD with the community meeting comments and the 7-11 Committee's Survey results for future MCRPD planning use.

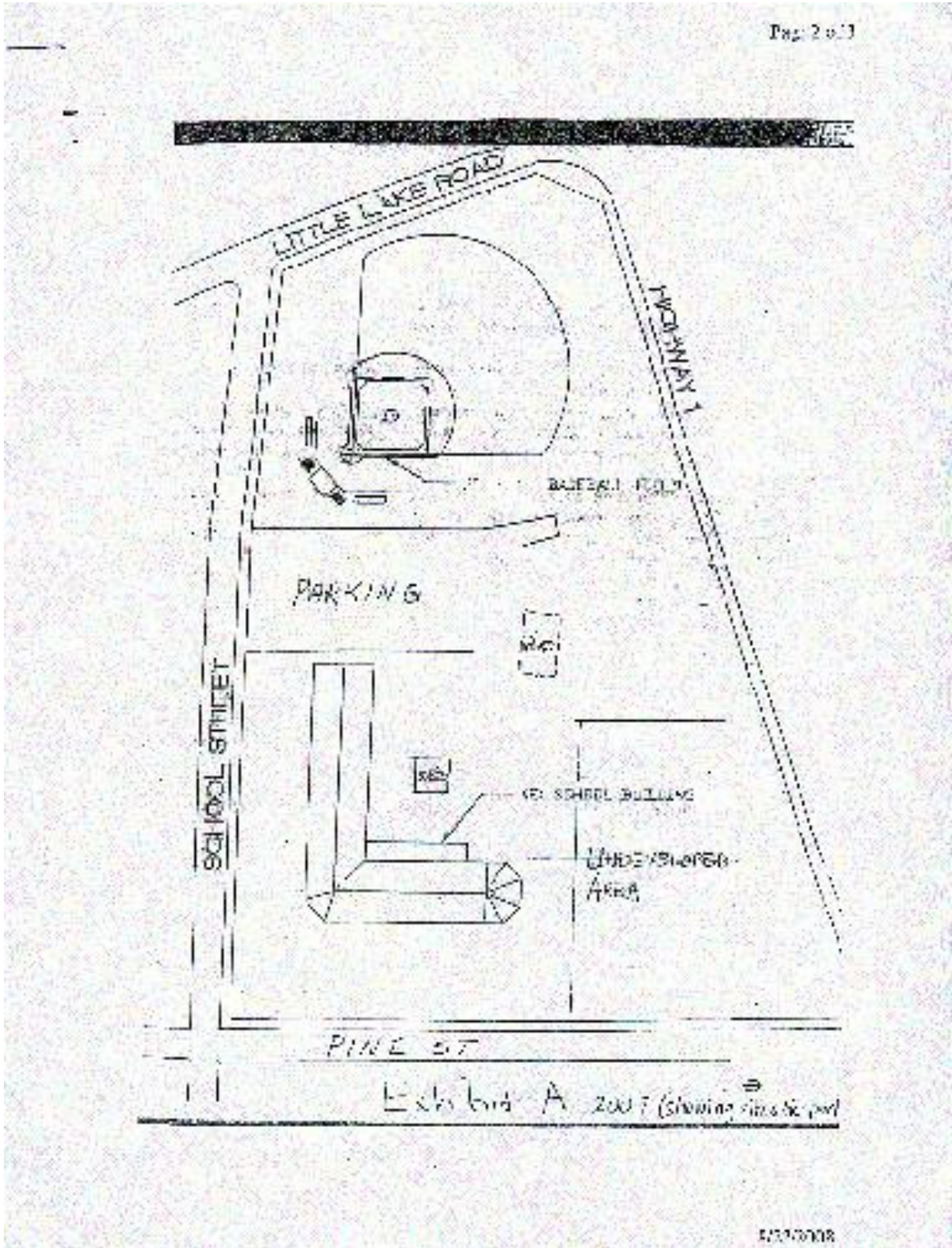
## Report Approval and Adoption

The 7-11 Committee's final report and recommendations to the MUSD Trustees was adopted by a unanimous vote of all committee members attending the September 29, 2009 7-11 Committee Meeting.

MUSD 7-11 Committee's Final Report

Appendix A

Historic Grammar School/Community Recreation Center Site Map





# MUSD 7-11 Committee's Final Report

## Appendix B

### Determination of Surplus Property

On Monday April 20<sup>th</sup> the 7-11 Committee unanimously passed a resolution that recommends to the MUSD Board that the Historic Grammar School Site and the 4 and ½ acres it is on should be declared surplus.

The definition of surplus property as stated in Education Code 17455 is property that is not or will not be needed by the District for school classroom buildings. The designation of the property as surplus allows the district many options. They can:

1. Sell all or part of the property. (this process is regulated by state codes)
2. Lease all or part of the property.
3. Move non-classroom functions into the building.

The Committee used the following information in making the determination to recommend the property be declared surplus:

- District student enrollment has declined by over 40 % since 1999 and could continue to decline in the future.
- Once the new K-8 School is completed, there will be no need for additional classrooms at any site.
- The Historic Grammar School building cannot be used for classrooms by the District since the building does not meet earthquake standards for public school district classrooms
- The District has leased the Historic Grammar School and most of the site to the Mendocino Parks and Recreation District who have run the Mendocino Recreation and Community Center for the past 23 years.

# MUSD 7-11 Committee's Final Report

## Appendix C

**Insert Community Questionnaire Here**

# MUSD 7-11 Committee's Final Report

## Appendix D

### Survey Responses

Below is the breakdown of the responses from the 403 surveys received: Please note that not all questions were answered by all respondents.

#### In what community do you live?

Albion	58
Little River	47
Comptche	24
Mendocino	173
Caspar	37
<u>Other</u>	<u>62</u>
Total	401

#### Is this your primary residence?

Yes	381
No	7

#### Do you have children under 18 living with you?

Yes	120
No	261

#### Has anyone in your family used the Recreation and Community Center in the past five years?

Yes	346
No	29

**#1. I think the Old Historic Grammar School and surrounding grounds should continue to be used as a recreation and community center, athletic fields, community garden, and open space. 387**

**#2. I think the Old Historic Grammar School and surrounding grounds, athletic fields, community garden, and open space could provide greater community value through an additional or different use of the building, the community garden and the remaining undeveloped portions of the property. 16**

# MUSD 7-11 Committee's Final Report

## Appendix E

### Summary of Comments/Recommendations from 7-11 survey respondents

Comments regarding expanded or enhanced use without substantial changes to current Community & Recreation Center uses:

Dog Park	27
Expansion of the garden	9
Adult Education	9
Commercial Kitchen/culinary program	9
Facility rental, as a source of revenue (e.g. wedding receptions, fundraisers, etc.)	9
Senior center/programs	8
Performing Arts venue	6
Outside games/courts (tennis, bocce ball, basketball, etc.)	6
Technology training center/Electronics lab	6
Teen program/club/or center	6
Pool	2
Soccer field	1
Food and Wine visitor center	1
Enhancing playground for young children	1
Reach out to homeless	1
Film program	1

Comments regarding significant changes in current use are as follows:

Skateboard park	9
Parking (so that traffic in the village could be restricted on weekends)	2
"Affordable" or "Low cost" housing	3
Remove the portable	3
Add a portable	1
Sell (if needed for high school repairs/renovation)	5
Subdivide and sell the undeveloped portion	4
Increase the revenue to MUSD	1
MUSD District Office	3
MCN Office	2
Retain the MCRPD management	26
Change the management	6

# MUSD 7-11 Committee's Final Report

## Appendix F

**Insert On Line Questionnaire Results Here**