



## COMMON GROUND NEW HAVEN ECOLOGY PROJECT, INC

*Cultivating habits of healthy living and sustainable environmental practices within a diverse community of children, adults, and families.*

### Meeting of the Board of Directors

#### Minutes – February 2, 2010

**Present:** Michael Doolittle, Liz Cox, Claudia Merson, Arthur Latimer, Jen Burke, Angela Watley, Joel Tolman, Frank Mitchell, Jonathan Knisely, Kim Futrell, John Jessen, Ben Gardner, Enroue Halfkenny, Elizabeth Turnbull, Melinda Stylos-Allan, Melissa Spear, Betsy Sneath, Rebecca Holcombe

**Welcome:** Chair referenced the Atlantic Monthly article critical of schools with gardens as a chance to refine the way we describe what happens at CG.

**Minutes:** Jonathan moved to approve the minutes and Michael was the second voice. Jonathan made one spelling correction, and the board approved the minutes.

**Race to the Top:** The first round application has been submitted to the federal government though not much in it is directed to charters. There is no significant change in funding and that isn't pushed in the application. ConnCAN, the advocacy group, assembled its own race to the top 4 point agenda advocating a phased "money follows the child" funding formula. They presented this proposal to a state BOE subcommittee meeting but it was not well received. They've begun a public campaign encouraging citizens to contact Rell in support of "money follows the child", i.e. money from sending district. ConnCAN is the only group to put forward charter school funding proposal, and there is a question of the level of commitment. How should we support the effort, is there some balanced response?

ConnCAN has a proposal that schools can support if they choose. There isn't an alternative proposal from the Charter School network. We might be behind a money follows the child model, recognizing the potential problems. A strategic response would be best, and the network should be in a position to help.

**Board resolutions:** a motion to approve regular \$10,000 payment to CBIA for health insurance; a motion recognizing Melissa's ability to enter in to contracts; and a motion recognizing a relationship with Dept of Agriculture.

Ben moved to approve the motion, and Claudia was the second. The chair read the motions and they are included as appendix. The Board approved the resolutions.

**Program:** School is preparing for CAPT testing in the first 2 weeks of March. We have a tentative public hearing date, March 16, 17, or 18. Rob Kelley will provide the outline and a New Haven venue. Kelley has invited Common Ground to be a resource for other charters around assessment. Other school directors will meet with Keith and Liz. Common Ground's new basketball team has Friday games scheduled. The Hawks, might need a practice gym—SCSU?

**Community programs:** There are still several winter school trips left open, but trip calendar is pretty booked. February vacation program has some space available still, and programs has positions available for the spring summer program cycle. The farm manager has been retooled and applicant interviews begin in several weeks with an expected March 1 start date. Other positions include after school program managers, and 20 camp staff college age. Next major program is Winterfest on March 20.

**Development:** State Farm Insurance approved a roughly \$100,000 grant for service learning to include students in work on site planning. This is a national grant decided by high school students. Event may be scheduled for later in the month. The next individual giving training is Tues at ONHSA.

Joel is working with a family foundation that could lead to an unrestricted operating grant, and there is a great deal of interest in the organization and school in foundation community.

**Budget:** Deep analysis of quickbooks continues in order to make some changes on our accounting/ reporting model. The process has been good and soon there will be recommended changes for review. Current form shows we are doing well this year and making budget with a little more unrestricted operating. 58% through the budget year and both areas are below budget in spending. There may be a surplus though we'll finish bookkeeping changes before reassigning that money. The frugality will benefit the organization in the end.

Finally, most of the Master Plan RFP documents have arrived. It seems that everyone in the room had a connection to a team member from one of the planning teams. A committee will review the documents next month and keep board informed.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05