



CITY OF WASILLA

290 E. HERNING AVE.

WASILLA, ALASKA 99654-7091

PHONE: (907) 373-9050

FAX: (907) 373-0788

COUNCIL MEMORANDUM NO. 92-18

FROM: Mayor Stein

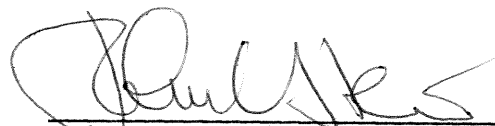
DATE: February 5, 1992

RE: Head Start/Old Wasilla School

Your attention is called to the attached article, letter to the editor and comments received on the use of the old Wasilla School for the Head Start program.

No further information has been received from the school district on their specific plans.

Council may wish to take a position on this issue or wait until more information is available from the school district.



John C. Stein, Mayor

Enclosures: Front Page Article - January 31
Letter to Editor
Gronewald Letter
Lund Comment

*Council voted to continue
lease agreement with
Headstart 2/24/92*

By DEBRA MCGHAN

Frontiersman staff

The Wasilla Head Start program, now housed in the City Hall building, may be homeless come September if the Mar-Stu School District has its way.

The district wants to put the overflow of middle school children in the former Wasilla Elementary School for at least a year.

"Wasilla Middle School parents are saying, 'Do what you have to in order to prevent double shifting.'"
—Martin Laster

But Head Start has no intention of moving without a fight.

Mary Steeby, Head Start's site coordinator, says the people in the program are very pleased with the space and would like to stay put another 20 years, maybe longer.

And Charlie Johanson, executive director of Chugiak Children's Service, which runs the Valley's Head Start programs, is angry that the school district didn't contact Head Start with the idea before approaching the Wasilla City Council.

"I think it's pretty bullish that no one (from the district) consulted us. We have 60



Kay Petal, a family educator, works with some of the 60 children at the Wasilla Head Start School.

children in the program now and another 54 kids on a waiting list," Johanson said. "We have three

full classrooms and are planning to add another two classrooms in September for sure. We can't buy

a building because that is against the regulations in the program. We don't want to lose this space."

Steeby said the building is designed for small children. The sinks, counters and bathroom

Head Start

(Continued from Front Page)

This is just one idea." Laster said it is not the intention of the district to displace anyone.

but parents of Wasilla Middle School students are pushing the district to find an alternative to double-shifting.

"Wasilla Middle School parents are saying, 'Do what you have to in order to prevent double shifting,'" said Laster. "Wasilla Elementary could give us six classrooms, enough space for 180 students."

Wasilla City Hall, originally Wasilla Elementary, is on the corner of Herring and Knik Avenue in downtown Wasilla. According to Mayor John Stein, the land has always been owned

by the City of Wasilla, but the building was originally owned by the school district. In the late 1970s, the district moved out of the building and turned the title over to the city.

Head Start, a federal program for three- and four-year-old children from low income families, took up residency in the rear part of the City Hall building four years ago. Stein said they signed a lease for an eight-year term, subject to an annual renewal clause.

"If the School District takes over they will have to buy the Head Start lease," said Stein. In addition to buying the lease, Stein said other problems would have to be worked out. "We'll need to upgrade the

School board to address space issues

Finding space for administration offices and for middle school students are key issues for the Mar-Stu Borough School Board, which meets Monday at 7:30 p.m. at Cottonwood Creek Elementary School.

Wasilla Middle School parents, concerned over the possibility of double-shifting, have asked administrators to look at a variety of solutions to the overcrowding problem. One solution would be to reclaim the space in what was once known as Wasilla Elementary. But that solution has parents and employees of Head Start, who currently occupy the space, up in arms. Bout groups are expected to be out in force at Monday's board meeting.

For a complete copy of the agenda, check this edition of the Frontiersman or stop by the district offices at 125 W. Evergreen Street in Palmer.

building and possibly lease space across the street for parking. But I'm sure (these things) can be done. Mayor Stein said he hasn't made a decision one way or

facilities are all set at a height geared toward younger children. In order for the district to use the building for middle schoolers, she says, all the fixtures would need to be remodeled.

Steeby doesn't agree the District should spend that much of the taxpayers' money for a temporary solution.

"Remodeling is expensive. And to spend that kind of money for a temporary fix is ridiculous. I think they should just wait, use

"Head Start works really well. They are non-disruptive to us, and are paying the heat and lights."
—Mayor John Stein

portables and rough it. According to the district it will only be three years maximum. Older children are more adaptable, they'll survive."

Assistant Superintendent Martin Laster asked the Wasilla City Council Monday evening to allow the school district to reclaim space in the city hall building to house overflow from Wasilla Middle School.

"I went to the city council just to see what space is available," said Laster. "Right now, there are a lot of options being discussed.

(See Head Start, Back Page)

haven't heard the whole story, so I don't know what to think. But I have to admit my predisposition is toward the status quo. If we do give the building back, we'll be short on space ourselves."

Stein said another possible option would be to work out an agreement that would give the entire building back to the school district, with the city moving elsewhere. But that might just be a pie in the sky," said Stein.

Laster said the district has always supported Head Start.

"We have provided them space in Colony High and Bute Elementary for the Palmer Head Start program. We're not trying to displace them, but right now we have constituents saying, 'we're deeply concerned about double

shifting.' We are just trying to pursue every possible solution. Everyone needs to make tough decisions."

Johanson, from Head Start said she understands the district's position, but also feels her program is providing more than just a preschool to the Valley.

"We're serving families and children," she said. "I think Head Start is one of the most positive things going for the community."

President George Bush expressed his support for the Head Start program in his State of the Union address and by requesting \$2.8 billion for the program in the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1. \$600 million increase from the 1989-90 fiscal year.

RE= HEAD-START / WASILLA SCHOOL

FRONTIERSMAN 2/5/92

Continued from page 4

Current problems

Editor:

Apparently Superintendent Martin Laster of the Mat-Su School District hasn't kept up with current sociological studies. Since this gentleman is a bit sluggish, permit me to provide an update.

Concerning the decision to reclaim space presently used for Head Start children, it appears that either this is an attempt to force the public into a tax issue, or the district is simply uneducated in the purpose of early developmental programs.

Physicians, educators and sociologists have determined that without intervention and guidance early in life, the probability of dysfunction increased dramatically in children deprived of necessary services in the first four years of life. Furthermore, these professionals inform us that nutrition and health care before birth and during this important period can actually raise a child's IQ by as much as 13 points. If the Mat-Su District is serious about their "2000" plan, then this is also of primary interest, for these children will attend other schools in the district later on.

As for the issues of portables, why does a portable room without water or restrooms cost \$100,000 to build? Maybe a few contractors would care to enlighten the public as to the reasons?

A study recently appearing in "Psychology Today" has determined that an overwhelming number of teenage pregnancies can be avoided with proper education—not sex education or passing out condoms, but education. The study has found that girls with learning disabilities or

other study problems allow themselves to become pregnant so that they are able to excel at something, using motherhood to blanket their feelings of failure in their daily lives.

These are issues that can no longer be ignored. As one social worker said, "Take care of them now, pay for it now, or pay more later when these children cannot support themselves, or turn to crime."

Do what you have to do, Mr. Laster, but do your homework first and try to develop a conscience along the way.

Jann Eller
Wasilla

February 2, 1991

John C. Stein, Mayor
City of Wasilla
481 Briar
Wasilla, Ak 99654

RECEIVED

FEB 5 1992

City of Wasilla, Alaska

Dear Mayor Stein;

It has been brought to our attention that the School Board is considering moving students from the Wasilla Middle School into the space owned by the City of Wasilla and occupied by children of the Wasilla Headstart Program. We strongly support the Headstart Program and urge you to take whatever action necessary to keep these children in the facility that they are now using.

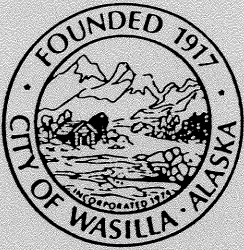
Your continued support of the Headstart Program will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Vern & Ricky Gronewald
961 North Shore Drive
Wasilla, Ak 99654

376-5985



CITY OF WASILLA

290 E. HERNING AVE.
WASILLA, ALASKA 99687
PHONE: 373-9050

CITY OF WASILLA
INQUIRY ACTION FORM

Serial # _____

Phone/In-Person/Written

Date Feb 3 1992 Time 8 PM

Name: JOYCE LUND

Address: PIWLOW DR.

Telephone: 373-0842

Location: Address _____

Legal PINECREST S/D

Request/Problem/Complaint/Compliment:

Telephoned to support Head Start remaining at old Wasilla school. She cited growth of program, suitability of old school and strong community and client support.

Referred to: Name Council
Admin, Muni. Svcs., Finance, Public Works,
Library, Museum, Other _____

ACTION: Received Date _____ Time _____ By _____

Long Term Policy Revision?

Administrative Procedure _____
Municipal Code _____
Other _____

Completed by _____ Date _____ Time _____