

ELHS School Building Committee
School Committee Conference Room and Zoom Meeting
June 27th, 2022 – 1:30 PM

Attendees:

Stephen Chrusciel, School Building Committee Chair
Gordon Smith, Superintendent of Schools
Pamela Blair, Assistant Superintendent for Business
Joe Dunn, Town DPW Facilities Manager
Frank Paige, ELHS Principal
Heather Brown, ELHS Director of Curriculum (absent)
Kathleen Hill, Town Council Member
Stephen Lonergan, Town Accountant and Town Finance Director
Mary McNally, Town Manager
Elizabeth Marsian-Boucher, School Committee Member (absent)
Bruce Fenney, Superintendent of East Longmeadow DPW
Dr. Daniela LaBarre, School Psychologist and Faculty Member
Greg Thompson, School Committee Member
Ryan Quimby, Town IT Director

Other Attendees:

Skanska USA Building, Inc.: Ben Murphy, John Benzinger, Victoria Clifford
Design Team (JWA/SMMA): Kristian Whitsett, Dorrie Brooks, Jillian DeCoursey, Brian Black, Helen Fantini, Erik Vangsness, Samantha Farrell

Gordon Began the meeting at 1:33 PM.

Meeting Minute Approval

- Steve Stephen Chrusciel asked for a motion to approve the 5/25 ELHSBC Meeting Minutes.
 - Kathleen Hill made the motion. Pamela Blair seconded the motion.
 - Gordon Smith called a roll call:
 - o Pamela Blair – yes
 - o Steve Chrusciel – yes
 - o Joe Dunn – yes
 - o Bruce Fenney – yes
 - o Kathleen Hill – yes
 - o Dr. Daniela LaBarre – yes
 - o Stephen Lonergan – yes
 - o Mary McNally – yes
 - o Frank Paige – abstain
 - o Ryan Quimby – abstain
 - o Gordon Smith – yes
- The motion passed.

Skanska Update

- Ben Murphy, Skanska, gave an update on the schedule milestones to date.
 - o Ben reported that the team met with the MSBA for a project kick-off meeting on 5/25.
 - o Ben reported that a small Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meets every two weeks to stay on target for the PDP report due on 8/30. The SLT group includes Gordon Smith, Steve Chrusciel, Pamela Blair, Ryan Quimby, Heather Brown, Skanska, SMMA, and JWA.
 - o Ben noted that SBC meetings should be scheduled for July and August to stay on target for the review and approval of the PDP submission.

JWA/SMMA Design Update

- Eric Vangness, Landscape Architect with SMMA and East Longmeadow HS alumni, provided an overview of initial findings from the Site Existing Conditions Survey:
 - o The site is located less than one mile west of the town center.
 - o Existing site access from Maple Street (primary) and Norden Street (secondary).
 - o The design team noted there might be an opportunity to access thru Chestnut Street to alleviate some traffic.
 - o The design team noted that a traffic engineer will be brought on later in the process to do a complete traffic study and will make recommendations based on counts.
 - o The site abuts residential neighborhoods, industrial properties, and the Redstone Rail Trail.
 - o Currently, there is no town-owned land available for connection south to Chestnut Street.
 - o The existing public sidewalk along the north side of maple street
 - o 61.4 acres
 - o Athletic fields and courts are extensive and are in good overall condition.
 - o Tennis courts need to be resurfaced in the next 2-3 years.
 - o Press Box/concessions are not ADA accessible.
 - o Lack of separation between school bus traffic and passenger vehicle traffic.
 - o Recommended separating staff and student parking.
 - o General safety concerns and lack of efficiency with overall vehicular circulation.
 - o Lacking dedicated pedestrian routes and areas in the main parking lot and between the building and stadium.
 - o Loading dock/service area cannot accommodate large vehicles.
 - o The site majorly drains towards the Southeast corner.
 - o Reviewed draining issues inside the school with the facilities group.
 - o Wooded wetlands to keep in mind for setbacks and drainage issues
 - A committee member asked what the wetland setbacks were.
 - Eric answered that state guidelines are 100 ft buffer zone from wetlands.
- Kristian Whitsett, JWA, provided an overview of initial findings from the Structural Existing Conditions Survey:
 - o The gym is in good shape structurally.
 - o The flat roof structure consists of open web steel join.

- The elevated floor structure consists of open web steel joists, steel girders and concrete floor slab on deck.
- The original gym roof consists of steel bents supporting steel beams purlins and metal roof deck.
- Gym addition and industrial arts addition roofs are structured with steel space trusses and metal roof deck.
- Swimming pool roof consists of long span open web joists and metal roof deck.
- Façade stucco shows cracking/delamination.
- Kristian Whitsett provided an overview of initial findings from the Architectural Existing Conditions:
 - Circulation is convoluted.
 - Finishes are robust – though colors are, of course dated and fixed
 - Spaces are being well utilized by staff.
 - Furnishings are dated and do not reinforce collaborative learning.
 - Natural light and ventilation issues.
 - Exterior sheet cladding is in very poor condition.
 - Lack of ADA compliance.
 - Bathrooms that cannot be monitored are abandoned.
 - Water infiltration in pool basement.
 - Poor architectural conditions as expected for a building of this age.
 - Significant quantities of hazmat material.
 - No student work is displayed in hallways or shared spaces.
 - The school demonstrates a strong sense of pride and a vibrant athletic/sport and wellness focus.
 - There are spaces where student-centered/UDL learning is on display.
 - Roof in poor shape, history of leaks.
 - Major public spaces lack updated technology and finishes.
- Helen Fantini, SMMA, provided an overview of initial findings from the MEP Existing Conditions:
 - The electrical generator and panels are in good condition but at the end of their life expectancy.
 - No emergency generator on site.
 - Electrical receptacles are at the end of their lives.
 - The kitchen and bathroom outlets are not up to code.
 - Question from a committee member: Is there redundancy if a boiler fails?
 - Bruce Fenney answered that some redundancy was built into the current boiler system.
 - The facility is not currently equipped with fire protection systems.
 - Storm piping is out of date, and no secondary overflow drainage.
 - Domestic hot water piping is outdated.
 - Question from a committee member: is the report on the plumbing system only based on what we can see?
 - Helen answered, yes, there could be further issues we don't know of. If the SBC selects addition/renovation, more investigative work will be ordered.²
 - Natural gas entrances and distributions are in fair condition.

- Compressed air system approaching life span.
 - Bruce Fenney provided an update to the committee:
 - UST's replaced in 2011/2012.
 - Underground storage tanks were also replaced, along with piping.

Review of Visioning Process

- Dorrie Brooks, JWA, gave an update to the SBC on the Visioning Process:
 - June 12th and June 22nd visioning workshops are complete.
 - Purpose of the workshops are to gain feedback that will inform the educational plan to be authored by the school district.
 - Dorrie shared key takeaways for educational, architectural, and community goals.
 - June 15th Visioning Community Forum was a hybrid event, with 45 attendees in-person and about 45 attendees virtual.
- Programming:
 - The existing school is 185,614 gsf total.
 - Spaces undersized by 5% or more from MSBA size expectations.
 - Dorrie shared a comparison of the existing school vs. the recommended class sizes for an 800-student high school. The key take away from the existing space was:
 - MSBA would have fewer classrooms than the current building, but they would be larger. The concept is to share classrooms.
 - No planning rooms.
 - No breakout rooms.
 - Undersized labs and STEM spaces.
 - Undersized gym.
 - Undersized media center.
 - Oversized auditorium.
 - Oversized art rooms.
 - Even on admin/slightly under on medical.
 - Abundant storage.
 - Oversized spaces may not be reimbursed by MSBA but can be funded by the community.
 - Spaces are negotiated with the MSBA.
 - Special Education spaces will be included in future reports.
 - Anticipate exceeding MSBA in core academic, physical education, and special education to meet ELHS programming needs.
 - Assume additional non-reimbursed shared community space.
 - Recommends matching MSBA in space guidelines to make the project more affordable construction costs.
 - Design team proposed to expect a building that is 200,000 gsf.
 - Comments and Questions:
 - A committee member expressed that cutting art and physical education square footage would pose an issue for programming.
 - A committee member asked if there are more reimbursement opportunities for renovation vs. new construction.

- The design team answered that renovation gains additional reimbursement in the overall project. However, the MSBA will not participate in renovating spaces above their guidelines.
- Committee members expressed that downsizing the auditorium may not go over well with the community.
- A committee member expressed that bringing Elcat into the building could be a programmatic opportunity for the school district.

Preliminary Development Studies

- Site Considerations:
 - Spatial restrictions.
 - Proximity to neighbors.
 - Poor visibility from Maple Street.
 - Conflicts the with existing facility (building and track and field).
- The design team presented proposed building options for discussion:
 - Code upgrade
 - Maintains current entry.
 - Remediates hazmat.
 - Brings building up to code.
 - Undersized labs and classrooms.
 - Accessibility upgrades.
 - Circulation reconfiguration.
 - Utility upgrades.
 - Addition/Renovation
 - Maintains current entry location.
 - Requires swing space for construction.
 - Accessibility upgrades.
 - Circulation reconfiguration.
 - Utility upgrades.
 - Open space reconfiguration.
 - Outdoor classroom opportunities.
 - New Construction (Center of Site – Option A)
 - “Embracing the green”
 - Suboptimal solar orientation.
 - Building between playing fields.
 - Large green to West.
 - Bike/ped connections to neighborhood.
 - Building adjacent to placing field.
 - Western exposure for entry.
 - Opportunity for North/South vehicle axis.
 - New Construction (Center of Site – Option B)
 - “Central green”
 - Some overlap on existing footprint.
 - Fronts towards Maple.

- Good solar orientation.
 - Building surrounded by playing fields.
 - Provides expansive green at front entry.
 - Eliminated Norden connection.
 - Maintains current parking strategy.
 - Improves pedestrian access.
 - New Construction (South End of Site – Option A)
 - “Big bow little bow”
 - Dramatic arrival.
 - Good solar orientation.
 - Building behind playing fields.
 - Separation between building and football field/track.
 - Large green to the North.
 - Spreads parking.
 - Uses Norden for emergency access and loading.
 - New Construction (South End of Site – Option B)
 - Building on North/South axis.
 - Suboptimal orientation.
 - Organized around chestnut connection.
 - Roads and building bifurcate site.
 - Greater impact on athletic program.
 - Spreads parking.
- Input from committee members:
 - Separating student and staff parking is preferred by School District.
 - Bruce Fenney comments that we should shy away from using Chestnut as access due to complaints from neighbors.
 - Bruce Fenney noted that including durable sidewalks on the perimeter of the site would be a bonus for the facilities department.
 - Committee member suggested maintaining current athletic spaces for community use.
- The design team noted that the educational plan that will be submitted with the PDP would help the SBC make informed decisions that align with the educational goals.

Communication Update

- Victoria Clifford, Skanska, noted that the Community Visioning Forum took place on July 15th, as Dorrie Brooks noted earlier in the meeting.
 - Recording of the Forum is available on the “Project News” section of the building website.
- Victoria asked for any input from committee members on outreach for the forum.
- Skanska to share with the committee questions that were asked by community members at the forum.
- Project website is live and accessible from the School and Town website landing pages.
- “Frequently Asked Questions” to be added to the project website.

New Business

- Steve Chrusciel asked for any new business.
- No new business from the committee.

Upcoming Meetings

- The design team requested to meet the week of July 18th.
 - o Meeting scheduled for July 18th at 2:30 PM.
- Skanska requested the August meeting be scheduled for week of August 22nd to approve the PDP submission.
 - o Meeting scheduled for August 22nd at 2:00 PM.

Motion to adjourn by Ryan Quimby. Seconded by Bruce Fenney.
Motion unanimously approved.

Meeting adjourned at 3:42.

Meeting Minutes respectfully submitted by, Victoria Clifford, Skanska.