

ELHS School Building Committee
School Committee Conference Room and Zoom Meeting
July 18th, 2022 – 2:30 PM

Attendees:

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

Gordon began the meeting at 2:37 PM.

Skanska Update

- Ben Murphy, Skanska, gave an update on the schedule milestones to date.
 - o PDP due to MSBA on August 30th
 - o Held three educational visioning sessions
 - o Review of space summary with school district
 - o Drafting of educational plan
 - o Existing conditions survey
 - o Cost estimate upcoming
 - o At the upcoming August SBC meeting, the SBC will be asked to approve the PDP submission.

JWA/SMMA Update

- Visioning Workshop Results:
 - o Documentation shared with SBC. The team encouraged SBC to review the documentation to get caught up with the feedback received and the design intent moving forward.

- Feedback was heavy on the community use side as not many teachers were able to attend.
- Feedback from teachers was captured by department interviews conducted by the design team.
- Proposed Program Spaces:
 - The design team gave an overview of proposed educational spaces, an early study of eligible and ineligible square footage for MSBA reimbursement, and an early study of estimated construction cost by cost per square foot.
 - Greg Thompson asked if all rooms will have windows.
 - Not necessarily, as some small spaces may be in between rooms or hallways. The intent is for all staffed rooms to have windows.
 - The design team reviewed square foot overages in the athletics and arts categories.
 - Beth Boucher expressed wanting to prioritize a larger auditorium for large educational gatherings and community gatherings.
 - The design team explained that some ineligible square footage could be deemed as reimbursable by the MSBA if it is clearly part of the educational program.
 - Gordon mentioned DESE's involvement in recent years and their push for social and emotional education and school resource officer.
 - The design team reviewed ineligible spaces that they propose to delete from the program. This included the greenhouses, Willie Ross program, LGI & Black Box in lieu of oversized auditorium, ELCAT studio, and overlap locker rooms.
 - The design team noted that the cafeteria or gym could be used as overflow area or an alternate large gathering space.
 - Group discussed that a black box is not as advantageous for the District as a traditional stage because other schools use the HS stage.
 - Greg voiced to not delete locker room space due to the volume of athletics.
- MSBA Reimbursement:
 - The project team explained that the MSBA Reimbursement Rate will be locked in just prior to going to the Town for the project approval vote.
 - Beth Boucher expressed needing to communicate to the community how much it would cost to bring the building up to code without any help from the MSBA.
 - John Benzinger added that if the vote did not pass and the District wanted to reenroll with the MSBA for another try, they'd be put at the bottom of the barrel for acceptance to the Feasibility Program and have to fund another Feasibility Study.
 - Skanska explained each design option would have a detailed cost analysis to help the SBC make the best decision on which option to pursue and present to the community for approval.
 - The project team explained that site costs are capped at 8%
 - Swing space not reimbursable
 - The design team went over additional reimbursement opportunities.
- PDP Options Criteria:
 - The design team presented PDP review criteria which included sample scoring performed by design team (subjective).
 - The design team asked for input on weighting priorities and scoring.

- PDP Options:
 - The design team reviewed the following PDP design options:
 - Add/Reno
 - Tried to save as much of the building as possible
 - It would be quite difficult to get classrooms at intended sizes and preferred adjacencies per the educational plan
 - Includes a pool
 - A committee member asked if this would include site drainage.
 - Yes, and traffic mitigation improvements.
 - New Construction Center A – “Reverse L”
 - Centers building on site
 - Build new around existing school footprint
 - The design team noted circulation could be changed with input from the SBC
 - Committee members discussed that mini-bus traffic might be possible thru Norden, but SBC mentioned large busses and student traffic wouldn’t be supported by neighbors.
 - New Construction Center B – “Tripod”
 - Footprint may be more costly (more square footage)
 - New Construction South A – “Corner Pods”
 - New Construction South B – “Flying J”
 - Beth responded to keeping green space as a buffer for neighbors.
 - Erik cautioned putting sports fields with ball hazards close to neighbors.
 - Gordon recommended bringing in the Rec Department for their input.
 - Greg cautioned adding any rec non-reimbursable square footage.
 - Alt New Construction South C – “Corner Pods/Separate Pool”
 - Pool, district office, and IT in a satellite building
 - Committee members raised concerns about wayfinding and student’s accessing the pool for PE classes.
 - The design team presented vehicle circulation routes.
 - The committee confirmed using the west side of the site for busses, student and parent drop-off would be OK.
 - The committee voiced a desire for adding another traffic light and three-lane exit.
 - Committee confirmed that service deliveries currently using Norden works well.
 - Greg voiced that large delivery trucks should not exit with the bus traffic and not be directed to drive around the school during classes.
- Reactions to PDP Review Criteria:
 - The design team asked SBC to email input to Gordon
 - The design team asked to narrow down similar options:
 - Reverse L vs. Tripod
 - Ryan preferred Tripod due to outdoor classroom opportunities

- The committee agreed
 - Corner Pods vs. Flying J
 - The committee preferred flying J
 - Separated Pool
 - The committee decided to forego
- Student Engagement:
 - Phil Peneli proposed including students in the design process. Potentially as SBC members.
 - Phil also recommended having students participate in a survey.
 - Gordon asked the design team to provide a draft survey
- School Tours:
 - Phil recommended the SBC tour other schools in the Commonwealth
 - Helen recommended touring North Middlesex. Proposed setting a date in August.
 - The project team is to follow up with committee to coordinate.

Communications Update

- Community Outreach:
 - Planning to host a booth at National Night Out, 8/2
 - Skanska reported that the building project plans to have a booth at National Night Out. The project team will provide a handout with FAQ information, ways to get involved, and a date for a fall community forum.
 - The design team added they will provide a community survey as well to collect input and will be working on a logo for the building project.
 - The project team invited SBC members to attend and assist with answering questions from the community.
 - Fall Community Forum
 - Skanska asked the committee to set a date.
 - Beth suggested having SBC reps at School open houses.
 - Project team asked for open house schedules
 - Mapleshade – Sept 7th
 - Birchland Park – Sept 14th
 - High School – Sept 22nd
 - Meadowbrook – Sept 28th/27th
 - Potential forum location: Senior Center
 - Potential dates: 9/15 or 9/21, 6 PM
 - Gordon to confirm with Senior Center

New Business

- Design team asked for the August SBC Meeting to be rescheduled for the 25th to allow time to incorporate estimates in the PDP.
- SBC Meeting rescheduled for Thursday 25th, 2 PM

Questions/Public Participation

- None

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.