

WESTWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS BUILDING PROJECT COMMITTEE
Westwood, Massachusetts

MEETING MINUTES

February 13, 2020

Attendance and Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:01am in the Professional Development Room at Westwood High School by Chair Maya Plotkin. Also present were: Ken Aries, Brian Bayer, Allison Borchers, Christopher Coleman, Sarah Cronin, John Cummings, Charles Donahue, Pam Dukeman, Abby Hanscom, Nancy Hyde, Josepha Jowdy, Lemma Jn-baptiste, Carol Lewis, Michelle Miller, Anthony Mullin, Emily Parks, and Kate Scales. John Cianciarulo recorded the minutes.

Chair's Report

Mrs. Plotkin recognized Westwood Media Center, which was on-site to record the meeting.

Project Updates

Mrs. Plotkin shared updates from the Evaluation Criteria Subcommittee and the recent Green Charrette. The Evaluation Criteria Subcommittee met; the discussion items on the agenda for this meeting will be to move to the shortlist.

The Green Charrette was held on January 30 and facilitate by the sustainability subcontractor, The Green Engineer. The Charrette was an opportunity to understand the Town's position and the School Building Committee's position on sustainability. Mrs. Hyde reiterated the benefit of collaborating with Eversource on sustainability measures. Mrs. Plotkin agreed, stating that partnering with them in a meaningful way would be beneficial.

Sustainability Subcommittee

Mrs. Plotkin is proposing a new subcommittee that is focused on sustainability. She recommended that it consist of Lemma Jn-baptiste, Ken Aries, Brian Bayer, John Cummings, Tony Mullin, and herself. Tom Philbin, the Town Energy Manager, will be a guiding liaison.

The mandate for the subcommittee is to do a deeper-dive into the net-zero energy options and liaise with Tom Philbin and other town members to determine what the building may look like. The work of the elementary schools building project could impact what future municipal buildings in Westwood look like.

Mrs. Jowdy moved to create the Sustainability Subcommittee that consists of Lemma Jn-baptiste, Ken Aries, Brian Bayer, John Cummings, Maya Plotkin, Tony Mullin, and a representative of the Town. Tom Philbin will be an ex-officio member. Mr. Donahue seconded.

Vote: 17-0-0

Result: Approved (Unanimous)

Discussion Items

Evaluation of Project Options

Mrs. Plotkin asked Ms. Parks to introduce a discussion on evaluating project options.

Each category was given a rating of one through five. Designs were rated against a relative comparison.

The categories and guiding questions are:

Education: How well does the option meet the educational goals of Westwood?

Site: How well does the option maximize on-site parking, allow for efficient pick-up/drop-off circulation, and provide access to/parking for sports fields?

Traffic: What is the impact of the project to the traffic in the neighborhood and the town?

Community: To what extent does the option provide benefits to the community, such as sports fields, community space, and gym space?

Sustainability: How well does the option align with the sustainable goals of the town?

Logistics/Construction Impact: What is the impact to the students on the project site during construction? How difficult is the phasing/site logistics?

Cost per Square Foot: What is the cost per square foot of construction for each option?

As part of the agreement with the MSBA, a renovation-only option (RO-H.1) of the Hanlon School – just bringing it up to code – must be carried forward.

Education: Options were evaluated against the guiding principles developed in the Educational Program, including grade level neighborhoods, extended learning areas, small group breakout space, purposefully-designed special education spaces, and public/private division. Designs that included neighborhood clusters were awarded the “best,” while linear designs – which also include grade-level groupings and extended learning spaces, but have undefined neighborhoods – were awarded a “better” ranking. Renovation options were given a ranking of “fair” because it created a disparity in academic experiences.

Site: There were concerns around sufficient bus lanes, adequate room for parent pick-up/drop-off with efficient circulation, room for playgrounds, street set-back, and adjacencies between the gymnasium and fields. Options where the bus lane was adequate for the number of buses were ranked higher; options where the school was set closer to the street, without adequate room for pick-up/drop-off circulation were ranked lower.

Traffic: The Sheehan site is challenging for traffic as there is a curve in the road and the entrance/exit is near the High Street/Pond Street intersection. Therefore, all options on the Sheehan site were ranked “poor” for traffic. A consolidation at Sheehan would generate more traffic throughout town, with buses crossing town. A 685 pupil school would increase traffic at the Hanlon site.

Mrs. Plotkin continued the discussion regarding the evaluation of design options.

Community: Designs that separated public/private spaces and provided new field/gymnasium opportunities received higher marks. Those that required relocating existing fields without the ability to replace them on the site received lower marks.

Sustainability: All designs that consist of new construction were ranked “best.” A “better” ranking was awarded to renovations with 685 students, as there would be more efficiencies, while a “good” ranking” was awarded to those with 560 students, as there would be fewer efficiencies.

Logistics/Construction Impact: Any construction will create an impact. Therefore, none of the designs were awarded “best.” Renovations were awarded lower marks as they would require phasing construction while students are in school with shared walls with construction. The Sheehan site has less room for staging and construction vehicles, making the impact to the existing school site and neighbors more extensive.

The shortlist of options come from each cost bucket. Option RO-H.1 (Hanlon renovation, 315 students), bringing the building up to code, must be brought forward as it is a requirement of the MSBA. Option AR-HS-H.3 (Hanlon and Sheehan at Sheehan, 685 students) is the least expensive of the addition/renovation options and it also scored the highest among the addition/renovation options.

Mr. Bonfatti commented that of both addition/renovation options, one is being proposed because it is a requirement. There is the potential that the MSBA would like an addition/renovation option for each of the enrollment scenarios.

In terms of new construction at Hanlon, four options are being carried forward. All of the costs are in a similar range. At Sheehan, the option carried forward is also the highest score. There is minimal cost difference.

Ms. Parks shared that Option NHS-H.1 (Hanlon and Sheehan at Hanlon, 685 students) was preferred among the elementary principals. They liked that the design had tighter groupings and more defined public/non-public space; the concept of the library/media center as a destination; and the possibility of a satellite for early childhood. The Evaluation Criteria Subcommittee did not have a strong preference between this and Option NHS-H.2, which had the same type, size, and location.

Mr. Fitzgerald presented cost summaries.

The preliminary project cost estimates distributed includes estimate total construction costs and soft costs (e.g., contingencies, traffic studies, wetlands studies, geotechnical surveys, etc.). These combine into the total project costs. Mr. Fitzgerald also included a place-holder for sustainable components that go above and beyond what is typically included. The includes geothermal and triple pane windows. This would assume that a solar array would provide electricity. It is just a placeholder.

Stand-alone, add-on costs (which are not factored into the project costs), are also outlined. These are items the Town desired to have costed out. They include:

- 7v7 Soccer field
- Softball or Little League fields
- Demolition of Deerfield, Sheehan, and/or Hanlon Schools, including hazardous materials abatement
- 11v11 Soccer field
- Parking for 75 spaces

Mrs. Hyde cautioned that it is presumptuous to assume that the vacated building will be demolished. Mr. Fitzgerald responded that it is worthwhile information to have. Mrs. Hyde believes that this information would be helpful for any committee that is charged with determining what to do with the building.

At Town Meeting, the vote will be on the full value of the project. Literature on the average tax impact would be on the Town's portion of the costs. The MSBA, however, requires a full appropriation.

Mr. Bonfatti cautioned that these estimates are strictly for comparison and are ballpark figures.

Mr. Bayer asked if an expected range of reimbursement is known. Mrs. Plotkin responded that she estimates a net reimbursement between fifteen and twenty percent of the total cost.

Mrs. Dukeman stated that it would be helpful for residents to know the costs of other communities' school building costs. Mrs. Plotkin replied that the MSBA has this information, so it is something that can certainly be pulled together.

Mr. Bayer asked if the total costs includes only the new building or also the remainder school. Mrs. Plotkin responded that addressing the needs of the remainder school is a separate project and something that will be discussed. It is dependent upon what the Town will fund.

Mr. Donahue shared that it would be beneficial for the School Building Committee to hear what the criticisms are in the community.

Mrs. Jowdy responded that what she frequently hears is to build a larger school, since it will be financially beneficial. The reimbursable amount is not that different.

Ms. Parks reiterated that the objective right now is not to identify the best option, but to go through a whittling-down process and to determine what is not feasible. The next phase will be to take a deep dive into the impact on each of these options.

The Committee discussed the potential of going back to the MSBA to address the remainder school. The team from Compass Project Management responded that this would be difficult. They were unaware of whether it was possible to initiate an additional project while currently working on one in-progress. Last year, 61 or 62 statements of interest were filed, while only twelve or thirteen moved forward.

Mrs. Hyde reiterated that there is an imminent need to address concerns at the main Fire Station. While the project has been put on hold, it is another need in town that remains to be addressed.

The Evaluation Subcommittee recommends moving forward the following:

- Option RO-H.1 (Hanlon renovation, 315 students)
- Option AR-HS-H.3 (Addition/renovation at Hanlon site of Hanlon and Sheehan, 685 students)
- Option NHO-H.1 (New construction at Hanlon site of Hanlon only, 315 students)
- Option NHD-H.1 (New construction at Hanlon site of Hanlon and Deerfield, 560 students)
- Option NHD-H.4 (New construction at Hanlon site of Hanlon and Deerfield, 560 students)
- Option NHS-H.1 (New construction at Hanlon site of Hanlon and Sheehan, 685 students)
- Option NHS-S.3 (New construction at Sheehan site of Hanlon and Sheehan, 685 students)

There will not be a vote on this yet. The School Building Committee should just review. On March 2, the School Committee will be hosting a community forum to present this short list. At the School Building Committee meeting on March 20, a vote will be taken on whether this should become the shortlist.

Action Items

Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Hyde moved to approve the meeting minutes of January 30, 2020. Mr. Cummings seconded.

Vote: 18-0-0.

Result: Approved (Unanimous)

Acceptance of Evaluation Criteria Subcommittee Minutes

Mrs. Hyde moved to accept the Evaluation Criteria Subcommittee meeting minutes of January 9, 2020. Mr. Cummings seconded.

Vote: 18-0-0.

Result: Approved (Unanimous)

Mrs. Hyde moved to accept the Evaluation Criteria Subcommittee meeting minutes of January 16, 2020. M. Cummings seconded.

Vote: 18-0-0.

Result: Approved (Unanimous)

Amend Dore and Whittier Contract

Several consultants revised their proposals, resulting in a decrease of \$5,000 in overall costs.

Ms. Parks moved to approve the contract amendment for Dore and Whittier. Mrs. Jowdy seconded.

Vote: 18-0-0.

Result: Approved (Unanimous)

The vote to authorize the Town Administrator to amend the contract was deemed redundant and unnecessary. The Select Board has authorized the Town Administrator to execute agreements that have been approved by the School Building Committee. Therefore, Mr. Coleman is able to sign the amendment without a separate vote.

Approval of Invoices

Mrs. Jowdy moved to approve invoices for period ending January 31, 2020, totaling \$92,058.75, as recommended by Compass. Mrs. Lewis seconded.

Vote: 18-0-0.

Result: Approved (Unanimous)

New Business

Mr. Cumming shared that an article in the February 9 edition of *The Boston Globe* had an article about the construction of the Sunita Williams School in Needham which resulted in cracks in the foundation and damages to abutting homes. The insurance company for the project stated that nothing could be done. Mr. Cummings would like this to be addressed in any contract.

Adjournment

Mr. Mullin motioned to adjourn. Ms. Parks seconded.

Vote: 17-0-0.

Result: Approved (Unanimous)

The meeting adjourned at 9:28am.

List of Documents and Exhibits Used at Meeting:

- Building Project Options, dated February 6, 2020
 - Option AR-HO-H.1 (Hanlon only at Hanlon, 315 students)
 - Option AR-HD-H.2 (Hanlon and Deerfield at Hanlon, 560 students)
 - Option AR-HS-H.3 (Hanlon and Sheehan at Hanlon, 685 students)
 - Option AR-HS-S.1 (Hanlon and Sheehan at Sheehan, 685 students)
 - Option NHO-H.1 (Hanlon only at Hanlon, 315 students)
 - Option NHD-H. 1 (Hanlon and Deerfield at Hanlon, 560 students)
 - Option NHD-H.2 (Hanlon and Deerfield at Hanlon, 560 students)
 - Option NHD-H.3 (Hanlon and Deerfield at Hanlon, 560 students)
 - Option NHD-H.4 (Hanlon and Deerfield at Hanlon, 560 students)
 - Option NHS-H.1 (Hanlon and Sheehan at Hanlon, 685 students)
 - Option NHS-H.2 (Hanlon and Sheehan at Hanlon, 685 students)
 - Option NHS-S.1 (Hanlon and Sheehan at Sheehan, 685 students)
 - Option NHS-S.2 (Hanlon and Sheehan at Sheehan, 685 students)
 - Option NHS-S.3 (Hanlon and Sheehan at Sheehan, 685 students)
- Correspondence from Donald Walter, Principal, Dore and Whittier, to Tim Bonfatti of Compass Project Management, regarding contract amendment, dated January 23, 2020; includes enclosure with amendment for approval/ signature
- Evaluation Criteria Matrix, dated February 10, 2020
- Evaluation Criteria Subcommittee meeting minutes of January 9, 2020
- Evaluation Criteria Subcommittee meeting minutes of January 16, 2020
- “Green Charrette” Sustainability Kickoff Workshop Meeting Minutes of January 30, 2020
- Memo from The Green Engineer dated February 7, 2020, regarding the January 30, 2020 Sustainability Workshop Activity Summary
- Monthly Vendor Invoice Package for financial period ending January 31, 2020
- Preliminary Cost Estimates, dated February 13, 2020