

WESTWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS BUILDING PROJECT COMMITTEE  
Westwood, Massachusetts

**EVALUATION CRITERIA SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

May 27, 2020

**Attendance and Call to Order**

The meeting, held remotely<sup>1</sup>, was called to order at 8:02am by Chair Maya Plotkin. Also present on the videoconference were: Ken Aries, John Cummings, Nancy Hyde, Tony Mullin, and Emily Parks. Mr. Mullin left the meeting at 9:30am. John Cianciarulo recorded the minutes.

Mrs. Plotkin recognized the live stream of the meeting which was provided for real-time, public access to the activities of the Evaluation Criteria Subcommittee. Members of the public were able to view a live stream of the meeting via the Internet at [www.westwood.k12.ma.us/live](http://www.westwood.k12.ma.us/live).

**Subcommittee Chair's Report**

Mrs. Plotkin provided an update on the project and process to-date. The Evaluation Criteria Subcommittee will be finalizing its recommended option for presentation to the School Building Committee at its meeting on Friday.

On June 4, the School Committee will be hosting a community forum to present the final option and solicit feedback from the public.

The School Building Committee will have two meetings in June; one to discuss sustainability options; and the second to vote on the final project option.

**Discussion Items**

**Review of Short-List Options Against Evaluation Criteria**

Mrs. Plotkin facilitated discussion on the design evaluation by sharing the draft, graded evaluation matrix. The Subcommittee deliberated each criterion:

- Educational Guidelines
  - The elementary principals met to discuss the project options. There is a preference for the "tree" design over the "E" design, as it allows for grade clusters, and flow between grade-level "neighborhoods" which is not seen clearly in the "E" plan.
  - There is a preference among the principals to divide private/public space. Both designs meet this criteria, but principals' preference is the way that it is configured in the "tree" design.
  - The library/media center in the "tree" design is spaced over two floors with a separate early childhood media space. Principals preferred that to the revised "E" design where the media center is entirely a destination, with no early childhood satellite space.
  - In regards to the location of the gymnasium, elementary principals thought about how physical education classes are delivered and prefer the location in the "tree" design due to its proximity/adjacency to the playing fields.
  - Overall, the principals are excited about both designs, but preferred the "tree" design as it would feel like a smaller school.
  - It is difficult to address the Education Plan in the renovation-only design. The result is some spaces are designed with new educational criteria in mind (e.g., extended learning spaces), and others not. This would create inequities within the building.
- Growth and Future

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<sup>1</sup> Remote meeting held in accordance with Executive Order of Massachusetts Governor, March 12, 2020

- All of the new builds were ranked “5” with the exception of those on the Sheehan site, due to site constraints, which was ranked “3.”
  - The addition/renovation was ranked “4,” and the existing a “3.”
- Outdoor Learning and Connection to Nature
  - In new designs at Hanlon, each was ranked “5,” as the school would be designed with outdoor learning and nature in mind.
  - Designs on the Sheehan site were ranked “4” due to site limitations.
  - Addition/renovation designs were ranked “3” as it would be a mixture of old and new. The building would be situated where it is.
  - The renovation-only design was ranked “2” as more of an effort would need to be made to establish an outdoor learning connection.
  - Those ranked “5” are the designs that embrace the “school in the woods” concept, in addition to designing specific outdoor learning spaces.
- Impact to Other Schools
  - Those scoring most highly are the Hanlon/Deerfield consolidation. The advantages include combining two schools and combining into one. This eliminates challenges associated with operating two small schools (e.g., singleton classes due to low enrollment). A combined school would create more equitable class sizes.
  - Consolidation for 685 students does have some advantages, but the District would end up with one relatively large school of 685 and yet not eliminating the challenges at Deerfield, a school of fewer than 200 students.
- Circulation and Parking
  - New designs at Hanlon were ranked “5” as it allows for the best circulation for buses and parking.
  - The addition/renovation design at Hanlon ranking was reduced to a “2” as it would create a bus lane along Gay Street.
  - Designs at the Sheehan site were ranked “2” mainly because the bus lane is not large enough to accommodate all of the school buses. In addition, the reconfigured vehicle entrance on High Street would not be ideal as it would create an additional back-up on Rte. 109.
  - The renovation-only design at Hanlon does not address the current back-ups onto Gay Street, the limited on-site parking, or the lack of a drop-off area. It was ranked “1.”
- Access to Fields and Site Fit
  - New designs were ranked “5.”
  - Existing and addition/renovation were ranked “4.”
  - Sheehan was ranked “3” due to the limitation of the boundary property line. It is not an ideal site fit and the proper elements are unable to work together in an ideal fashion.
- Redistricting
  - Per the consultant’s analysis, the least disruptive design is the Hanlon/Deerfield consolidation. This redistricting plan could be implemented rather simply.
  - Hanlon-only options do not involve redistricting. However, one guiding question is how the project meets building utilization goals. This would not be the most efficient utilization of school buildings, by keeping two very small schools online.
  - The analysis demonstrated that it would be quite disruptive to consolidate Hanlon and Sheehan, just because there would be so many more students that would need to be transported across town, as it would involve wholesale redistricting.
  - The combined Hanlon/Sheehan on the Sheehan site was ranked “1” as it is a far more complicated process to redistrict current Hanlon neighborhoods to Sheehan.
- Traffic
  - Criteria related to traffic was ranked not just on the neighborhood, but on the overall town as well.
  - Hanlon/Deerfield designs were ranked “4” as there is an impact on overall traffic, but would still be fairly manageable.
  - The renovation-only design was ranked a “2,” as cars would continue to back-up onto Gay Street.
  - The addition/renovation design was also ranked “2” as the bus lane would abut Gay Street.

- Community Use
  - New designs at Hanlon were all ranked “5,” as it is hopeful, given what currently exists, to be able to add to the Town’s inventory of field space. Gym space could also add to community availability. The separation of public/private space and new performance space were also a factor.
  - The addition/renovation at Hanlon for 685 was ranked “4” as the public/private space separation is not as seamless.
- Security
  - All new designs were ranked “5,” as they would be designed with the input of security consultants.
  - The addition/renovation design was ranked “4” as the separation of public/private space is not nearly as easy and the proximity to the road would be a concern.
- Sustainability
  - All new designs were ranked “5,” as they would be designed with sustainability in mind.
  - The addition/renovation was ranked “4” as a fair amount of sustainable design elements could be added.
  - There would be no sustainability designs in a renovation-only building.
- Logistics/Construction Impact
  - None of the designs were ranked “5” as there will be some impact.
  - New builds at Hanlon all received “4” as the building would be behind the existing school, providing as little disruption as possible. The size of the site allows for there to be various levels of access for construction, staging, etc.
- Costs
  - Mr. Fitzgerald reviewed preliminary project costs. In the process between the Preliminary Design Proposal and the Preferred Schematic Report, additional information was able to be provided to the cost estimator.
  - In developing concepts, information was fine-tuned. Engineers were able to provide narratives and provide full descriptions of planned systems.
- Net Cost to Town for all Three Schools
  - A combined Deerfield/Hanlon consolidation leaves the Deerfield School as a Town building. Mrs. Hyde asked if there was a method to capture this cost, even though it is not directly related to the project.
  - The Subcommittee suggested using half-points in this category, and did so in its evaluation.
- Busing and Operational Costs
  - Some efficiencies would be realized in staffing and operational costs in consolidating (e.g., more efficient classroom staffing). This was captured in these rankings.
  - Two old buildings would be taken offline, having implications in reduced, ongoing maintenance costs.

The Subcommittee completed the evaluation matrix and then computed the ranking totals as outlined below:

- Option 1 (Hanlon renovation, 315 students), total is 183
- Option 4 (Addition/renovation at Hanlon site of Hanlon and Sheehan, 685 students; informally known as the “linear” design), total is 323
- Option 6 (New construction at Hanlon site of Hanlon only, 315 students; informally known as the “hammer tacker” design) total is 370
- Option 7 (New construction at Hanlon site of Hanlon and Deerfield, 560 students; informally known as the “tree” design), total is 458
- Option 10 (New construction at Hanlon site of Hanlon and Deerfield, 560 students; informally known as the “E” design), total is 443
- Option 11 (New construction at Hanlon site of Hanlon and Sheehan, 685 students), total is 403
- Option 15 (New construction at Sheehan of Hanlon and Sheehan, 685 students), total is 315

The highest-scoring is Option 7 (New construction at Hanlon site of Hanlon and Deerfield, 560 students; informally known as the “tree” design), with a total of 458.

Discussion of Recommended Final Option

The Committee reviewed the two highest scoring designs: Option 7 and Option 10. There was consensus that the best option is Option 7.

Mrs. Plotkin surveyed each of the subcommittee members on their opinion of the final option. There was consensus that this was a methodical analysis. All were confident in the process and confident in the outcome.

**Action Items**

Approval of Final Option to Recommend to School Building Committee

**Mr. Aries moved to recommend option 7 [a newly constructed Hanlon/Deerfield consolidation for 560 students situated at the Hanlon site, (the “tree” design) with a score of 458] to the School Building Committee. Mr. Cummings seconded.**

Mrs. Plotkin	Aye
Mr. Aries	Aye
Mr. Cummings	Aye
Mrs. Hyde	Aye
Ms. Parks	Aye

**Vote: 5-0-0.**

**Result: Approved**

Approval of Subcommittee Minutes

**Ms. Parks moved to approve the Evaluation Criteria Subcommittee meeting minutes of April 16, 2020. Mr. Aries seconded.**

Mrs. Plotkin	Aye
Mr. Aries	Aye
Mr. Cummings	Aye
Mrs. Hyde	Aye
Ms. Parks	Aye

**Vote: 5-0-0.**

**Result: Approved**

**New Business**

Mrs. Plotkin thanked the subcommittee members, Dore and Whittier, and Compass for their work.

Mr. Fitzgerald echoed Mrs. Plotkin’s sentiments, stating that the process in Westwood was thoughtful, thorough, and engaging. The amount of engagement with the Town has benefitted Dore and Whittier in their ability to translate intentions into options for review and analysis.

Mrs. Plotkin then reminded the Subcommittee of the plan to forward material today, including the final matrix, to the full School Building Committee. On Friday, there will be no vote; just a presentation.

**Adjournment**

**Mrs. Hyde motioned to adjourn. Mr. Cummings seconded.**

Mrs. Plotkin	Aye
Mr. Aries	Aye
Mr. Cummings	Aye
Mrs. Hyde	Aye
Ms. Parks	Aye

**Vote: 5-0-0.**

**Result: Approved**

The meeting adjourned at 10:11am.

**List of Documents and Exhibits Used at Meeting**

- Design Team Slideshow Presentation, dated May 27, 2020
- Evaluation Criteria Subcommittee draft meeting minutes of April 16, 2020
- Hanlon Evaluation Criteria rubric – PDP Phase, dated February 6, 2020
- Hanlon Evaluation Criteria rubrics – PSR Phase, dated May 20, 2020