

**Westwood School Committee  
Thurston Middle School Cafeteria  
Community Forum  
Thursday, January 23, 2020  
7:00pm**

**Present:**

Anthony Mullin, Chairperson  
Joseph Jowdy, Vice Chairperson  
Carol Lewis, Clerk  
Maya Plotkin, Committee Member  
Charles Donahue, Committee Member  
Ayesha Tariq, WHS Student Representative- Not in Attendance

Emily Parks, Superintendent  
Allison Borchers, Assistant Superintendent- Not in Attendance  
Lemma Jn-baptiste, Director of Business and Finance- Not in Attendance  
Abby Hanscom, Director of Student Services

**Meeting called to order 7:06pm**

*Meeting was recorded by Westwood Media Center*

**Discussion Items (7:06-8:38)**

Elementary Schools Building Project Update

Mr. Mullin welcomed everyone and introduced Ms. Plotkin.

Ms. Plotkin explained that the 2015 Master Capital Needs Study started this process. She explained there were renovations completed at the other schools. Thurston had some renovations in the '90s and MJ and Downey were fully renovated in 2000s. The new Westwood High School was completed in the mid-2000s. The 15 options for the elementary schools building project were presented to the School Building Committee last week. That group will use a set of evaluation criteria to select 6-8 options. This will be completed by March. More public forums will be held after that point, with the final option being presented to the MSBA in June. She explained the timeline for the approval and construction of the project. She also explained the three scenarios that are being studied: Hanlon only, Hanlon/Deerfield, Hanlon/Sheehan.

Mr. Walter, lead architect from Dore and Whittier presented. He explained all that has been done by their group since the middle of October. He wanted to emphasize that even though these buildings are older, they are very well maintained. He showed pictures of buildings in their existing condition, as well as pictures of space needs in each building. There have been eleven visioning sessions and workshops with the design team. Educators toured three newly built schools in Needham, Millis, and Milford.

## Guiding Principles and Organizational Elements

- Create small learning communities (classroom clusters vs. linear)
- Sufficient number of classrooms to support class size policy
- Centralized library/media center, as a destination
- Reconceived cafeteria (flexible seating options, smaller dining experiences)
- Performance platform (stage) as a part of the cafeteria
- Gym that supports educational and community use
- Purposefully-designed and fully integrated special education spaces
- Building oriented to maximize natural light and views of outdoors
- Variety of spaces and flexibility in design
- Sufficient professional space for adult planning, collaboration, and consultation
- Leverage the outdoors for learning

## Presentation of Design Options

Mr. Fitzgerald, architect with Dore & Whittier, presented.

### Scenarios being studied

- Hanlon - 90,860 GSF - 315 Students
  - 3 sections per Grade level, WABA Lower, WABA Upper, Focus Program, Language Based Program, 1 Art room, 1 Music room, 12,000 SF Gymnasium.
- Hanlon/Deerfield - 122,388 GSF - 560 Students
  - 5 sections per Grade level, WABA Lower, WABA Upper, Focus Program, Language Based Program, 2 Art rooms, 1 Music Room, 12,000 SF Gymnasium
- Hanlon/Sheehan 136,181 GFS 685 Students
  - 6 sections per Grade level, STAR Lower, STAR Upper, Focus Program, Language Based Program, 2 Art rooms, 2 Music Rooms, 12,000 SF Gymnasium

### Existing conditions:

- Hanlon site - considerations: No parent drop off loop, bus loop is very short, cars backing out into traffic on Gay street, room for expansion: 30 acres of land to the west of the school.
- Sheehan site - considerations: No separate parent drop off loop, inadequate parking, traffic congestion on-site, very limited room for expansion, Wetland buffer at east side of property.

There are 15 options that have been developed. He went through and explained each of the options.

Mr. Bonfatti, from Compass, reviewed the evaluation process

### *Evaluation Criteria Categories*

Education: How well does the option...

- meet education goals of Westwood?

Site: How well does the option...

- maximize on-site parking
- allow for efficient drop off circulation
- 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 sustainability 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: To what extent (if any)...

- does the project go over the baseline cost of the building?

Of the 6-8 options to move forward in March, the Hanlon renovation base repair capital improvement, some add/renovation options and some newly built options need to move forward.

Next Steps: Ms. Parks presented.

- January 2020: Visioning, Options Development and Community Presentations
- February 13, 2020: SBC meeting to review options with cost estimates
- March 2, 2020: Community Presentation - options with cost estimates
- March 20, 2020: SBC vote - Short list of Options and Submission to MSBA
- April-June: Analyze and Develop Preferred Solution & Submission to MSBA

Ms. Parks asked that after the Q & A if the attendees could please go around to view the 15 options. There would be sticky notes that could be placed on each option to get feedback on what people liked, didn't like, or wished to see.

Mr. Mullin opened the forum up to Q & A

Resident had two concerns. His house is across from the Hanlon school. Traffic between 7am-9am is currently jammed up from Washington Street. He used to work at the High School and the traffic jam to get across town at that time and then trying to get into the High School parking lot with the carpoolers trying to drop their children off was very challenging. With a proposal of more students, has the traffic been considered? Also as a former music teacher, the option of 685 students had two art rooms, and one music room. A teacher can't teach all of those sec-

tions with one music room. The MSBA standard includes 2 music rooms with 685 students, including practice rooms as well as performance area. There is a traffic study which is going to continue, when in next rounds of options will get in more detail the traffic issues.

Resident questioned what would happen to the other school building that wasn't included. We will know the cost of what it would take to renovate/build new, then the town would know what that would cost.

Resident had a question with the detail on the traffic study. Going onto the school site or traffic across town with the combined Hanlon/Sheehan, it will be looked at what roads would be impacted in general terms. The design is not at that stage yet, but will once the options are taken to a short list. It was explained that with the Hanlon/Sheehan option, the town would possibly redistrict. It wouldn't make sense to keep the same districting. This redistricting report hasn't been returned yet, but will have more information once received.

Resident had a question about the addition/renovation options. How can that be contained and not be disruptive with students? And exposure to any hazardous materials? There are very strict guidelines with renovations. There would be solid partitions to block off the renovation site. This is very regulated. It will be a disruption to teachers and students, but can make it work. Not as ideal as building a new school building, but can be done.

Resident asked if there is a process to understand location. Is there a process to determine the best location site for new construction? There are more acres at Hanlon site: 40 acres vs 12 acres at Sheehan. Site is only one factor of the evaluation process. No decision has been made. The Sheehan site will only have the 685 student option, Hanlon site can have all three enrollments.

Resident is fond of the Hanlon/Deerfield option. But when breaking down the number of sections per grade -- either 315 students, 560 students, or 685 students -- came out with large class sizes. Ms. Parks explained School Committee class size guidelines by grade. The numbers are looking at the capacity with the enrollment projection. We are using the low end of the class size guidelines. An additional question on whether future development that would impact the enrollment numbers was asked. That information has been factored in. There will be three demographic studies to compare.

Resident commented that most designs, site specific for the Sheehan site, were dropped on the existing site instead of working with the site as it exists. The resident questioned why that was. It was explained that, in this phase, there is only a site-fit test. At the next round, the team will then take a closer look at the site specific layout.

Resident hopes that all students will have an equitable education. Does the MSBA have a percentage or a flat dollar amount for these projects? They will fund a percentage. We won't know until right before the Town Meeting vote in 2021 what that specific percentage will be. It could be as much as 34%, but not thinking this will be it. These 15 options were developed without cost in mind, to facilitate commenting on the building's merits without thinking about cost.

## **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. Jowdy. Seconded by Ms. Lewis.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

**Meeting Adjourned at 8:38pm**

List of Documents and Exhibits Used at Meeting:

- Presentation of Design Options