

WEST STREET SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: April 21, 2016

Location: 10-B West State Street, Senior Center

Members Present: Mark Bail, Chair of the West Street School Building Committee
Emre Evren, Granby School Committee Member
Judith Houle, Interim Superintendent of Schools
Chris Martin, Town Administrator
Jim Morrissey, West Street Building Committee Member
Jim Pietras, Granby School Committee Member
Lynn Snopek-Mercier, West Street Building Committee Member

Absent: Joe Rokowski, Vice Chair, West Street Building Committee
Deborah Barthelette, Principal, West Street Elementary School
Jennifer Fraser-Champagne, Principal East Meadow School
Andrea Kennedy, West Street Building Committee Member
John Libera, Chair of the Granby Finance Committee

Also in attendance: Alan Minkus, Colliers International
Kristian Whitsett, Jones Whitsett Architects (JWA)
Helen Fantini, Jones Whitsett Architects (JWA)
Lawson Wulsin, Jones Whitsett Architects (JWA)
Rachel Loeffler, Berkshire Design Group
Mark Darnold, Berkshire Design Group
Sheryl Stanton, Incoming Superintendent of Schools
John Sullivan, Director of Facilities
Lillian Camus

Mark Bail called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

Approval of February 11, 2016 minutes

Mark Bail reviewed changes to the February 11, 2016 minutes with the Committee.

Motion was made by Jim Morrissey and seconded by Jim Pietras to approve the February 11, 2016 minutes as amended.

Approval of March 17, 2016 minutes

Mark Bail reviewed changes to the March 17, 2016 minutes with the Committee.

Motion was made by Judith Houle and seconded by Emre Evren to approve the March 17, 2016 minutes. Lynn Snopek-Mercier and Jim Pietras abstained.

Colliers

Design Development to Project Closeout Schedule Update

Alan Minkus reviewed the project work plan and accompanying Gantt chart, including the items that are coming up and their due dates. Mr. Minkus would like to have the Committee's June meeting on June 9 so the Committee can vote on any design changes prior to the package being sent to the MSBA.

Emre Evren asked if the dates on the DD Design Phase on the Gantt chart (3/4/16 – 6/14/16) mean the phase is over on June 14. Mr. Minkus noted the date should be 7/14/16 adding there is an overlap between the DD Design Phase and the CD 60% Design Phase.

JWA

Design Development (DD) Schedule Detail Review

Kristian Whitsett reviewed a presentation starting with a summary of recent meetings with teachers and staff (March 30-31), design issues subcommittee (April 6) and Town Department Heads (April 21).

Mr. Whitsett reviewed the recent schematic plan which included changes such as resizing the gym as well as other spaces that will be adjusted as the designs are finalized.

Shared Spaces – Mr. Whitsett reviewed shared spaces changes in the pre-K to K area which included moving them closer to the hallway to facilitate less disruption to the classes.

Lynn Snopek-Mercier asked if the two shared rooms would be to be used by groups other than pre-K and K. Mr. Whitsett indicated his understanding was they would be able to be used by other groups.

Jim Morrissey noted the schematic shows two doors into the lavatories in the pre-K and K shared rooms. Mr. Morrissey asked if that wouldn't create privacy problems. Mr. Whitsett responded with the level of supervision at that grade level there shouldn't be any privacy issues. Mr. Whitsett also noted the teachers thought it was more important to have more sinks than toilets to keep the flow of kids through.

Emre Evren asked if there is space in the back of the stage for actors and stage folks to walk back and forth. Mr. Whitsett responded there will be interior access, behind the curtain.

Emre Evren noted the music space is now at 795 sq. ft. and asked how that compares to other schools. Mr. Whitsett responded the East Meadow music space is about 50-60 ft. larger. Mr. Whitsett added they did speak with the music folks, who were concerned about the size, but it does seem to meet their storage needs. It's not ideal, but it keeps within the square footage allotted.

Emre Evren observed that the Commons area seems to be geared only for the older students. He asked if some of the younger students want to use a Common area would they have to go to that one. Mr. Whitsett responded they would have to go to that area.

Emre Evren noted if we are thinking about the stage in terms of what we have today and the elementary school we are building something that can be used well into the future? In the future there may also be used for larger instruments. Is there storage for them? Mr. Whitsett and Helen Fantini responded the storage are trying to provide enough storage, but that this is not fully supported by the MSBA at this grade level.

Jim Pietras asked if storage has become an issue. Mr. Whitsett noted we are eliminating about 50% of the existing corridor storage closets though the addition of the Shipping/Receiving room is an improvement over existing conditions. Mr. Pietras asked if copy paper would be stored in shipping and receiving. Mr. Whitsett indicated they could be stored in shipping and receiving, as well as in some of the Teacher Planning rooms.

Emre Evren asked if the computer classroom is comparable to what we have today. Mr. Whitsett responded that it is smaller and will be part of the library, but will be divided from the rest of the library. Mr. Evren noted are only thinking of what we know today regarding desktops or laptops. If something such as a smartboard would be added the room wouldn't be big enough. Judith Houle responded she thought the room is big enough, adding that putting up the glass wall allows teachers to also use that space while the library is being used.

Cafeteria - Kristian Whitsett discussed changes in the Cafeteria such as adjustments to the platform for wheelchair access and the flexibility of using the platform as another stage. Other changes included extending the cafeteria closer to the hallway by removing a closet to have enough room for the students.

Student Storage - Mr. Whitsett next discussed storage for student belongings. The cubbies for the lower grades were redesigned so each student has a separate one. The higher grades currently have one large space for their coats and back packs. They are working on devising a grouping of cubbies to replace the one large space.

Berkshire Design Group – Site Development Update

Rachel Loeffler reviewed the current site plan with regard to the playground space. The \$213,000 budget includes two slides, two swings and play surfacing for 460 students. They will utilize dirt which is on-site to create structures for grades 3 to 6, and will be adding a climbing net and wood deck. Sculptural play areas will be created for grades pre-K to 6 which will include a maze and sandbox.

Lynn Snopek-Mercier asked about a climbing net and if it was specifically requested or if it was included because that is what area schools are doing. Ms. Loeffler responded it was suggested as a developmental aid.

Ms. Loeffler went on to review the proposed parking which will be 360 spaces, and is 112 more than current. Ms. Loeffler noted the Department of Transportation's requirement is less than

360. LEED 4.0 requirements include an alternative fueling station, electric charging station or a completely green space.

Jim Morrissey asked how we are going to get to a finished parking area by the time school starts. Ms. Loeffler responded in Phase I we are looking at possibly connecting to Maximillion Drive and keep the current 168 lot for teachers, or other options. Mr. Morrissey indicated the parking lot should be complete before use and not have anyone driving on it before that. The design team is continuing to refine the phasing plans.

Ms. Loffler next discussed the courtyard. There are concerns about noise when the courtyard is in use as well as distractions to kids in the classrooms. Ms. Loffler reviewed three options.

Option 1 would be lawn only. It would cost about \$15,000 and someone would have to mow it.

Option 2 would be to keep both the 12" caliper shade tree and a 6" caliper ornamental tree that are currently in that area. This would still have a lawn. Additions could be "fuzzy" edges, paths and benches. Colorful chairs could be put out there and make a reading area in a central space. John Sullivan expressed a concern over the leaves on the roof and issues if either tree has to be taken down.

Option 3 would be to add a contemplation garden with paths and keep the two trees and grass.

Jim Pietras asked what the size is of the courtyard. Mr. Whitsett responded it is 4,800 square feet. Mr. Minkus noted it is roughly 60 x 80 feet.

Emre Evren noted one of the primary purposes of the courtyard is to provide natural light. If we go with the option with the trees does that cut down the light? Mr. Whitsett responded that it increases the quality of natural light. The shade trees temper the direct light into the classrooms.

Lynn Snopek-Mercier noted she likes all the options and asked if there is a huge cost difference between the options. Ms. Loffler responded that Option 1 is the cheapest and may be a bit more once you remove the two trees, then Option 2 at about \$18,000-\$20,000, and Option 3 at \$20,000 to \$25,000.

Jim Morrissey asked how much we are losing if we start adding various other things that wouldn't be used.

Lynn Snopek-Mercier remarked she is also looking at maintenance along with these options. John Sullivan agreed and discussed issues with noise when mowing the grass and reminded the group of the small maintenance group to take care of these items.

The Committee agreed that Option 2 has the least amount of use area.

Helen Fantini asked Ms. Loffler if there ways are you could make more usable space. Ms. Loffler responded there are ways.

Jim Morrissey responded any of the options are good but would prefer not to have the trees cut down.

Emre Evren asked when they need a decision. Mr. Whitsett responded some direction tonight would be good.

John Sullivan asked how close the large tree is to the school. Ms. Loffler responded the trunk is probably 15 feet away from the building. Mr. Pietras noted in the past the tree has been kept trimmed back to keep it away from the building. Mr. Sullivan noted they will just have to continue to keep it trimmed back.

Emre Evren liked the idea of flipping some of the plans to make more usable space and keep the trees.

John Sullivan said he would be more concerned about weed wackers and mowers getting in and out of the space.

Lynn Snopek-Mercier asked if the area could be mowed before school or after school.

Ms. Loffler asked if anyone has had experience with “no mow” grass. There is a seed mix that maxes out only so far and would only have to be cut once a year.

Lynn Snopek-Mercer that that leaving the area flat with the trees would give the teachers the most option for use of the area.

Judith Houle noted that, having worked in schools that had courtyards, the more you vary vegetation over time it starts to look a mess.

John Sullivan asked if there would be any sprinklers. Mr. Whitsett responded there would not be any sprinklers.

Jim Pietras noted it doesn’t have to totally fall on Mr. Sullivan to maintain the area. It could be parents, projects for kids, or even the master gardeners in town.

Emre Evren recapped that we agree to keep the trees and keep it simple to keep the grass. It would be simple to add benches later.

John Sullivan responded he was thinking of keeping it simple to start and add on something like a winding path later.

Alan Minkus noted other schools are adding large rocks for kids to play on, 2/3 hard surface to 1/3 soft green areas.

The final decision was to proceed with keeping the trees, adding “no-mow” grass, and a winding pathway between the two doors. This keeps the space flexible for future additions or plans.

Mark Darnold discussed the well. The current well has to be moved in order to accommodate construction. Mr. Darnold went on to discuss restrictions and advantages to moving the well.

Mr. Darnold reviewed different timeline scenarios for the well. Worst case scenario is about 1 year. Best case scenario is six to seven months.

Jim Morrissey asked if we can start early. Mr. Whitsett noted the MSBA kept every item separate in the budget that had to do with the well so it could be started early. We have proposals from Berkshire Design Group and others.

Jim Pietras asked what we would have to do to get started.

Alan Minkus and Chris Martin responded that we just received the second and third proposals tonight and haven't had a chance to review them yet.

Emre Evren noted there seem to be some uncertainties with the proposed well. Mark Darnold explained the DEP wants to make sure you have total control over zone 1 before going to zone 2. We can proceed with the first phase very quickly.

Lynn Snopek-Mercier questioned the impact on abutters. Mr. Darnold indicated there might be an impact on part of one person's property.

Emre Evren responded he would like to understand what the impact would be to the area around the school.

Jim Morrissey noted that we need to know if this will affect the budget. Mr. Whitsett responded the construction and design of the well are in the budget. Mr. Minkus added that we don't have inflation built in the budget if the construction start date has to be postponed. Mr. Whitsett noted that there is some flexibility in the phasing plan – so that phase 1 may not impact the existing well.

Kristian Whitsett next discussed the boilers for the building. The proposed mechanical equipment was three boilers – two are dual fuel running on oil or propane. Mr. Whitsett asked to consider the option of going to all propane. Benefits include smaller equipment that is more efficient and easier to maintain. The big con is the cost per gallon fluctuates and you are locked into one fuel.

Jim Pietras asked what other schools are doing. Mr. Whitsett responded it is hard to say as we haven't run across it. Alan Minkus responded their engineers recommend dual fuel.

Emre Evren asked if we budgeted for dual fuel. Mr. Whitsett responded we did budget for dual fuel.

The Committee agreed to keep dual fuel.

Kristian Whitsett next discussed irrigation for the fields which is not included in budget.

Emre Evren asked if the LEED certification would go up with irrigation. Mr. Whitsett responded it would go up without irrigation.

The Committee decided not to add irrigation for the fields.
Kristian Whitsett next discussed future key dates. They are

TBD – Design issues subcommittee meeting
May 12 – School building committee at 6:30 p.m.
May 20 – DD Document to cost estimators
June 7 – Cost Estimate Reconciliation
June 9 – School Building Committee – Approve DD submittal to MSBA
June 14 – Submit DD Package to MSBA

Other Business

None

Next Meeting Date

Thursday, May 12, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. at 10-B West State Street.

Adjournment

Motion made to adjourn by Lynn Snopek-Mercier and seconded by Judith Houle. Approved unanimously and adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lillian Camus, Recording Secretary