



Kevin J. Murphy
City Manager
Michael McGovern
Assistant City Manager

School Building Committee MSBA Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Date: Dec 1, 2016
Time: 10:00AM
Location: Mayors Reception Room, City Hall

1. - Attendance

Attendees: Kevin Murphy, Conor Baldwin, Robert Healy, Mike Vaughn, Brian Martin, Gary Frisch, Richard Underwood, Lisa DeMeo, Steve Gendron.

Also in attendance: Mike McGovern, Rodney Conley

From Skanska: Mary Ann Williams, Jim Dowd

From Perkins Eastman: Alicia Caritano, Robert Bell

2. - Preliminary Design Program Update

K. Murphy commenced the meeting with a general discussion of the City Council presentation that introduced the education plan, visioning and goals overview. The Educational Leadership Team met Nov. 30, 2016. The PDP will be submitted in February so that the educational plan is fully incorporated for the School Committee to approve in January. J. Dowd commented on the SCOG Analysis to incorporate 21 century learning goals into the educational plan.

3 - Visioning/ Goals Overview

K. Murphy commented on the students being the number one strength and a credit to the City. A FFE consultant commented on being impressed with the wonderful feeling on the campus. Lowell High School was the first coeducational high school in Massachusetts. The SCOG Analysis posed an opportunity for a decision to be made. The building can be brought up to code, accessibility standards and the systems can be replaced, but this would not support the educational and visioning goals. K. Murphy stated that the City Council may ask questions related to the line item costs.

4 - Education Program Update

4.1 Programming/ Space Summary

During the 2016-2017 academic year, Lowell had 3,125 students. The design enrolment number is 3,520 students. No significant changes to courses and class sizes were made.

4.2 User Group Meetings

Full day sessions were held on November 15 & 16, 2016. 17 groups discussed the big picture of each program, space requirements, adjacencies, educational aspirations and trends.

4.3 Discussion of Future Design Program Approval

The School Committee will vote on the Educational Plan prior to the PDP submission to the MSBA in February.

5 - Design Options

5.1 Base Repair

The base repair scope summary projections exclude Coburn Hall. The base repair for electrical system is \$26 M that would include new power and security systems throughout the buildings. The 620 sq. ft. requirement is for the projected enrollment of 35,000 students. The four comparisons are based on the square footage and design enrollment numbers. The cost per dollar of square footage is greater than \$1,000. S. Gendron asked if the options don't match the OMR, can the City use eminent domain and take a building to utilize space on the other side of the canal. The projected repair is based on the assumption of \$250M, which seems high but is due to the location. Tight urban spaces with little room to expand make it harder to keep the temporary class rooms on site.

A. Base Repair w/ Small Addition

The base option would not meet educational goals, only repair and maintenance goals. Based on the evaluation of existing conditions, the cost is estimated to be \$231.8M to repair the buildings. S. Gendron asked if the feasibility study is looking into accessing properties. M. Williams stated that it was being looked into but there is no final decision, it would only be used as a last resort. K. Murphy noted that it would not always be beneficial, for example, the assessed damages from Kerouac Park estimated at \$600,000 cost the City \$3.5 M. The MSBA does not cover un-eligible costs such as acquiring property. M. Williams also noted that the option of eminent domain may stall the project and that a City owned property would allow the project to move forward faster.

B. Relocate ¼ of the population into other schools



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This option would not work. G. Frisch commented that there is limited space for the current enrollment, especially at the middle schools.

C. Create temporary modular class rooms using a portion of F. Morrissett Blvd.

This is an option, but it may not be the most feasible. S. Gendron asked if it would be less disruption to the downtown area if a part of Paige St. and Kirk St. were used instead. R. Healy noted that the construction materials and staging would also need to be placed somewhere nearby. K. Murphy stated that the surface of the Tsongas arena parking garage is a possibility. M. Williams noted double sessions may also be an option to have workers working a second shift to not interrupt educational environment. K. Murphy brought up potential issues with union considerations and disasters. M. McGovern noted that the second shift has been used before at other sites from 3:00 PM-11:00PM. L. DeMeo added that this was true in Haverhill, MA. R. Bell noted that this would enable a blocks of space available for surgical construction. This could be difficult for electrical and heating renovations and construction. Off hour construction could increase the cost of the project. Students would also be deeply located in the construction site. S. Gendron asked if there was anywhere the city could rent or build a location for displaced students. He continued that perhaps some classes may be moved to the Freshman Academy building.

D. Create Temporary Modular Classrooms via use of upper Garage level

K. Murphy proposed using the Tsongas Arena or the parking garage by the arena. He continued that he can speak to the University. He also noted that the top floor of the garage is normally full and may cause some disruption. S. Gendron suggested looking into alternative locations, not just in the down town area. L. DeMeo noted that the West Campus at UML may have room. K. Murphy asked if any schools were available. Perhaps the St. Louis School. It was noted by M. Williams that a high level of consideration is being placed into what locations may be available for a phased renovation. The Educational Plan will need to be built to configure any swing space utilized. B. Martin stated that each option will cost money, and asked if there was a general idea of what the cost may be for a swing space. He continued that it may help give a better decision considering financials. M. Williams noted that the costs would depend on the amount of time and the percent of the class that will be displaced. A three year phasing would require approximately 25% of unencumbered space. An existing space that is owned by the City or Schools would help cut costs. Investing in a space would have long term benefits to the City, but costs more upfront. M. Williams stated that the OPM and design team will make the number work for the City.

If the design team builds on site, more students can move into the newly constructed area. This space can be used instead of modular class rooms as swing space. The financial analysis will include accusation cost v. modular swing space cost.

M. Vaughn suggested using the field house to house students, and use the existing space in the building as swing space. The Phasing costs may off set the additional construction costs. Decreasing the construction time would be beneficial to the City's debt service. S. Gendron suggested building a new field house a Cawley Stadium and tear down the existing field house. This raised the PE v. athletics issue. B. Martin stated that the focus should be more on programming not over the building. Coburn Hall can be changed into dance classes. If more swing space is needed, B. Martin stated that the School Department would make it work; they are committed to this project. Sharing classes or shrinking square footage in current classrooms are options.

M. Williams noted that the OPM and design team engaged others through the educational group to review options. She continued that providing information and input helps the OPM and design team generate more engaged and efficient options. J. Drown noted that the physical options for the design will be vetted in advance. Members of different organizations, groups and schools will be considered. The collective input gathered through community outreach will help vet options. S. Gendron, representing the School Committee is on the ELT team with R. Howe and B. Martin. M. Williams suggested a collective date that works for everyone involved, perhaps Wednesday at 1:00 PM. M. Williams continued, reactions from the design options will be used to utilize resources available.

6 - Renovation with Rebuild of FA. Gym and Portion of Lord Building (requires temporary PE/ Athletics)

PE would need to be held off site for one year or more. During the short duration of construction, PE would still be required. In Winchester, the OPM noted that the school switched their PE to focus on yoga and Pilates. The gymnasium was off line for one year, but it helped decrease construction time.

7 - Renovation of Freshman Academy, Gymnasium and Lord Building.

A large portion of the Lord building would have classes without exterior daylight. The design team noted that they would save as much natural light as they could.

8 - New Construction Existing Site



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The existing location size is 3.2 acres; the gross square footage is 575,000. The design team is exploring this as a scenario.

9 - New Construction Site

The difference between all new construction and a full renovation with a small addition is that the renovation would leave the shell of the building. Renovating the 1920 building is an option that may pose challenges to phasing. The new school would be a great option, but the question is what to do with the displaced students. The phasing and square feet are variables that will be provided in terms of financial cost to the SBC. B. Martin noted it is hard to justify spending \$230M on a building and not know from the outside that the money was invested in the building. B. Martin inquired about the number of stories that are being considered for the 1980 building. R. Bell stated that there is no limit as it is unrestricted. In order to help minimize safety costs, the design team will try to limit the number of floors so that the building is not considered a high rise. It may be more expensive for over two stores. A possibility is to access the site next to the School, which is currently a dentist office. It would be more cost effective to have 2-3 floors with less roof space.

B. Budget Implications of Options

M. McGovern started the discussion of progress so far. Soon, the OPM and design team will be able to give the SBC options with financial scenarios. M. Williams noted that the key to each scenario is the cost. R. Underwood asked what the value is of the dentist office. It is possible for the City to begin talks with the owner, to see if they would want to move. S. Gendron asked what the cost would be if the City used eminent domain. This could impact the time factor. A POS could result in an outrageous number resulting from a bargaining ploy. The option of a land swap opportunity will be discussed. S. Gendron asked if the City made a generous offer before the information is released to the public. The amount to acquire property is not reimbursable by the MSBA. Modular class rooms are also not reimbursable. There may be a tradeoff that is ultimately paid by taxpayers.

R. Bell wanted to clarify that the meeting will discuss visible options without cost and that some may be better than others. Without definite scope, costs will be estimated. A detailed cost analysis will be given in the spring.

C. Analysis of Sites/ Selection

J. Dowd discussed the 15 criteria that the selected sites were analyzed on. A key factor is the number of acres.

Existing HS Location

The existing site is in close proximity to services, transportation and parking. The site is also already owned by the City. There are potential environmental issues with construction on the existing site. The site is also limited in space.

Cawley Stadium

The site has 31 usable acres, which is large enough for the project and is city owned. The location does not have close proximity to services and transportation. J. Drown noted that the maximum site cost that the MSBA reimburses is up to 8%. This would include bringing in utilities, parking and lighting. 6 acres are required for parking alone for seniors and staff. The design team noted that they could build around the football field. M. McGovern discussed the criteria. There may be a large debate with the general public regarding moving the high school out of the down town area. He noted that a public discussion should be set up. The December 8 meeting can be used to provide the public with the top three sites selected by the SBC.

Wang MS/ LeBlanc Park

The site has 31 usable acres and is city owned. The site is not in close proximity to services or transportation.

South Common Park

The site is in close proximity to services and transportation. There are land use restrictions and the usable acreage is 2.3 acres. Approximately \$1M in grant funding has been invested into this park to improve the space. Appealing to the legislature may be easier said than done. The OPM has had an experience with this in Westfield where the project was held for 5 years. R. Underwood stated that the project may shrink and that the reimbursement may as well. B. Martin asked what the next step would be. R. Underwood asked if the change in perception is what we would want to do. B. Martin noted that the neighborhoods want the High School to be downtown. It was also noted by the design team that the land is dedicated in deed as park land.

Regatta Field



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The usable acreage on the site is 19 acres. There area is a Flood Plain and is owned by MA DOT. There are also wetlands that divide the site. The site offers limited proximity to services.

Rollie's Farm

The site is zoned correctly for the building. Usable acres, however, only total 11.18 acres. The land is privately owned and has limited access to services and transportation.

Carlisle St

Property is City owned and has the usable acreage. The lot is in Chelmsford with limited access to services and transportation.

Discussion

The SBC has determined that the existing location, Cawley stadium and the Wang MS. LeBlanc Park. South Common, Regatta Field, Rollie's Farm and Carlisle St fall short in acreage and ownership. R. Healy noted that the top three options would demonstrate to the MSBA that alternative site locations have been considered. It will be worth looking into both Cawley Stadium and Wang MS/ LeBlanc Park be vetted further. It would be beneficial to look into the transportation of students across the city bridges commuting to both alternative locations.

Vote

M. Vaughn noted that the PDP due diligence requires the SBC to select the top three sites. He suggested that the SBC vote on the possible locations.

R. Healy motioned that the SBC endorse the three most favorable sites: Existing HS location, Cawley Stadium, and Wang MS/ LeBlanc Park for more information. Seconded by G. Frisch. All in favor, so voted.

6 - Community Outreach

6.1 Update on Neighborhood Meetings

K. Murphy noted that the City Council was under the impression that the repair would only cost \$231M and was surprised. The City Council will vote for a loan order in the

amount necessary once a final location is chosen. G. Frisch inquired about the local share of \$100M. C. Baldwin noted that the tax rate will increase \$174/average single family home. M. McGovern stated that the reality of the project is that it will be the only major project in the city for the next decade. This is due to the limited capacity to issue debt while keeping taxes level. C. Baldwin discussed the capital plans for the city including street and sidewalk improvements as well as additional ongoing projects such as the canal bridges. R. Healy noted that any major improvements to the Police Department would be off the table. B. Martin stated that real estate value may improve with the new school, which may help to balance costs. The goal at the moment is to achieve the educational process designed. If only improvements are done which could cost \$230M, the City may then be required to invest in a new high school in the next decade. S. Gendron asked about the 80% reimbursement from the MSBA for the new high school. M. McGovern noted that it is 70% now, and may drop in the future. B. Martin stated it will be easier to look at the dollar figures once the analysis is concluded. R. Healy noted that the ineligible costs will also need to be stated. R. Conley stated that the reimbursement rate is currently 65-70%.

6.2 12/8 Community Meeting Presentation Review

The range of cost for the feasibility allows the SBC to weigh options until there is a strong reason to remove options. S. Gendron asked if the MSBA would be satisfied with this. M. McGovern noted that the top three sites should be shared with the City Council, School Committee and the public. B. Martin suggested that it may be best to consider investing in each of the three top sites. R. Healy stated that direction and fine tuning is needed. S. Gendron thought it would be important to inform the public of the 8% reimbursement for the site. M. Williams spoke about the December 8, 2016 meeting being an opportunity to inform the community. M. McGovern noted that adding 8% as a con to the sites that includes bringing more services into the sites. M. Williams said that Perkins Eastman will add the information collected from the meeting in the next presentation.

6.3 Website Development Update

The City is working with a vendor that is creating a new city website. For the moment, a landing page will be created for the High School Project. Once the city site is live, the vendor will begin working on a separate site for the High School Project. The website will have the meeting minutes, presentations and a list of the SBC members.



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The next meeting will be January 5, 2017.

R. Healy motioned to adjourn, seconded by M. Vaughn.



Heather Varney



HEATHER VARNEY
Notary Public
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
My Commission Expires Oct. 2, 2020