



Kevin J. Murphy
City Manager
Michael McGovern
Assistant City Manager

School Building Committee MSBA Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Date: March 2, 2017
Time: 10:00AM
Location: Mayor's Conference Room

1. - Attendance

Attendees: Kevin Murphy, Conor Baldwin, Maryann Ballotta, David Beati, Lisa DeMeo, Rodney Elliott, Gary Frisch, Steve Gendron, Brian Martin, Jay Mason, William Samaras, and Richard Underwood.

Also in attendance: Mike McGovern and Rodney Conley.

From Skanska: Jim Dowd, Mary Ann Williams and Dale Caldwell.

From Perkins Eastman: Robert Bell, Joe Drown and Alicia Caritano.

2. - Introduction

M. Williams began the discussion by describing the Preliminary Design Program (PDP) document. It compiles all the reports, activities, research and information from public meetings regarding the LHS project. She referred to J. Drown who stated that the PDP is a combination of the past months work including the Educational Plan, Space Program, site locations as well as the budget. He noted that the document is a way for the MSBA to be brought up to speed quickly.

3. - Educational Program

R. Bell discussed the Educational Program and different aspects of the report including grade and school configuration, class size policies, school scheduling, teaching methodology and structure, teacher planning and room assignment, food service programs, technology program requirements, art programs, music and performing arts programs, physical education, special education, vocational education, transportation, security and other programs. He noted that the goal is to cluster STEM and Humanities classes. The design team stressed the emphasis on flexibility and adaptability of rooms for large, small and one on one groups. The food service program will change from four times to three, including a breakfast. Another goal is to create mobile computer labs rather than dedicated computer labs, enabling the entire school wireless access. R. Bell noted that the art, music and physical education rooms will be requested to be larger than the MSBA normally approves, but he believes that the design team can prove that the

design is needed to accommodate large class sizes. R. Bell continued that the Educational Program will shift the special education towards autism classrooms. He also noted that the special education program would be approved by the DESE. R. Bell discussed the pathways regarding planning the space so it is appropriate for learning and sustaining education. The transportation piece details the number of students who get dropped off, drive or walk to school. The design team has developed a safety and access control plan for visible entries as well as simplifying circulation; both of which will be discussed in workshops at upcoming phases.

M. McGovern asked if the Educational Program fit better to any particular site options, specifically between the existing site and the Cawley site. R. Bell replied that it is still early in the process, and that there are challenges and compromises for each location. In the existing location, there would be a challenge to cluster STEM and humanities classes as well as the auditorium, athletics and media center. This would not impede the educational program but it would not fit as well as it may with a newly designed building. M. McGovern asked if all educational program requirements would be met with options two and three. R. Bell noted that the goals of the educational program are not mandatory requirements; there are compromises that would be made regarding the goals in a renovation project. G. Frisch asked if the design team would be able to quantify as a percentage how the new site, option 2 and 3 would meet the educational program. R. Bell noted that this may be abstract; it is easier to point out what will not be met by each option which was already provided in the presentations. B. Martin inquired about support systems that would go with the educational plan. R. Bell noted it is an integral part of the decision process, there will always be compromises and the decision will include which programs are most valuable to the school. W. Samaras stated he had heard that architects are building based on current trends. He asked if option 3 may be built to conform to the educational plan similar to Cawley. R. Bell stated that there is no absolute answer; an addition/renovation may meet more of the educational requirements. There is also the inherent benefit of the renovation is the attached building and its historic value. This is an important part of the evaluation that will come from the community. There may be aspects of the plan that may be better met than others; R. Bell noted that the team can try to articulate clearer what is met for each option. W. Samaras asked about teachers not having ownership of classrooms. Although teachers would commute to rooms, they would have a desk that is all their own. S. Gendron asked the design team if it is difficult for any site to meet all of the educational goals based on reimbursement and costs as well as issues at Cawley. R. Bell replied that it is difficult and that it may be easier to meet all requirements if the buildings were adjusted to five stories. W. Samaras noted it is important to get the right information distributed to the public that clearly expresses each stage the project is currently in. M. Williams commented on progression, the process will drill down more and more before the study is completed to find a final solution. S. Gendron



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asked if wireless infrastructure is a high priority. R. Bell replied that it is, wireless access is a significant objective. He continued that the design team will not focus on trends but flexibility so that the building can accommodate current and evolving teaching styles over time. R. Elliott asked that given the information, at this point, does any location have the ability to meet 100% of the educational program. R. Bell replied that there may be a challenge in stating any one site meets 100% of the educational plan as each location has different amenities such as fields and access to the downtown. He continued that there may have to be a weight allocated to each for the final decision. The community and school district will need to weigh goals; this is something that the architect firm cannot do. For example, the educational plan clusters fine arts together in a new construction. The same can still be done with a renovation except it would utilize existing space. B. Martin discussed the benefit of the downtown location for humanities courses in close proximity to the local government center. He also mentioned interns at local businesses and synergies between the school and downtown community. J. Mason inquired as to the balance between the educational program weighs against the benefits to the city that are not covered in the program. R. Bell stated that this is a gray area; the Educational Plan is not a check list, but rather a list of goals that enrich connections. J. Drown commented on the close proximity enabling easier communication and the need to recognize a solution. S. Gendron commented on the size of the auditorium, asking if the new construction would be similar in size to the current auditorium. R. Bell noted that the MSBA sets a cap of 750 seats, which is eclipsed by the current 3,000 seat auditorium. He continued that there will be difficult choices, but as of right now the team assumes that they will build a pool and auditorium.

4. - Initial Space Summary

R. Bell discussed the space summary description including calculating fewer students per classroom. He stated that the MSBA normally does not fund the entire 5,000 sq. ft. that is included in the PDP, but due to the class sizes it seems necessary. He continued that the DESE will step in to assess the Autism class space summary. The athletic facility requests 8,000 sq. ft. for a pool and 6,000 sq. ft. for gym space. The administrative space requested is 4,000 sq. ft., which is also over the normal approval by the MSBA. Other spaces total 8,000 sq. ft. R. Bell noted that the form may not measure needs, so the design team will be ready to make a case for the additional space required to the MSBA. G. Frisch asked if the state came up with requirements based on smaller schools. R. Bell replied it was a mix between smaller and similar sized schools.

5. - Evaluation of Existing Conditions

A. Caritano discussed the evaluation of existing conditions. She reiterated that the report only focused on the interior and exterior of the existing site. She noted that there are some restrictions

on the site for the historical building. In the next level, there will be tests performed to measure initial hazardous conditions and explore the foundation for more information. The phase one environmental tests includes the mills and the railroads, which are scheduled to take places during the PSR Phase. The geotechnical tests will also be scheduled, now that the sites have been narrowed down to two. W. Samaras inquired to how hazardous materials found behind the walls can be controlled so that the children are safe. A. Caritano stated that there are protocols in place for this kind of situation. It is difficult to know what the expected costs are for this kind of project until more testing is completed. R. Elliott inquired to the results of testing done to date and what has been found. A. Caritano summarized the preliminary results that included hazardous materials in caulking, sealant, glue dubs, blackboards, as well as the stage fire curtain. A boring and water sample will be taken to find out what was processed in the mills in phase two. The design team hopes to have the information by the end of April to help the SBC make a final decision. M. McGovern stated that the City will coordinate with the School Department when it will be easiest to do the testing, whether over school vacation, over night or on the weekend. M. Williams stated that some of the costs are built into the budget as contingencies, but they are limited. S. Gendron expressed his concern that people will come into contact with materials. A. Caritano replied that the design team will deal with the construction site, ensuring no students are harmed during construction. J. Drown noted that Perkins Eastman has worked on a number of additional/ renovation school projects and that the team has experience with regulating air pressure and protocols in place to protect students. M. McGovern stated that the next phase will also look into addressing wetlands as well as endangered species. Although these issues will not prevent a site from being developed, it is important to have a topographical survey and to flag the wetlands. J. Drown discussed a situation in which there were endangered species on a site for another municipality, in which the design team designed the building around the turtles so that the school and animals can cohabitate. K. Murphy noted that the long eared bat is the endangered species at the Cawley site. The bald eagle is an endangered species noted for the downtown site. S. Gendron commented on the Cawley site being a wetland, with a high water table that may impact the neighborhood. A. Caritano replied that the boring sample will help the design team understand the hydrology with regards to the water level. M. McGovern commented that the Conservation Commission has rules and specifications that may apply to the location. L. DeMeo stated that the engineering department can research and provide a recommendation pertaining to the water issues. She continued that there are no regulations covering ground water as there is no way to tell which way the water is going. Construction may have an impact on current flow patterns but it is hard to determine this up front. Surface runoff water is covered by both City and state regulations.

6. - Site Development Requirement



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The PDP submission includes the existing site, existing expanded site and the Cawley site. The requirements include parking, paving, emergency access, utilities, zoning requirements, and building orientation for each site. Utilities for each site include water, storm and sewer. The building orientation in the existing building is north and south. There is more flexibility in an addition/renovation as well as the new site. R. Bell noted that the Cawley site does pertain to Article 97, more information was provided in the appendices report.

7. - Preliminary Evaluation of Alternatives

The high school design includes grades 9 through 12; information on this is included in the analysis of school district assignment practices. There is no tuition of rental acquisition agreements pertaining to the project. The base repair option, which is a required assessment, indicates that the City would pay for 70% of the costs. The evaluation and conclusions for sites lists all the pros and cons for each site that have been presented over the course of the meetings. M. McGovern stated that the Board of Parks is scheduled to meet Wednesday March 8th, at 6:00 PM. J. Mason commented on the rental and acquisition of buildings, as it pertains to taking the dentist office. R. Bell stated that typically the MSBA looks into the rental of space, but the design team will look into this further. S. Gendron inquired to the effect of Article 97, and whether the fields at South Common may have been replicated as well. At the Cawley site, the softball and field hockey fields were in the process of designing replicated fields. The first initial discussion on replicating the fields on site has begun. The design team will continue to work with the landscape architect to replicate the fields individually. D. Beati inquired if there is an effort to acquire the land from behind Market Basket to replicate the fields across the street through purchase of the property or lease. M. McGovern stated that without taking the existing fields, the building would not fit on the site. It was easiest to design the parking to be over the Tewksbury town line, in terms of zoning and permitting. S. Gendron commented on the parking spaces available at each site. M. Williams stated that there are 624 spaces utilized downtown. She confirmed that the team will also investigate the parking further. B. Martin discussed the number of students who are dropped off, walk and drive to school. The stadium is seasonally used, and inquired to having enough space for all the kids in the spring and fall.

8. - Local Actions and Approvals

M. McGovern stated that it was clear in the City Council packet that the scheduled presentation to the MSBA would be June 28, 2017. Skanska and Perkins Eastman are scheduling mid may, approximately the 18th, for submission of the PSR. The SBC will vote for a preferred option and recommend the option to the City Council in late April or early May. Ideally, the SBC will be presented with the information and the City Council will receive the information on acquired during this phase of the feasibility study. M. McGovern stated if the project is delayed and the

PSR is submitted to the MSBA in August, so be it. He continued that it is important that the discussion on the feasibility information take place. He reiterated that there has been discussion on a one month delay costing an additional \$1.5 million, but compared to the \$350 million that the project will cost it is worth ensuring that everyone is comfortable with the decision to move the process forward. G. Frisch asked if the City needs to know if the dentist office may be purchased or if Article 97 would affect the process. M. Williams replied that if Cawley was chosen by the SBC and the City Council, the city can proceed with the process even if Article 97 is not concluded. It would be ideal to solve the issue prior to the Schematic Design, as the project would be halted otherwise. The Schematic Design will be completed in the fall. J. Mason asked if the same would hold true for option 3, expanded existing site; would the City need to know if the property can be acquired within the same time frame. M. Williams replied that the same conditions apply; the City would need to have possession of the site. It would be impossible to continue beyond the schematic design if the City does not control the site. She stated that the OPM and architects would continue to study the four options. The options will need to be narrowed down to one preferred option by May. S. Gendron asked if prior to the vote that the SBC would receive viable information about Article 97 and the acquisition. He continued, asking if there was an ability to choose full renovation and then expand to the acquired site if it becomes available. M. Williams stated that the scope and budget are approved by the MSBA for the December 14th meeting. She also mentioned that there may be consequences for stopping the process. R. Underwood asked if there were any talks with the dentist office. G. Frisch inquired to eminent domain as it has not been voted on. The land taking would need a City Council 2/3 vote to pass. B. Martin asked if the SBC would not just have one abstract discussion focused on the entire community. He continued that this is a large project that will have a significant impact on the community. B. Martin stated that the Mayor mentioned outreach to hear what each group and neighborhood had to say. He specifically commented on the Latino and South East Asian communities, which will have meetings scheduled at the CMMA and CBA.

9. - Appendices

J. Drown discussed the appendices by summarizing the topics. He then discussed the schedule for the SBC and the timeline presented pertaining to the PSR. The SBC will tentatively vote to approve the PSR report on May 4th, which will then be sent to the City Council for a vote on May 9th. By May 18th, the PSR will be submitted to the MSBA for review. M. Williams stated that either the 24th of May or the 7th of June there will be a meeting with the MSBA to prepare for the board meeting on June 28th. A. Caritano noted where the project is today in terms of refining plans, phasing conditions downtown/ possibilities that can or cannot be done, ongoing existing conditions testing, traffic study, hazmat investigation as well as excavations. The



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existing conditions are $\frac{3}{4}$ completed, with the geotechnical test to be coordinated with the City.
The excavations will include the color of the soil as well as subsurface water.

R. Conley mentioned that the correct estimated cost for modular classrooms is temporary physical education for option 2 and no modular requirements for option 3. B. Martin mentioned that the current computer labs can be used for additional programming space if needed. The next ELT meeting is March 8, 2017 at 1:00 PM. The next SBC meeting in April will be informational, with the May meeting including a vote.

J. Mason motioned to adjourn, seconded by W. Samaras.

Notes taken and certified by:




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