



School Facilities Review Committee
Monday, October 3, 2016
5:30 P.M.
City Hall, City Manager's Conference Room

Chair Dennis Slopak called the meeting to order at 5:31 PM.

Committee Members Present: Mayor Debercy Hinchey, Business Administrator Athena Nagel, Alderwoman Joanne Philbrick, Board of Education Member, City Manager John Salomone and Committee Chair Dennis Slopak, and Facilities Supervisor Dolores Thayer

Committee Members Excused: Superintendent Abby Dolliver, Board of Education Member Angelo Yeitz and Comptroller Joshua Pothier

Others Present: Alderwoman Stacy Gould, Recording Secretary Marixsa Romanella, and a number of citizens

Determination of Quorum: It was determined a quorum was present.

Prior Meeting Minutes: On a motion by John Salomone seconded by Athena Nagel, the minutes of August 8, 2016 were unanimously approved. Discussion of minutes – Dennis Slopak pointed to the second page regarding a motion made by Abby Dolliver to accept the final recommendation as presented and seconded by the committee. Dennis Slopak mentioned the word recommendation should not be there, it should read as report as all that was done was accept the report and not the recommendation. A motion to amend the minutes was asked by Joanne Philbrick, motion was second by Athena Nagel. Mayor Hinchey abstained as she was not present at the last meeting. A question was asked by Joanne Philbrick as to whether someone not present at the meeting can vote to approve meeting minutes. Joanne Philbrick was not present at the last meeting and therefore a motion to amend the approval of the prior meeting minutes was presented by John Salomone and Athena Nagel seconded the motion. A vote to accept the motion was approved.

Citizen Comment: Gabe Litman – stated she is confused about the continued dialog about the push to the super school plan. She was referring to a report given on the September 4th meeting by Mr. Slopak. Committee voted to pursue the idea of renovating 4 existing schools which is option B provided in the report by JCJ Architecture. It recommends using existing buildings, additionally the committee did state that it was unsure of the location of its administrative offices with this new plan. However, in section 7 of the report it clearly states that Huntington School is hands down the best locations for those offices. Another concern listed in the report with these schools being renovated the schools populations will top out at 620 give or take which directly opposes sound education research that clearly recommends urban districts like Norwich should tap out at 450. The back and forth on these issues only add to public confusion about what direction this committee is taking for public education in our town. We need a clear and specific direction as we make changes that will impact this community for generations to come. She provided a report about school on configurations as this committee moves forward with a direction. It's a brief report done by NPR Education.

Susan Blinderman – In June she wrote a statement prepared by the Norwich Teachers League expressing concerns with the work of the school review committee. One of their major concerns was the lack of input from the public schools faculties and staff. She is disappointed at being denied a seat at the committee table and have a voice in the discussions that will decide the future of our work as teachers in Norwich School system. As a result of that report being read the School Building Facilities committee appeared to be open to include teachers and staff members that work in the schools. After repeated requests it has now been discovered there are not available seats on the committee is full. They are confused as to why it was offered to be included when people in the room should know or do know how the committees are run, the policies and procedures such as appointments for committees.

Dennis Slopak stated that he was not aware of this until receiving an email a day or two ago about Gabe's request. Mayor Hinchey was asked to provide information as she was copied. Mayor Hinchey stated she did some research and read a resolution and stated that there was no vacancy on the committee as the resolution stated. Dennis Slopak stated after receiving the report that the committee would be expanded to include said people. Mayor Hinchey replied that a resolution must come before the City Council. Joan Philbrick stated that at the next agenda setting she will propose a resolution.

Joyce Werden – commented that it makes no sense to build a school, to make decisions about a school without teacher input. Would like a process that teachers will have input in the future.

New Business:

- Review of Meeting with DAS

Dennis read bullet points on information the study as well as the plan the committee was discussed and things like computers will not be covered. There will be a referendum in November of 2017 the state must be notified of the result by November 15th of 2017.

- Discussion of format for NPS staff meetings regarding the re-design

Will have to be taken up with Abby, it was discussed with Abby but there has not been a decision on who and how. This will be postponed until a discussion with Abby takes place.

- Update on lost opportunities for doing nothing

Athena Nagel - Not all are fiscal cost or educational costs. Most are fiscal structural related so those are cost we will have to incur if something is not done. There are also educational costs such as lack of space for expanding student needs.

Old Business: None

Adjournment: On a motion by Athena Nagel seconded by Mayor Hinchey, the meeting adjourned at 5:53 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Marixsa Romanella
Recording Secretary