

School Building Committee (2020)
Regular Meeting
City Hall Room 335
100 Broadway
And Virtually via ZOOM
Tuesday May 17, 2022
6:30 PM

Committee Members Present: Chairman Mark Bettencourt (ZOOM), Alderwoman Stacy Gould, President Pro Tem Joe DeLucia, William Hull, Peter Gauthier (ZOOM), Gregory Carabine, Cindy Beauregard (ZOOM), Mark Kulos (ZOOM) and Christine DiStasio (ZOOM).

Committee Members Absent: Mark Adams and Gregory Ballassi.

Ex-Officio Members Present: Mayor Peter Nystrom (ZOOM).

Citizens Present: None.

I. Call to Order and Quorum: Alderwoman Stacy Gould called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

II. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meetings: Christine DiStasio made a motion to approve the April 19, 2022 regular meeting minutes. Chairman Mark Bettencourt seconded. The chairman called the roll of members present and all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Update by DRA representatives Jim Barrett and/or Greg Smolley: Gregory Smolley asked members their positive and negative thoughts regarding the April 26th Public Information Session. President Pro Tem DeLucia stated he felt there was a great presentation and material provided, there was just not the desired level of turnout. Jim Barrett stated he felt the video recording of the meeting would assist in knowledge exposure. William Hull stated public relations needed to be increased to encourage turnout and suggested bringing the presentation to other groups in order to build momentum. Gregory Smolley suggested structuring the July Public Information Session in that way opposed to inviting the public to a single location. Discussion ensued regarding presentation options and future plans. Gregory Carabine asked when DRA would need direction on how to move forward. Gregory Smolley responded that the goal would be for the Committee to make a decision on the number of schools, without a cost analysis, that evening.

Gregory Smolley showcased a map of the site evaluations which included population centers. Gregory Smolley explained that DRA looked at how three elementary school

sites and two middle schools could work the most effectively, while including a transition service and administration building. Gregory Smolley explained this would include the Huntington School Administration Center, Stanton Elementary School, Moriarty Elementary School, Teachers Middle School and Kelly Middle School, as well as the consideration of Golden Street, Franklin Street and Ox Hill Road as new sites. Gregory Smolley stated the size of each school in a three school system functions better educationally than the size of each school in a four school system.

Gregory Smolley discussed the comparisons between the conceptual programs of 525 students with a 74,000 square feet required and 700 students with a 95,000 square feet required.

Gregory Smolley discussed the existing elevations and wetlands on the Moriarty Elementary School. Gregory Smolley discussed potential development options.

Gregory Smolley stated renovating the building would be more costly than a conventional floor plan. Gregory Smolley stated a new classroom wing would be required to run parallel to the existing classroom wing 'B' with a new gymnasium in the rear, after demolishing the existing classroom wing in that area. Gregory Smolley discussed options for building a new school on the site, which had benefits in regards to student displacement during construction. Gregory Smolley stated the proposed new two-story building would be constructed on the existing ballfield.

Gregory Smolley continued that the proposal would be to demolish the existing school building and put the ballfield in its place, which would allow for the addition of a new rectangular field, additional parking, and a proper drop off loop for buses and parents.

Gregory Smolley stated that the Stanton Elementary School had a relatively large site but included adjacent wetlands and topography with 2-5% slopes. Gregory Smolley stated an option for the site included building a single story school backing up on the existing playfield and 2-5% slope area. Gregory Smolley stated that after investigating it was determined the wetlands at the Stanton stie would not be an issue. Gregory Smolley stated the plan would utilize as much of the existing parking as possible but would limit the playfield area around the site. Gregory Smolley discussed building a two story school on the site with the same footprint suggested for Moriarty Elementary. Gregory Smolley stated a two story school would provide room to configure parking to allow for slightly larger playfields and drop off loop. Gregory Smolley noted the positive location of the Uncas Elementary School site. Gregory Smolley detailed the existing parking layout and slopes on the site. Gregory Smolley discussed options regarding increasing size of existing buildings in comparison to potential pick up and drop off numbers. Gregory Smolley showed the option of rebuilding the two story school further back into the slope on the site to provide expansion of the lower field around the building. Gregory Smolley stated this option would provide potential for Elizabeth Street Extension to be straightened out, if desired. Gregory Smolley noted this option would also allow for better parking and a large drop off loop.

Gregory Smolley concluded that all three schools discussed were workable options. Gregory Smolley stated when determining what sites to develop further the decision should be based on location relative to population.

Gregory Smolley stated DRA developed options for potential new sites with input from the committee and Pat McLaughlin of Public Works.

Gregory Smolley stated the Ox Hill Road site is geographically undesirable as it is far from the population area that the committee is looking to serve. Gregory Smolley stated the site also has a fair amount of topography with slopes greater than 5%.

Gregory Smolley stated there would be a lot of site work involved to develop an elementary school.

Gregory Smolley stated the Golden Street site is an ideal location for a school and has existing undeveloped right of ways that could be developed to offer relief to roads in the area. Gregory Smolley noted that the site did have slopes greater than 5%. Gregory Smolley showcased a two story test fit with the school situated on the top of the ridge with a crossing road from Golden Street to Boswell Avenue, that included space for parking and bus drop offs. Gregory Smolley stated the test fit included playfields adjacent to the early childhood section of the proposed building and on the flat below the building.

Gregory Smolley stated the Franklin Street site was close to the center of population growth but was also closer to a commercial district than is ideal. Gregory Smolley discussed the layout and topography of the site.. Gregory Smolley discussed a three floor school and parking lot on site. Gregory Smolley discussed a typical urban school layout that could accommodate a play area on the roof of the building.

Gregory Smolley discussed the site criteria comparisons based on a 700 student model.

Gregory Smolley stated the project timelines would be based on how many existing and how many new sites would be utilized. Gregory Smolley based on conversations with the superintendent's office DRA developed a 350 student lower and upper grade alignment proposal. Gregory Smolley stated there would be enough sites to choose from even if a four school model was selected.

Christine DiStasio noted concerns for busing students from Veterans Elementary School to the new proposed sites. Gregory Smolley stated the existing site of Veterans Elementary School is too small and the acquisition of property would add funding and time onto the project. Gregory Smolley stated that was something that is typically avoided unless there is greater land development potential in the area. Mayor Nystrom discussed potential flooding issues for the Franklin Street site and noted that the Golden Street site offered a unique opportunity. Discussion ensued regarding moving forward with a three or four facility proposal. Mark Kulos asked if there was any advantage on the number of schools in regards to reimbursement from state funding. Gregory Smolley responded that the cost differential begins to show in the time value of money and how long it takes to construct all of the buildings. Gregory Smolley stated the easiest facilitation would be building new schools on the sites and demolishing the existing schools.

Gregory Smolley discussed a two phase project approach over a seven year time

span. Gregory Smolley stated the end of Phase 1 is projected for 2025 and discussed interest as well as budget based increase. Gregory Smolley discussed options for moving students during construction phases. Gregory Smolley also discussed a three phase approach over a ten year time span, which would extend operational costs. Gregory Smolley stated three windows of time could be logistically difficult, with four windows being more feasible. Gregory Smolley stated the renovation of Huntington to an administrative building would be the final consideration. Mark Kulos noted he did not see allocation for adult education. Gregory Smolley stated the inclusion of that would be needed. Discussion ensued on hosting adult education in Huntington Elementary School. President Pro Tem Joe DeLucia stated that due to the scope and scale of the project there would likely be multiple referendums required. Jim Barrett stated it was important to show the overarching concept as a master plan that identifies dollar amounts for the breakdown of the project. Discussion ensued on potential options and project histories. Gregory Smolley discussed the accuracy of cost estimating in relation to true pricing and stated that DRA was typically very close in their pricing projections.

V. Discussion and action on the report as needed:

Mayor Peter Nystrom asked if the phase schedules included the two year notice post referendum required to the state School Construction Grant Program. Gregory Smolley responded that they did. Discussion ensued regarding the direction to give to DRA.

William Hull made a motion to instruct Drummey Rosane Anderson, Inc to proceed in developing a four elementary school facility school system plan for further review, that would include the incorporation of Moriarty, Stanton and Uncas elementary schools, as well as a new facility to be developed on the former Greenville Elementary school site. Gregory Carabine seconded.

President Pro Tem DeLucia discussed waiting to decide on further studying a three of four school program following the upcoming public information session. Mark Bettencourt stated he would also be interested in further studying both options. Discussion ensued on what approach to take in order to give the public one suggested direction at the public information session.

William Hull reiterated his motion, to which Gregory Carabine seconded.

Alderswoman Stacy Gould, President Pro Tem Joe DeLucia, William Hull, Gregory Carabine, Cindy Beauregard and Christine DiStasio voted in favor. Chairman Mark Bettencourt, Mark Kulos and Peter Gauthier opposed. The motion passed.

VI. Future Meeting Schedule: Gregory Smolley stated DRA would run through the draft plan at the next meeting. Gregory Smolley stated following that the report would be brought to city council for approval. Gregory Smolley stated the next public information session would follow city council approval. Discussion ensued regarding the meeting scheduling and combining the next School Building Committee (2020) Meeting with the regular June Board of Education meeting. A decision was made for the DRA presentation to be added to the June

Board of Education agenda with attendance by the School Building Committee (2020) Meeting, and for another Public Information Session to be held on June 21st after the draft is presented at the regular council session.

As a matter of record: During discussions at the June Board of Education meeting the schedule of upcoming School Building Committee Meetings was changed per the chairman.

VII. Additional Agenda Items: Discussion ensued on creating a public relations subcommittee.

Greg Carabine made a motion for interested committee members, including at least one from the Board of Education, to develop a School Building Committee (2020) Publicizing Subcommittee, that would handle promotion of informational sessions and other needed items. President Pro Tem DeLucia seconded. The chairman called the roll of members present and all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously. Alderwoman Stacy Gould asked members to let Chairman Mark Bettencourt know if they would like to volunteer their time.

VIII. Adjournment: Gregory Carabine made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:33 PM. William Hull seconded. seconded. The chairman called the roll of members present and all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted, Katherine Rose