

TOWN OF GROTON  
PHASE II SCHOOL DESIGN COMMITTEE MINUTES  
THURSDAY, AUGUST 13, 2009 – 7:00 P.M.  
TOWN HALL ANNEX, CR1

1) ROLL CALL

Present: Scott, Lange, Ritter, Harrell, Kane, Koehler, Webster, Peruzzotti  
Staff: Oefinger, Kadri, Greenleaf, Norris, Bresnyan  
JCJ: Greg Smolley, Jim Hoagland, Carol Pierotti

Chairman Scott called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

2) RECEIPT OF CITIZENS PETITIONS / COMMENTS - None

3) APPROVAL OF MINUTES of June 25, 2009 and July 13, 2009

A motion was made by Kane, seconded by Ritter, to approve the minutes of June 25, 2009 as written.

The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Lange, seconded by Koehler, to approve the minutes of July 13, 2009 as written.

The motion carried unanimously.

4) ITEMS OF BUSINESS

A. Pre-K Enrollment Targets

Greg Smolley explained that he has been doing research in an effort to get a handle on potential pre-K enrollments. He distributed national early childhood program statistics to the Committee indicating that national predictors of pre-K enrollment are at about 57%. Groton, however, does not have the ethnic makeup or poverty levels that would drive pre-K enrollment that low. Smolley then distributed a state study on school readiness and costs for pre-K for 19 priority districts. The state identifies an 80% participation target, with 45% in public programs and 35% in private programs. Again, different ratios can be expected in Groton. Mr. Smolley distributed information on the percentage of Kindergarteners with pre-K experience in Connecticut. He also spoke to representatives from Waterford and Brooklyn where both towns have pre-K waiting lists. Approximately 65% of Groton's Kindergarteners have pre-K experience, with 15% from private providers. To reach the state's target of 80%, Groton must add 15% capacity. Test fits were therefore based on 65% pre-K enrollment. Potential pre-K enrollments are averaged back from Kindergarten over the years. Kadri noted that Groton's initial program will serve four year olds; but there is still a need for three year olds. Once the details of the program are known, Kadri will be reaching out to private providers. Smolley noted that a program of 550 kids is

manageable because of the programmatic pod structure. The student teacher ratio of 20:1 for 1<sup>st</sup> and 15:1 for pre-K and Kindergarten results in 33 classrooms per school.

B. Test Fits of Pre-K-1

- West Side Alternatives

A test fit for West Side with 33 classrooms requires removal of the existing cafeteria and support spaces and reconstruction to the rear of building. The design reduces parking; maintains the tennis courts and ball field; and keeps all classrooms on one level. Smolley noted that the test fit will not preserve a lot of the existing building, but will instead start with a shell and retrofit it. The design does preserve the gymnasium and entry courtyard. An attempt has been made to stay close to the state guidelines because this test fit is approximately 20,000 square feet over, but there is a need to refine it. Smolley noted that special education, magnet and/or early childhood school readiness are all factors that will drive up the guidelines. Discussion followed on the spaces and how they are driven by the program. Smolley explained that issues such as the preferred location for the media center should be built into the educational specifications.

- S. B. Butler

The same footprint was applied to the S. B. Butler site just to show that it would fit. A refined design can probably be developed that will retain the ball field and work with the site's slope. A 2-6 School would not fit at S. B. Butler because of the field constraint, which makes the case for turning Cutler into a 2-6 school.

- Planning for the Future: Options (Not discussed)

C. Test Fit of 7-8

A 7-8 school of 143,000 square feet was test fit on the Kolnaski site. Smolley noted that the program has not yet been vetted with the Superintendent of Schools. The test fit is within 6,000 square feet of state guidelines and the design anticipates undergrounding the utility lines. Smolley stated that he still needs to verify that fields will work with the topography of the site. Discussion followed on other potential sites and considerations such as bus travel times and infrastructure. Smolley noted that if the diversity issue is going to be addressed, Kolnaski could be changed to an intradistrict school that feeds right to the 7-8 school on the same site.

D. Cutler Options

Smolley noted that by default, Cutler becomes a site for a 2-6 school. He noted that it will be tough to make the case that renovate to new is more efficient than building new at this site.

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E. Other

- Tour of Friendship School

The next tentative meeting of the Committee is September 10<sup>th</sup> for a tour of the Waterford Friendship School, followed by a regular meeting (time to be determined). The August 28<sup>th</sup> meeting was cancelled.

5) ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Kane, seconded by Ritter, to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.