

TOWN OF GROTON
PHASE II SCHOOL DESIGN COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, JANUARY 24, 2008 – 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX, COMMUNITY ROOM 1

1) ROLL CALL

Present: Scott, Kolnaski, Smuts, Shirvell, Ritter
Staff: Oefinger, Schneider, Norris, Mitchell, Greenleaf
JCJ: Jim Hoagland

Chairman Scott called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

2) RECEIPT OF CITIZENS PETITIONS/COMMENTS

Chairman Scott noted that Ken and Deb Berg were present. They indicated that they were asked by Bob Peruzzotti to attend the meeting. Deb Berg addressed the Committee and asked that the Committee consider including a community pool in whatever proposal goes to the voters. She noted that such a facility would not only service the needs of the high school and middle school populations, but would be an asset for the entire community including its seniors.

3) APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 10, 2008

It was noted that Jim Hoagland's name was spelled incorrectly on page 2 of the minutes.

A motion was made by Kolnaski, seconded by Smuts, to approve the minutes as corrected.

The motion carried unanimously.

4) ITEMS OF BUSINESS

A. Identification of Middle Schools for Committee Members to Tour

Oefinger gave a brief overview of the last meeting and the desire of Committee members to visit both new middle schools that have been built and middle schools that have been renovated and/or added onto. Oefinger introduced Jim Hoagland from JCJ. Mr. Hoagland noted that JCJ has done a fair amount of middle school work over the last couple of years and has prepared a PowerPoint presentation to talk about current trends and to show Committee members a number of examples of school projects from Connecticut.

With respect to trends, Mr. Hoagland touched upon a number of items including single story versus two story schools; rigid room setups versus flexible room setups; the need to learn from past design mistakes; the need to create an environment for learning; and the need to recognize that there is a relationship between customized curriculum needs and flexible room setups. Mr. Hoagland then presented a number of thoughts associated with small learning communities of 100-125 students and the need to create informal social settings for some of this learning activity. He talked about the modular approach of school design which can be created in a way to bring about flexibility, i.e. creating different floor plans from the same space. He reviewed a number

of different models and talked about the need to identify upfront how spaces will be used. Other topics discussed included low impact site development standards; sustainable/green building concepts; the creation of social settings throughout the school; the use of natural ventilation and light; and the need to create a sense of place/identity within new schools.

Mr. Hoagland then showed a series of slides of a number of middle schools that have recently been opened in the State of Connecticut. These included West Woods Upper Elementary School in Farmington, Middlesex Middle School in Middletown, Smith Middle School in Glastonbury, Woodland Regional High School, Lincoln Magnet Middle School in Meriden, Saps Middle Schools, and the Bedford Middle School. The merits of these various school projects were discussed and the Committee indicated their desire to visit both the West Woods Upper Elementary School in Farmington and the Smith Middle School in Glastonbury. At this time, JCJ has not been able to identify a suitable example of a middle school that has gone through a renovation/expansion, but indicated that they would attempt to find one or more for the Committee to visit at some point in the future.

Other issues that were discussed were two versus one middle schools and whether or not the community should consider doing one middle school if we develop clusters or the school-within-school concept. Mitchell noted that the real issue with respect to two versus one middle school is whether or not the community would accept a single middle school concept. In addition, Committee members discussed the need to verify/validate their assumptions with respect to one versus two middle schools. It was noted that part of the task of JCJ would be to provide information that the Committee can review to validate their assumptions with respect to this item.

The Committee then identified a number of potential dates to visit West Woods Upper Elementary School and Smith Middle School. Mr. Hoagland indicated he would contact the two middle schools and get back to staff as to what date would be best for a Committee tour.

B. Other Items to be Discussed - None

5) ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:48 p.m.