

SCHOOL FACILITIES INITIATIVE TASK FORCE MINUTES
THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 2013 – 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX, COMMUNITY ROOM 1

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Ambroise, Beaulieu, Bresnahan, Bryer, DeMatto, Denno, Greenleaf, Heller, Koehler, Peruzzotti, Trejo, Volkmann, Watson, Zod
Ex-officio: Hoyt
Staff: Oefinger, Schneider, Murphy, Bresnyan
Consultant: Mike Zuba and Rebecca Augur
Other: Rick Norris

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of February 14, 2013

A motion was made by Trejo, seconded by Beaulieu, to approve the minutes of February 14, 2013 as written.

The motion carried by a vote of 12 in favor, 0 opposed with 2 abstentions (Peruzzotti, Ambroise).

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS - None

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

a. Homework Group Review

Chairman Heller asked the Task Force to break into groups to discuss the results of the homework assignment to reach out to six constituents to solicit their thoughts about past and present school initiatives.

Groups responded with their findings highlighting specific concerns that they heard. Chairman Heller asked the groups to provide their information to staff for transcription.

b. Existing School Facilities

Mike Zuba introduced a PowerPoint presentation entitled “Facilities Inventory and Conditions.” He presented a map showing the locations of the elementary schools and their attendance boundaries. Mr. Zuba and Ms. Augur reviewed the age, square footage, acreage, floor plan, capacity, and enrollment for Charles Barnum, Catherine Kolnaski, Claude Chester, Mary Morrisson, Northeast Academy, Pleasant Valley, and S. B. Butler. For each of the schools, Greenleaf commented on previous updates/maintenance and high priority facility needs such as fire alarm replacement, sprinklers, electrical upgrades, HVAC upgrades, boiler replacement, asbestos abatement, handicap accessibility, security upgrades, replacement of portables with permanent space, encapsulating dirt crawl spaces, energy-efficient windows, and parking. Information on the elementary schools was presented in an Elementary School Facilities Comparison table.

Mr. Zuba and Ms. Augur presented the same information for the two middle schools. Information on the middle schools was presented in a Middle School Facilities Comparison table. The same information was presented for Fitch High School.

Greenleaf addressed the issue of “ticking time bombs” and the difficulty in deciding where to spend capital funds without a long term plan for the schools. Trejo differentiated between acreage and “useable” acreage. Mr. Zuba noted that issue would be addressed later in the process.

Discussion followed on various aspects of the schools, the work required, costs, and anticipated reimbursement rates. In general, maintenance items are not reimbursable. The Town Manager noted that the improvements identified have been defined as “critical”, but they would not result in “renovate to new” status which is reimbursable. The costs were taken from previous studies and represent an order of magnitude.

Mr. Zuba noted that the April meeting has been cancelled. In May, the survey developer will meet with the Task Force. In the meantime, Milone and MacBroom will be meeting with school administrators and conducting a SWOT analysis.

c. Election of Vice-Chairman

A motion was made by Trejo, seconded by Volkmann, to elect Craig Koehler Vice-Chairman of the School Facilities Task Force.

The motion carried unanimously.

d. Homework Assignment

Chairman Heller suggested some potential activities for moving the process forward in between meetings including:

- Devoting a weekend in May to focus in on some of the deep discussions.
- Touring existing facilities.
- Staying informed during the budget process.
- Talking to six more constituents.
- Identifying constituencies and affinity groups that the Task Force should reach out to such as parent/teacher organizations, youth sports groups, the senior center, the business community, and other committees and commissions. Discussion followed on informing the public of the school facilities initiative process and providing information. All Task Force information is currently being posted on the Town’s website at www.groton-ct.gov.

Koehler asked that the Board of Education make the new superintendent aware of this process so that it stays on track. Hoyt noted a superintendent search committee is being established and members of the Task Force should participate.

Town Manager Oefinger noted that the budget public hearing is March 28th at 7:00 p.m. at the Groton Senior Center. The proposed budget represents a 0.6% increase, but the mill rate will go up approximately 5% due primarily to decreased revenues. Last night, the RTM passed a resolution asking the Town Manager to develop a zero mill rate increase budget which would result in over \$4 million in cuts.

e. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting of the Task Force will be held on May 9, 2013.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.