



Town of Groton - Public Works

134 Groton Long Point Rd
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Public Works
Administration
(860) 448-4083

Meeting Minutes

Permanent School Building Committee

Chairman Rick DeMatto, Vice-Chairman W. Gordon Lange, Robert J. Austin-LaFrance, Richard Monteiro, Robert Morrison, and John Webster.

Thursday, May 5, 2005

7:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

Regular Meeting

1. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Chairman Rick DeMatto, Robert J. Austin-LaFrance, Gordon Lange, Richard Monteiro and John Webster

Members Absent: Robert Morrison

Staff: Rick Norris, Project Manager - School Construction, Wes Greenleaf, Director of School Buildings and Grounds, and Colleen Quattromani, Recorder.

Others present; David Russell.

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 pm.

2. RECEIPT OF CITIZEN'S PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Rosanne Kotowski, 24 Ann Avenue, Mystic, read a statement she prepared voicing her concerns about the possible use of Ann Avenue as an access to the Freeman Hathaway School site. Ms. Kotowski stated that there was no reason to use Ann Avenue as an access as there is already an entry to the site to Fieldcrest subdivision from Lamphere Road and Ledgewood Drive. Ms. Kotowski believed Ann Avenue already has volume issues.

Robert Garcia, 11 Avon Place, Mystic, a District 6 RTM Representative attended the meeting to speak with the PSBC about calls he has received in opposition to using Ann Avenue for the entrance to the school. Mr. Garcia also said he thought Ann Avenue posed a safety risk if used as a main thoroughfare.

Keith Brothers, 268 Thomas Road, Groton, President of Local Union 547, stood up to ask if the Town Attorney would be present this evening. Mr. Norris told the group that the Attorney had sent a letter which he would review with the PSBC this evening.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

P-2005-0001 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Webster, seconded by Lange, to accept the meeting minutes of April 5, 2005 as written.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 5 - DeMatto, Austin-LaFrance, Lange, Monteiro and Webster

4. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS (other than Subcommittee reports)

(a) PSBC Members

Vice-Chairman Lange reported receiving calls on the possible use of Ann Avenue as an access to the new school.

(b) Department of Public Works staff

Mr. Norris, Project Manager - School Construction, said he had spoken with Ms. Kotowski and RTM Representatives about Ann Avenue access to the Freeman Hathaway site.

The contract with Gilbane for Construction Manager Services as Advisor has been signed by the Public Works Director, the contract now will be signed by the Finance Director and the Town Manager. Two work orders have been written for URS, the contractor for Environmental Services. One is for hazardous materials inspections at the old Freeman Hathaway building to begin Monday, May 9th. The other work order is for Phase I assessment which starts Friday, May 6th.

The PSBC received a copy of a letter from the Town Attorney, addressed to the Public Works Director, addressing Project Labor Agreements and who in the Town of Groton is responsible for making decisions about their use. Mr. Norris told the Committee that the Town Attorney said the responsibility for entering into such labor contracts is a policy decision and that decision belongs to the Town Council.

Chairman DeMatto asked what the next step was for anyone interested in asking the Town to enter into a PLA. Mr. Norris stated that those parties must contact the Town Council through the Town Manager.

Mr. Norris said that the Town was meeting with Groton Utilities to discuss burying the utilities which cross the "King" property. The Town is also working on the Amtrak right-of-way. The State will not reimburse the Town for the fence to block off the tracks because their location is not considered a safety threat. The Town is now discussing with Amtrak the need for a fence.

(c) Board of Education staff

Mr. Greenleaf said he was providing the explanatory text for the school referendum with Ms. Kotowski regarding the Ann Avenue access for the new school.

The final school schedule for 2005/2006 and 2006/2007 was distributed to the Committee. The highlight is the length of the summer break in 2006 which will allow for construction at Fitch High School.

The naming committee for the new schools have narrowed their selection and final selection should be made soon. Some of the suggestions being considered are Northeast Academy for the Freeman Hathaway site, and the Kolnaski School or the Jordan Freeman School for the "King" property.

Mr. Greenleaf has given Mr. Norris the accreditation report for the High School to help establish priorities in the construction project.

(d) Jeter, Cook & Jepson

Greg Smolley, Senior Associate, JCJ began the architect's presentation with an update telling the PSBC that the archaeological consultants report for the "King" property was due May 31st. The preliminary report is good, of the four sites of concern, one has been shown to actually be off the property and the other three are on the fringe of the property and in no danger of being disturbed. Therefore JCJ will start on the design of the school for the "King" property.

Moving on to discuss the topic of Ann Avenue as an access to the Freeman Hathaway site, Mr. Smolley said, Fuss & O'Neill, the Town's traffic consultant had found physical and financial detriments to use of Ann Avenue. Those considerations have pushed the design focus back to an Oslo Street access.

Mr. Smolley asked the PSBC to consider a second meeting for May so that JCJ could present elevation and massing studies for the school sites. Chairman DeMatto asked if the school construction project was on schedule and Mr. Smolley answered that the project is on schedule and JCJ would hit its target of June for schematic design presentation.

Mr. Cali, lead designer, JCJ then gave the PSBC an overview of the project. JCJ has met with the Town Planning Department and also with the Police and Fire Departments. Mr. Cali stated that there are no issues that have come up for the school project which cannot be solved. The biggest issue to be addressed is wetlands interpretation. Since the last meeting with the PSBC, JCJ has had revision to both the High School renovations schematic design and the Freeman Hathaway schematic design with the change of the site's access point.

Mr. Hoagland, designer for the Elementary Schools, JCJ explained the design progression for the Freeman Hathaway site. The design now focuses on an Oslo Street orientation. The site has some constrictions because of some topographical and wetlands issues. Another consideration in the site design is the traffic flow for the school. JCJ has designed a double loop which separates parent drop offs from school bus drop offs. There are also routes for service vehicles. The current schematic shows a main entrance with easy access to the administrative offices, the cafeteria and gym. The kindergarten which has an access that allows for noon buses without disruption to the entire building and first grade are on the first level. The second and third and fourth and fifth are group together in their own clusters on the second level. There are three classes for each grade with one flex room for each two grade grouping to allow for fluctuations in population. The clusters on the second level have grade level access to dedicated playscapes which can be supervised on by the same level. There is a tree buffer for the second story playarea for neighboring properties. The PSBC saw a section elevation of the building as well as an scale model of the design on the site.

Mr. Monteiro asked about emergency access to the site and was told that the Fire Marshall was not requesting a full circulation for the site. At this time the design show access around 95% of the building and the creation of a sidewalk to the Kindergarten would provide emergency access to that part of the building. Chairman DeMatto asked if it were possible to trade off wetlands in another area to use some wetlands on the Freeman Hathaway site. Mr. Smolley answered that the State prefers wetlands not be disturbed. Mr. Webster expressed concern over the amount of corridor space which he accurately gaged to be 40%. Mr. Cali told the Committee that some of that space is considered working space or commons areas. Mr. LaFrance wondered if there was a way to arrange the L shaped classrooms to create more linear space. Mr. Smolley answered that daylight and sound were important considerations that developed the design. Mr. Monteiro asked about the use of half walls and Mr. Hoagland said that is a possibility.

Chairman DeMatto and the PSBC discussed what the Committe was shown and reached a consensus to ask JCJ to continue on with the ideas they presented for the Freeman Hathaway project.

Mr. Cali then presented the PSBC with the latest schematic design for Fitch High School. The access to the site off of Groton Long Point Road has been realigned and moved further north. The new entry will make it easier for large delivery trucks to move on the site and creates a boulevard effect which also assists safety concerns. The current design shows approximately 500 parking spaces which Planning will evaluate for the space needs. There is a stonewall which would be reconstituted to comply with the State Archaeologist report for the property. The new classrooms are being shown on the east side of the auditorium on three levels. The three levels consist of the current first floor with one new level to be constructed below and one new level above. A height variance is necessary and JCJ is working with the Town Planning Department. The main entrance to the school would be relocated to the east with the doors facing north. There is a generous lobby to handle 1600 students moving around at the peak points during morning arrival and afternoon departure. There is a corridor between the auditorium and the new classrooms to connect support services such as the administrative offices, guidance offices and special education . The art classes which are a factor in the accreditation of the school may be moved to this section. The placement of the administrative offices also allows for monitoring of student traveling between the programs. A lot of thought is being given to Phase II of the renovation

project as priorities are being sorted out. Some considerations are moving the cafeteria and swapping space with the Tech Education space moving Tech Education from the north to the west side of the site. Again the question of emergency access was addressed. The current design allows 80% of the site to be accessed by fire trucks with the remainder of the building reached with fire hoses.

The PSBC saw section elevations of the schematic design and also a scale model of the design on the building site. Mr. LaFrance noted that the design showed flat roofs. Mr. Cali said there was a roof element around the edge of the building and a pitched roof to blend with the older portion of the school. Chairman DeMatto asked about the creation of a TV Studio which was discussed in the vision committee specifications and was told that may not happen at the High School until Phase II as classrooms were the first priority for Fitch. Mr. Webster asked about the stairways and was told that their number and size was dictated by the number of students attending the school.

Chairman DeMatto consulted the Committee and there was a consensus to ask Jeter, Cook & Jepson to move forward with the concepts they are developing for Fitch High School.

5. RECEIPT OF SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

(a) Model School Committee

Mr. Norris will look into setting up a tour of the Daniel Hand School in Madison and the Westwoods School in Farmington on May 18th for any interested members of the PSBC.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

As decided at the April 5th meeting the PSBC will determine the necessity of a second meeting for the Committee on the third Thursday of the month during deliberations with the architect and other members of the school construction project at the first monthly meeting. For the month of May it was decided to meet again on the 19th to continue presentation of schematic issues for the school designs.

7. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Norris asked the PSBC to address a joint meeting of the Town Council and the Board of Education in mid-June to give the status of the School Building Project. With a consensus the PSBC agreed to set up a meeting.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm.