



Town of Groton - Public Works

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Meeting Minutes

Permanent School Building Committee

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

Thursday, June 2, 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, David Russell 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.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.

Mr. Austin-LaFrance arrived at 7:20 pm.

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

None.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) May 5, 2005

A motion was made by Monteiro, seconded by Lange to accept the meeting minutes of May 19, 2005 with a correction. The motion to accept the minutes of May 5, 2005 was made by Mr. Austin-LaFrance, not Mr. Webster.

4. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS (other than Subcommittee reports)

(a) PSBC Members

No report.

(b) Department of Public Works Staff

Mr. Norris reported that URS is essentially complete with their work on the school project. Public Works has a draft report of their environmental phase I site assessment and hazardous waste inspection. One item URS is trying to gather further information on is an underground storage tank which has already been removed at the Freeman Hathaway site (Northeast Academy).

Fuss & O'Neill, JCJ's consultant for traffic studies, has requested and the Town provided information regarding development sites and any accident history within the vicinity of the school projects

There is a meeting to review the schematic design scheduled for Wednesday morning, June 8th. The meeting includes the Planning Department, the Police and Fire Departments, JCJ and Gilbane Construction.

The Public Works Department is setting up some internal accounting measures to track the cash flow and cash flow projections for the school building project.

Mr. Norris has received a memo from Mr. Schneider, the Director of Public Works, regarding the Merritt property which is being considered for possible temporary parking during construction and renovations at the High School. At this time any access to the property would be from the western end and Public Works is looking to see whether there were any use restrictions from the grant which was used purchased the property.

Mr. Webster wondered if the Merritt property could be used for the laydown for the materials during construction and was told it wasn't a good location because it would inhibit the flow of traffic on the site.

(c) Board of Education staf

Mr. Greenleaf and Mr. Peruzzotti met with the Board of Education to update them on the latest drawings, floor plans, etc. for the school building project. The Board of Education had comments Mr. Greenleaf wanted to pass along to the PSBC. The principals as well as the Superintendent agreed to the construction of L shaped classrooms for the new schools. There was also discussion on the use of folding doors between classrooms at the elementary schools. Chairman DeMatto said he has reservations about the use of folding doors as they have technical and acoustical issues. Mr. Greenleaf likes the ability to create larger spaces but agreed there were many issues to be looked at before any final decision was made.

Mr. Greenleaf reported that the Board of Education was happy with the solution for handling traffic flow at the Catherine Kolnaski School. Traffic flow has been a major concern at the existing schools and everyone involved feels the new school design handles the issue well.

Mr. Greenleaf's meeting with the Board of Education looked at the Educational Specifications and discussed all day Kindergartens. The original decision made was not to have four Kindergarten all day units but to have an option to have three rooms with two all day programs and one room for two half day sessions. Mr. Greenleaf feels the correct decision was made given the current and projected student population.

Chairman DeMatto asked if there was any discussion about the High School. Mr. Greenleaf replied that he emphasized the new construction over renovation in his talks about the High School but did assure the Board of Education that areas that involve accreditation will be addressed. There was concern about the "look" of the building. The Board of Education feels there should be a brick/colonial type air to the school to the High School.

Chairman DeMatto asked if there was any more discussion about the base closing with the Board of Education. Mr. Greenleaf said the base closing would effect elementary school enrollment the most but not in the districts where the two new schools are to be built. The base closing will only result in a small reduction of up to 200 students at Fitch High School.

(d) Jeter, Cook and Jepson

Mr. Smolley, Senior Associate, JCJ gave the PSBC an update on the work being done on the school building project and the schedule of presentations to be made to the Committee over the next month. The property line surveys for the Freeman Hathaway and Fitch High School are ready. The focus of the June 2nd and 16th meetings will be the schematic design presentation. There is a comprehensive report being developed for the Committee that will be handed out at the July 8th meeting. The report is a compilation of items the Committee has reviewed with JCJ. The report will contain an executive summary, a list of participants in the project, an overview of each of the schools, the education specifications, references to studies completed for the project, an estimate for project costs, and zoning, wetlands and archeological summaries. The report will say what systems and materials JCJ is recommending for the project at this time, these recommendations do not vary from what was previously discussed.

JCJ asked the Committee to look over the systems reviewed and coordinate any questions through

Mr. Norris so that JCJ can come provide answers on June 16th. Chairman DeMatto also asked the Committee to look back over their materials as the Committee will soon be asked to make quality decisions.

Mr. Hoagland presented the most recent drawings and elevations of the Catherine Kolnaski School on the "King" property. The site design had to take into consideration the master plan for the site. There were questions about the access point onto the property and discussion on the various challenges the terrain, a combination of wetlands and steep rock hills, present. The steep hill approach to the school was of particular concern but is considered the best option and Mr. Smolley told the group that engineering and wetlands issues ruled out other possibilities.

A ring road design was developed for the "King" property and its handling of the traffic flow was well received by the Board of Education. At this time there is an opportunity to create just a part of the ring road to operate for the elementary school. The actual placement of the school is still being evaluated.

Mr. LaFrance asked if it was possible to combine the utilities for both the elementary school and any future middle school and was told that the schools were not large enough to bring cost savings by the combining of resources. Chairman DeMatto asked if there were provisions made for a gifted and talented classrooms. Mr. Cali told the PSBC that at the moment one of the general classrooms could be used as a flexroom as needed. Mr. Greenleaf stated that there was no current program for gifted students.

The exterior of the building is proposed to use an earth based pallet of colors taken from the school's setting. There will be concrete masonry, stone and brick veneer, glass and metal used in the exterior finishes.

Chairman DeMatto asked about the placement of the HVAC equipment. Mr. Hoagland said its placement was still being considered. Mr. Webster asked if the design still called for pitched roofs and was told the roofs would all have some pitch even if only low sloped roofs.

Discussion of the Northeast Academy site plan design showed no major change since the last PSBC meeting. Types of materials to be used and sidewalks were discussed.

Chairman DeMatto noted a consensus within the PSBC that the presentation of material for the elementary schools this evening is consistent with JCJ's previous communications and the Committee would like the architects to move forward with the project.

There was a break from 8:45pm to 8:50pm.

Mr. Cali presented the latest information on the High School project speaking again about the realignment of the approach to the school to create a boulevard effect with the entry across the street to the Town Hall Annex complex. The site design is showing a roundabout at the entrance to the school which will direct the flow of traffic and separate buses from parent drop offs. The site design will call for the development of some new busing procedures and uses sidewalks similar to commercial bus terminals. The site plan also allows the front of the building to be highlighted as a feature. Other issues discussed included parking both during and after construction, the cafeteria and the impact of traffic queuing into and around the facility and the use and appearance of the "courtyard" like spaces created within the new classroom wing.

The PSBC reached a consensus that the plans and designs shown for Fitch High School are consistent with previous discussion and the Committee would like the architect, JCJ, to continue forward with the project.

Mr. LaFrance reminded JCJ that they needed to make their analyses of the chosen systems for the school building project clear to the PSBC so that the Committee can respond to questions from the public. Chairman DeMatto told the Committee that they should call Mr. Norris at Public Works with questions for JCJ.

(e) Gilbane

No report.

5. RECEIPT OF SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

(a) Model School Committee

Chairman DeMatto asked that this item be removed from the agenda as a standard reporting item due to lack of activity.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The terms of the Committee members' appointment to the PSBC is being looked into by Barbara Tarbox and the status of the official dates of appointment will be confirmed at the next meeting.

7. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Monteiro reported viewing a Town Council meeting during which the issue of Project Labor Agreements (PLA) was discussed. Two councilors wanted the PSBC to handle the issue. Another councilor wanted at least for the PSBC to provide their input in any decisions the Town makes with PLAs. Mr. Norris told the Committee that the Department of Public Works was working on a brief on PLAs for the Committee of the Whole meeting on June 14th. Chairman DeMatto asked that the PSBC receive a summary of the presentation at the earliest possible time allowed so that the Committee can keep up with the issue.

The summer schedule for the Committee was discussed. The Committee will look at where the project stands at June 16th meeting and make some decisions from there.

The PSBC then focused on the format for the presentation of the schematic design for the school building project to the Town Council and the Board of Education for June 23rd. The agenda for the evening will have a single subject, the Schematic Design Presentation and has no time for Citizen's Petitions or Committee Reports.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45pm.