

**Wellesley Advisory Committee  
Juliani Room, Town Hall  
May 16, 2018, 7:00 PM**

Those present from the Advisory Committee included Jane Andrews, Todd Cook, Rose Mary Donahue, Tom Fitzgibbons, Mary Gard, Mike Hluchyj, Mark Kaplan, Paul Merry, Lina Musayev, Betsy Roberti, Tom Skelly and Andrea Ward.

Mike Hluchyj called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**7:00 p.m. Citizen Speak**

Mr. Hluchyj explained that there would be a later Citizen Speak related specifically to the June 5 Special Town Meeting (STM) warrant articles. There was no one present for general Citizen Speak.

**7:01 p.m. School Committee/Board of Selectmen re: Warrant Articles for June 5 STM**

Sharon Gray, School Committee (SC) and Chair, School Building Committee (SBC); Matt Kelley, Vice Chair, SC; and Jack Morgan, Vice Chair, Board of Selectmen (BOS), and Vice Chair, SBC, were present.

- Lots of events in last couple of weeks
- SC/BOS heard concerns around warrant language and concerns about whether MSBA would allow Town to study Hardy/Upham (H/U) sites in the way that Town intended
- Have gotten direct confirmation that MSBA expected that and would partner with us on that
- Have also gotten confirmation from Town Counsel that original warrant language would have allowed us to do what we wanted
- Have since gone back and requested changes from the MSBA; on Monday, BOS/SC discussed and voted, and decided not to go forward with Article 2 at this time
- Clear that warrant language as drafted raised a host of questions
- As we went out to confirm things with MSBA, it became clear that in general MSBA is amenable to the vision we have
- Given questions that people in Town have, and to some extent some questions that SBC needs to work through with MSBA over the summer, decided to wait re: Article 2
- Town has nine months to get through eligibility period and had originally chosen to do funding as one of first items, but in fact there's no timing benefit to getting funding approval in June as opposed to early October because realistically we weren't getting through the rest of the eligibility process in time to be acted upon by MSBA earlier than October
- BOS concluded that better off continuing to work thru processes and to continue advancing understanding with MSBA and concluded that should remove Article 2 from the warrant
- As of last Friday, BOS felt that there wasn't any impact on Hunnewell timing if waited until fall to come forward with Article 3, but over weekend it became clear in meetings with Facilities Management Department (FMD) that that assumption was wrong; there are significant impacts on not just timing but the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) bidding process; to pull back would disrupt process and impact ability to get same kind of enthusiastic response when it's restarted; in meeting jointly Monday night, SC and BOS concluded that should remove H/U project from warrant but should go ahead with Article 3, Hunnewell feasibility project
- Regarding questions about original warrant language for Article 2: drafted some new language that didn't change intent but was much more explicit about what we anticipated being done
- Although a little bit of a moot point now, wanted to share language for which we obtained MSBA approval and which we may use in the future: Town will appropriate funds for "a feasibility study to determine the preferred solution to address the physical and educational deficiencies of

the Ernest F. Upham School located at 35 Wynnewood Road, which solution may include but not be limited to renovation or rebuilding of the Ernest F. Upham School or another school, and schematic design of the selected solution, for which the Town may be eligible for a grant ...”

- This was maybe most important question from May 2 public hearing and we got a definitive answer/approval of language
- Conversations with MSBA very productive; they are aware of how we want to study things; talked through maps, etc.; committed to making this as successful as possible
- One component is enrollment study agreement with MSBA – takes about 90 days – we’ll provide our enrollment data and studies to date as well as housing data from Town and will have a series of conversations to agree on design enrollment
  - Date for enrollment study agreement is October 1; another reason to push Article 2 back

There was a question whether the SC had gotten any clarity regarding the concern in Town that the MSBA email (dated May 7 and excerpted in May 9 SC statement) would require the Town to close the seventh school in perpetuity: Almost everything in Hardy, Hunnewell Upham Master Planning Committee (HHU MPC) work and SC Position Statement has been discussed explicitly with MSBA; email didn’t say “in perpetuity”; we will pursue and get clarity; MSBA interest is that they invited Upham School into program, so they can’t accept that Upham students go to school in the same building; not on a mission to close the school, but are on a mission to solve needs of Upham students.

- Confident that we understand what MSBA meant
- A lot better insight into why the regulations are written the way they are
- In some sense MSBA sees those students as being at a disadvantage because they are in a substandard school and MSBA doesn’t want a lot of money spent that doesn’t help those students
- This is another example of why we really concluded pretty firmly that it makes sense to wait until fall on Article 2
- Over the summer will have to keep in mind that we have to be as clear as we can; won’t be able to answer every question; some are unknowable – like scope of feasibility study, which doesn’t get decided until next spring – but need to hear concerns and seek answers and clarifications and recognize that we need to have as crisp an understanding as we can of what MSBA positions are
- MSBA knows that our plan is to go from three schools to two and to increase back to three if/when enrollment goes up, and that we’re going to hold the third site idle for doing that

There was a question as to what the benefits of doing both feasibility studies (H/U and Hunnewell) at the same time had been and what now are risks of putting them on different timelines: We will have results of Hunnewell feasibility study by end of March 2019 (early spring), just as H/U feasibility will be getting off the ground; see that as an advantage from a Town bandwidth point of view; at end of Hunnewell feasibility study we will have conclusions from architects and team and SBC about whether there is a pathway to go forward on Hunnewell without waiting to get H/U school completed (so that old H/U school can be used for swing space); if we push back Hunnewell feasibility vote to fall, can’t really do study til after winter, which would put it on the same timeline as the H/U feasibility study.

There was a question/comment that splitting Hunnewell off from the other two schools creates a very different feel for the HHU/three-school question: Complex project with shifting dynamics; biggest change occurred with MSBA invitation in December, because it was clear that Hunnewell would be a separate process/project team/warrant article; one of absolutely clearest results of the HHU MPC process was unanimous agreement that because Hunnewell was the only school in southwest quadrant of Town, we needed to keep it in operation; had already become very firm that we were going to rebuild a school at Hunnewell.

There was a question/comment that MSBA email might mean Upham can't be used for swing space: Perfect example of the kind of questions we will be asking the MSBA.

There was a comment by an Advisory member that the decision made by the MPC to consolidate to two schools is something that Advisory/Town Meeting should affirm.

There was a request for an explanation of exactly what goes into a feasibility study, in order to understand why we need to spend \$1 million, and whether efficiencies can be achieved by consolidating feasibility with design process: Every significant construction project in this or any other MA town starts with a feasibility study (as described below).

#### Scope of Feasibility

- Look at existing 5.5 acre site, which has parking lot, library, wetlands, etc. – topographical site survey
- Detailed traffic review re: construction and swing space
- Utility/infrastructure/hazardous materials; geotechnical (borings); environmental site assessment
- Sustainable Energy Committee (SEC) and Historical Commission (HC) considerations
- Programming needs – engage with staff and SC and community around programming needs and what we hope to achieve
- Swing space options (build on site or other creative solutions) – that in itself is an architectural study because you need to know where you can put students
- Communication with community
- Minimum of three conceptual site plans; minimum of three floor plans
- Sustainable design achievement for each option – deep, detailed feasibility study
- Cost analysis: Very clear that costs we are carrying for both schools (without factoring in cost escalation for time delays) are extremely rough estimates based on what SMMA did in HHU MPC process – we need site and plan specific numbers
- Design funding will be around \$5 million – the reason the Town (and other towns) go through feasibility, then design and then construction is to stagger risk management

There was a follow-up question as to whether this feasibility process is statutorily required in public construction: Don't know in terms of general capital projects but it is required per MSBA procedures; MSBA requires us to vote funding for both feasibility and schematic design at same time, followed later by detailed design and construction; typical Town process is three votes (feasibility, design, construction).

An Advisory member commented that feasibility studies are standard practice in construction, as they inform the next phase of the project; people are always concerned about amount of money that goes into planning for a process: These activities have to be done, wherever you do them.

Regarding the Owner's Project Manager (OPM) and whether FMD could staff that function: BOS finalizing work plan for next fiscal year, working with FMD and Permanent Building Committee (PBC) to evaluate whether should "staff up" FMD; Lexington does that; significant staffing commitment; will take considerable study; the kind of question that we'll try to get to Annual Town Meeting in 2019.

There was a question whether the additional position funded at this year's ATM for FMD project manager to assist with school projects could perform services required during feasibility: Very confident that neither FMD nor PBC thinks we will have sufficient staff to do so, even with the new hire.

There was a comment from an Advisory member that all design professionals on SBC were in support of hiring an OPM early, someone who could see project through all five years.

There was a comment/question that given split timing of Article 2 and Article 3, and consequently differences in Town Meeting members who may attend the two STMs and changes in Advisory Committee membership, there is possibility that one of the articles (perhaps Article 3) may go through and the other one (perhaps Article 2) won't, is there a "Plan B" for H/U: There is not a Plan B for H/U; we're committed to making that happen; running the numbers makes it crystal clear why we want that MSBA partnership; you'd be back to drawing board at a significant cost; if a town gets invited into MSBA process and doesn't ultimately go through with it, it's quite a long time before you're going to get another invite.

There was a question whether there are any practical consequences to deficiencies at Upham: In terms of impact on the kids, we don't have the spaces to deliver the services that kids today need (e.g., services currently occurring in closets, hallways etc.; running physical therapy sessions behind curtains in the gym); accreditation questions for some of the programs. There was a follow-up question, in terms of making the case for the project, as to what the potential consequences are from delay/inaction – e.g., risk of losing funding, etc.: Fact that one of our schools was invited into eligibility validates our concerns with the schools; only 15 of the 83 applicants were invited in; doing tours of Hunnewell in advance of STM and will do H/U tours in the fall.

There was a question whether could potentially have a part-time OPM or an in-house OPM during feasibility phase: Will get an answer from FMD/PBC, but come back to opinion of community professionals on SBC who were unanimous and adamant that not only do we need an OPM, but we need to get them on board before we finalize selection of the designer; in the normal course of events you'll keep the OPM on through all the phases, to ensure continuity and understanding and ability to manage the designer; OPM is not Clerk of the Works; OPM manages the designers and the contractors; one of the SBC professionals created a document entitled "Why Hire an OPM."

There was a clarification that the question concerning the OPM was, why do you need one at the feasibility stage: Town Counsel stepped forward and explained that Massachusetts General Laws Ch. 149 requires the Town to hire an OPM for any job over \$1.5 million; not only is it a good idea, but statute requires it.

There was a follow-up question as to whether there are efficiencies or inefficiencies associated with conducting feasibility studies on different timing tracks – are you going to end up repeating certain components, or are there some areas where having studied them before will make it easier the second time: Experience from one school will carryover to the next project; MSBA has said they like to see towns that know a lot about what they already have and what they want; Wellesley scores high in both those categories; partnering with the MSBA means we have to go through processes that will slow some things down and we won't get as tight efficiencies as we might, but what we will get is \$19 million in potential reimbursement; maybe we'll have to repeat hundreds of thousands of dollars, and maybe there will be some cost escalation, but it's worth it; at end of the day it's about wanting to do the process with MSBA because it's worth \$19 million; in addition, much of feasibility is site-specific, e.g., traffic, borings, etc.

There was a question whether, given that the HHU MPC recommended two 19-classroom schools, a vote in favor of Article 3 assumes that the feasibility study will be for a 19-classroom school: Yes, that's the position SC has taken; we don't know if we can do that on the Hunnewell site; it's our goal going into the process but it's not yet our conclusion; it will be concrete when we bring forward a proposal at the end of feasibility before going into design; Hunnewell site is the tightest physically; BOS, like SC, strongly endorses MPC recommendations, including the 19 classroom target and the enrollment trigger; one reason for 19-classroom schools is parity across Town; that's the size we are used to; there was pushback in 2015 to School Facilities Committee recommendation of 24-classroom schools; educational benefits to having school not be smaller than 19 classrooms.

## **8:18 p.m. Citizen Speak re: STM Warrant Articles**

### Jeff Levitan, Tanglewood Road (TMM Precinct C)

- Concerned about timing, swing space and tax consequences
- Hard to decouple Hunnewell from H/U
- Hard to get a clear view of what we are signing up for
- Ultimately the tax consequences add up and become significant
- Doesn't know whether can support a Hunnewell feasibility study by itself; needs to be convinced that there aren't economies of scale by putting them all together with one firm

### Katherine Cort, Fisher Avenue (TMM Precinct B)

- Doesn't know how we can separate them when we want a preferred solution
- Need to do them at the same time to compare options, like Hardy swing space
- Need to look at feasibility at the same time – want to wait until the fall to bring them to Town Meeting

## **8:23 p.m. Discussion on STM Warrant Articles**

Mr. Hluchyj noted that the Advisory Committee had received and circulated within the Committee a number of emails in support of proceeding with Article 3.

An Advisory member noted that part of the purpose of feasibility is to figure out if you can build on the site in a way that you don't need outside swing space; from taxpayer standpoint, you avoid \$3 million of cost escalation by going forward.

Another Advisory member noted that the Advisory Report will include cost projections comparing "early" Hunnewell vs. "late" Hunnewell: Mr. Morgan noted that proceeding directly with Hunnewell construction leads to a \$55 million cost estimate based on FMD forecasts; if need to wait for H/U project to be completed, the cost would be approximately \$63.5 million (three years at 5% off a \$55 million base), so about \$8 million difference; another factor that makes it worthwhile to say, is there a reasonably tolerable way to work with MSBA.

An Advisory member noted that \$1 million is "short money" to answer a lot of questions during feasibility, and there are a lot of questions at Hunnewell; HHU school conditions are bad; shouldn't be picking over feasibility studies, which are done all the time in construction; wholeheartedly supportive of moving forward on Article 3; lives in Precinct B, which is under siege (looking at losing elementary school, 40Bs are coming); need to trust the process; let's get on with this and provide the quality education we're capable of in this Town – facilities are the only piece we're missing to doing so.

Another Advisory member expressed support for Article 3; embarrassing to have schools in these conditions; fortunate with work that our school professionals are doing in these sub-standard buildings; trusts all the MPC and SC work; trusts BOS, and notes that BOS went out of its way before ATM to buy Worcester Street land to make Hardy more attractive as potential site; makes financial sense to move forward with Hunnewell given cost escalation; need to work with MSBA given the significant amount of funding available, and believes that MSBA has answered question about ability to consider alternative sites given new potential warrant Article 2 language that was read tonight; always thought it was better to split Hunnewell from H/U, since Town can move more nimbly than MSBA process.

An Advisory member expressed strong support; sees feasibility phase as information gathering; there will be further decision points; interested in Advisory views on work of MPC; decision-making about 19-classroom size and enrollment trigger is foundation for these other decisions; from educational and fiscal point of view, consolidation makes sense and 19-classroom schools makes sense.

Another Advisory member noted there are pros and cons of dealing with HHU in a single session vs. dealing with H and H/U in separate sessions, but that issue is not before us now – only issue is Article 3, Hunnewell feasibility; no question from all the work that MPC has done and the presentations that have been made that Advisory should support Article 3.

An Advisory member noted that moving forward with Article 3 is simply the right thing to do for the kids.

Another Advisory member originally believed it might be more fair to the Town to assess these different projects together and pick and choose between them, because they could be alternatives to one another; however, that member's mind has been changed based on presentations; not hard to envision that Hunnewell is not on same footing as MSBA project, in terms of geography, funding process and perhaps condition of the school; supports going forward with Article 3.

An Advisory member echoed full support for moving forward with Article 3; heard repeatedly that Hunnewell has deficiencies, that committees that have reviewed the issues have determined that Town needs a school in that part of Town; once that has been determined, then going forward with feasibility studies will allow us to gather information, not make any final decisions; first of traditional three-step process which will help us decide whether there is a path forward to save \$8 million and understand what we can do on that site; it is in best interests of Town right now to move along.

Another Advisory member expressed support for moving forward with this now; very mindful of neighborhood and citizen advocacy for both Hardy and Upham, but hasn't yet been convinced that anything with respect to Article 3 is going to affect them; hasn't heard any reason that Hunnewell shouldn't go forward independently.

An Advisory member noted that rebuilding Hunnewell has never been a matter of controversy throughout process; we've been studying this for a long time; this is only feasibility; focus is just on Article 3 right now; supportive of moving forward with Article 3.

#### Vote on STM Warrant Article 3

*Andrea Ward made and Mark Kaplan seconded a motion for favorable action on Warrant Article 3, as proposed by the Board of Selectmen and the School Committee, to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, or borrow \$1,000,000.00 (ONE MILLION DOLLARS), to be expended under the direction of the School Building Committee, for a feasibility study of the Hunnewell School located at 28 Cameron Street including architectural and engineering services and all associated costs related to the renovation, reconstruction, addition, consolidation or replacement of the Hunnewell School. The motion passed unanimously (11-0).*

#### **8:45 p.m. Adjourn**

Tom Skelly made and Jane Andrews seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **Items Reviewed During Meeting**

- Wellesley School Committee statement of May 9, 2018