

**HHU Parent Advisory Committee to School Committee  
Meeting 4  
December 8, 2015  
High School Library 1938 Room**

The fourth meeting of the HHU Parent Advisory Committee convened at approximately 7:05 pm. Matt Kelley called the SC meeting to order; Lisa Hicks called the PAC meeting to order.

In attendance: Facilitator Lisa Hicks; School Committee Chair Matt Kelley, Vice Chair Wendy Paul, and members Patti Quigley and Tony Bent; Superintendent David Lussier; Karen Briggs and Tam Kennedy from Bates; Jessica Graham from Fiske; Maria Davis and Ingrid Houghton from Hardy; Michael Batka and Sarah Kulka from Hunnewell; Kristen Whitaker and Beth Willett from Upham; Meghan LeBlanc and Jenn Fallon from PAWS; Jackie Hoglund and Julie Crafton from Schofield; Brook Rosenbaum and Michael Rodman from Sprague; and Alex Pitkin from SMMA. Absent: Sharon Gray, Judy Belliveau, Lou Madge

**AGENDA REVIEW**

Discussion of Small Meetings – without the SC members – let PAC meeting members get to know each other and hear opinions. Ms. Hicks reviewed the agenda and then asked if there were any questions or suggestions. Mr. Bent thanked Lisa Hicks for doing a good job. None were raised.

**APPROVAL OF Minutes** – November 23, 2015

**HHU PAC** - Ms. Hoglund made a motion to approve the minutes, Ms. Briggs seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**SC** - Ms. Paul made a motion to approve the minutes, Mr. Bent seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**UPDATE ON COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH**

**David Lussier**

At the end of the last meeting it was discussed about how to get a consistent message out to each school's communities – School Department sent out a message to give guidance to all of PTO presidents (Central Council). PTOs want to remain objective during this process.

Message was:

- 1.) To give a space in the PTO newsletters for the PAC reps. This space provides contact information and lists dates of the PAC meetings. Try to encourage people to reach out to the reps with questions or feedback to be brought back to the PAC meetings;
- 2.) To find a time at a PTO meeting for reps to give an update and collect information.

Concerns:

PTO meetings only pull in a small number of people,  
How should we go about disseminating info?  
Website posts info, but it can be overwhelming;  
Varies by school on how to disseminate info;  
How go about sharing info if can't do it thru PTO or school?  
Newsletter only allows names of rep and dates of meeting;  
PTOs only reach those that elect to receive the newsletter, some parents opt out;  
Presentations have been made in schools and twice in town hall- tried to inform communities;  
Can't reach the people who will be impacted because they haven't enrolled their child yet;  
People getting info have older children and will be in Middle School.

Suggestions:

- School Department can send something out but no decisions have been made yet or action taken.
- The charge of the parent rep is to represent your community;
- Could be a push strategy not a pull, people who care passionately will find a way to contact rep and find a way to voice opinion.

- Set up information meetings
- Need to add context around the issues in emails/newsletters

### **PAC Members: Small Group Discussions:**

At 7:29 the PAC members broke out into small groups (assigned by L Hick). Discussion of key take-ways from 11/18 and 11/23 meetings, what is the biggest question you want to have answered, and to review SFC evaluation criteria

At 7:45 the Small Groups disbursed and reassembled for presentation

Feedback – good conversation being in small group, more feedback opportunity after 2<sup>nd</sup> Small Group Discussion

### **Presentation (Continued from November 23, 2015 meeting**

#### **David Lussier**

WPS Programming considerations for future school building design and capacity needs:

Not just a collection of large classrooms, gymnasium and cafeteria

Need small intervention and report spaces

Spaces for small teams of kids to work, literacy spaces, needs of program have evolved not just from mandates, allows students ability to be innovative & creative

Build new or do a significant renovation?

Even a modest renovation (i.e. Fiske & Schofield) allows reshaping of some of the spaces; lots of opportunity to think about design

Not consider just current deficiencies but look forward

Look at older schools and restrictions (using corridors as learning spaces)

Footprints are not adequate for where we are or where we are going;

Schematic design phase is open ended and forward thinking

Impact proposed changes on specialized programs, after school care, academic or athletic:

Blessed with rich opportunity in having WCCC, Recreation Dept., Academic and Athletic after school programs –we want to maintain the after school programs

Look at spaces or lack of space (gym space). Redesign provides enrichment to the afterschool care and programs

Specialized Programs – in all schools except BATES – draw from entire community:

In the past students would go out of district, more capacity allows students to stay in Wellesley

Can assess space combinations and more capacity, if the right programs are in the right schools,

Need current programs but also consider expanding. Can't forecast disability but can look at trends and see if there are areas/programs that may see expansion

Break 7:55 – little after 8:00

#### Citizen Speak

Paul Cort — Past Hardy Parent

Extremely important issue for stakeholders and 5 minutes Citizen Speak is inadequate

Importance of Hardy:

Accessibility is important as well as small (more personal) schools;

Community of parents;

Wellesley is about neighborhoods – defined by neighborhood school;

Closing Hardy would leave a void and wound the community built up around it;

It would diminish and ruin Wellesley as a town;

Becomes more a town that values cost and administrative efficiencies rather than neighborhood schools;

SFC claims the model stays the same. If you eliminate a neighborhood school, increase enrollment and the distance to school for a number of households, how does this not change the model?

Asks rep parents – what if it was your school instead of Hardy how would you feel? Sense of great loss, in a fundamental way you do anything to save a school;  
Wellesley has the resources to come up with a 7 school solution – needs the will and leadership

Peter Adler – lives behind Upham

Opposes a really large school at Upham;  
Objects to the lack of notice;  
Multiple stakeholders and competing interests;  
2<sup>nd</sup> notion small schools are beneficial to small children, appear more nurturing and comforting;  
Object to larger school due to traffic problems it will create;  
Traffic problems will destroy the quiet neighborhood and the reason most bought in that neighborhood;  
The hill behind Upham is beautiful, and the baseball field is like an amphitheatre and is frequently in use; in building a new school the hill would be destroyed and change the appearance of the area.

Andrew Friendly – Hardy school past parent

Concern is making this monumental decision in large part without engaging  
The Town planner, M Zehner;  
I had a call with him and he had never been contacted about this project;  
All work (other projects) had not been included - North 40, St James, and next year's strategic planning for town;  
This decision is not part of a comprehensive town-wide plan; consider including planning department, data, building permits, apartment complex being built behind DD on Rte 9;  
All info town has should be considered in a holistic strategy in town and not done on the sidelines.

Ryan Dietz – Hardy parent –

Agree with Paul's comments – efficiencies shouldn't be only consideration;  
Enrollment – it was implied that it went down but actually went up;  
Capacity needs to be known; consider 24 Hardy demolitions, 15 Upham demolitions, and 36 units in Hardy district in the apartment building;  
Previous estimates (20, 30, 50 years) are made incorrectly even with best efforts;  
Need to keep schools online. Brookline, Natick, Lexington, and Framingham all forecasted that enrollment would go down when it actually went up;  
Focus on the right solution for Wellesley;  
Critically important to create the right type of schools; walk ability;  
Critical guiding principle is the best schools for our town

Ishan Capila – Hardy Parent

A previous proposal for 3 schools at 1700 capacity was rejected because it was too high;  
When think about a proposal, look at a more aligned school, 1200 considered more rationale

### **Scenarios Considered by SFC & Rationale:**

Alex Pitkin, Principal & SVP – SMMA (Symmes, Manini, & McKee Architects)

Background – working on projects in Belmont, Lexington, Andover, and Brookline - same demography as Wellesley

SFC was extremely cautious when considering numbers  
SFC had SMMA evaluate all 7 schools

#### Existing Conditions

Older schools

Physical plant deterioration – boilers, light fixtures, systems  
Parking spaces, curbs, sidewalks-extend beyond immediate perimeter  
Music/ Art / Library – specialties not served well  
Lack of accessibility of Toilet rooms, doorways, stage access  
Accessibility must be universal

When create accessibility you lose capacity

Program delivery and capacity constraints

MA-CHPS and ASHRAE – not meeting guidelines

SPED programs spaces are inappropriate

Program deficiencies

Multi-useless classrooms

Undersized classrooms- for general education, SPED, music, nurse, etc.

Kitchens and serveries lacking

Teacher meeting spaces not available

Understanding learning styles

Student to student

Teacher is facilitator

Controlled open plan – every sq ft taken advantage of

Educational goals and the type of spaces being designed into modern buildings

Large group instruction

Breakout spaces

Outdoor learning environments

Stem and Steam environments

Learning communities

Appropriate and secure entrances

Enrollment scenarios

Masterplan takes in whole district (7 buildings) – deep dive in each building

Population in Cropper study drop in the new 4 schools

Not run new properties below capacity

MSBA design to 85% capacity/ SMMA design for 90%

Wellesley class size guidelines provides 2 – 2 1/2 Sections

3 sections is a 402 student capacity

4 sections is a 536 student capacity

536 is what neighboring towns are building – relatively easy model

Caution on relying on demographic numbers and that they were too low and missed mark

A 2 or 3 school scenario hits 550 – 800 enrollment at 90% capacity and includes that the other 4 schools are full

Peak enrollment of 2481 students was in 2009 with a total capacity of 2508

3 schools analysis

Consider existing population, gross and net sq ft

Use the MSBA model to analyze existing shortfalls,

Modulars are beyond lifespan,

If projected enrollment goes down building still undersized then looked at combinations of the 3 schools

SITES:

Hardy:

Water protection zone – Morses' pond, Water supply protection district

Grade change in back of school

Historical commission attended meetings

Program deficiencies: Multi-purpose spaces (Art & Music share space)

Square footage – demolitions become a delta on the right side of the school if working with existing footprint; would only have 45,000 sq ft and MSBA model requires 81,000 sq ft. Would be approximately 36,000 sq ft short

## Upham:

- Good Building site
- Access to traffic from a few different points
- Land lock neighborhood
- Building layout – can't put an addition on easily or effectively
- Many classrooms are undersized by today's standards

## Hunnewell:

- Mass Historical
- Flood Plain at back
- Riverfront setback requirement
- Newer Addition- more modern
- The 1950's building's classrooms are undersized

## Planning options:

- Consider North 40 / Hardy / Hunnewell/ Upham
- Lot of different scenarios – simplified thinking
- Cost per square foot
- Looking at construction cost on individual basis before apply to scenario takes into time, phasing and cost of estimators

## 4 scenarios:

- #3 Hardy New/ Hunnewell Reno & Addition / Upham Close
  - 536 students per site
  - Hunnewell naturally divides the town, critical piece in the population and can't be taken offline – max out this site – 3 ½ section school
  - Hardy school building was an asset but not part of new school
- #5 Hardy closed/ Hunnewell Reno & Addition / Upham – New
  - This is the SFC recommended scenario
- #7a Hardy, Hunnewell and Upham maintain but renovate all schools
  - No educational improvements
- #8 Keep existing populations – Hardy mostly new with 308 students/ Hunnewell reno & Add with 330 students / Upham – new with 264 students

Q: Why maintaining capacity and not increasing at each school?

A: Increasing would be over the demographics (900 students). Could design a core to plan for a 3 section school in future but core has to be bigger (boiler, kitchen larger) - higher cost to project.

## Costs:

Option: #3 \$65,950,000 construction cost / \$91,000,000 project cost  
 #5 \$69,400,000 construction cost / \$95,800,000 project cost  
 #7a \$46,500,000 construction cost / \$64,000,000 project cost  
 #8 \$84,000,000 construction cost / \$116,000,000 in project cost

## Current MSBA elementary projects

- Square footage in line using same standard
- Dedham K Only -200 students
- Hopkinton K-1 -400 students
- Newton – Cabot Elementary School
  - Tenets- 3 options –
    - (1) base repair 44,000 sq ft bldg.,
    - (2) add/reno – 28,000 sq ft reno,
    - (3) new - sq 84,000
- Hopkinton – 5 scenarios (3 versions of new 83,000 sq ft building)

Inflation is very real in construction industry: \$450/sq ft construction cost is getting to \$500/sq ft cost; (increasing 1%/month)

Careful looking back at projects that happened 5 years ago, the High School was built for less money per square foot than these elementary schools will be built

#### SFC consensus points

- Concerned about using low enrollment figures (850 low vs 1100 middle), prefer middle for planning effort
- Prefer 2 school scenarios
- Phase one: new building, not resulting in need to relocate students (less disruptive)
- Traffic studies proved that Hardy and North 40 connected
- Town geography makes closing Hunnewell not possible
- Upham – not closed

#### Thoughts on Elementary Schools:

- Norm in Northeast is a 4 section school
- 4 sections is not large
- Too small poses challenges
- High performing districts – serve schools well no matter size
- Teacher to Student ratio is more indicative of a good outcome
- 5 sections schools – Andover and Lexington – successful districts- if enter the buildings it does not feel as if they are too big
- Older/neighborhood schools – housed more students but program differences
- New schools have appropriate support basis

Q: Why can't Upham have a renovation/addition?

A: Combination of the site and the geometry inside the building. Example- the back wing of the building that looks at the hill and the core spaces are undersized. There is no easy conjunction point and expansion point was used at last addition.

Q: Hardy/Hunnewell – Historical parts of building – Upham – small school without historical part of building – does the building need to be razed or can you go up a level?

A: With 3 sections the building is short 20,000 sq ft. You can't add a level due to the building's construction; Also need to consider secure entrances, location and size of gym, repurposing spaces, and grade and sloping of site.

Q: Scenario 5 – new Upham built, will the old Upham be the swing space?

A: Scenario #5 – Still using old Upham as swing space. More details need to be worked out. In the recommendation brought forward the new building could handle the Hardy and Hunnewell population.

Q: Scenario 8 – new Upham or old Upham to carry the population of Hardy and Hunnewell?

A: Part of the cost of #8 would add modulars to the old Upham to hold Hardy and Hunnewell population. Scenario #8 is right sizing Upham so bigger and in a temporary scenario would house Hardy and Hunnewell students.

Q: How do towns use swing space?

A: Newton: bought an old school or other town building, renovated and will be using it to house students from schools being renovated for the next 25 years.

Q: What about using the St. Paul school to house students?

A: It has about a 200 to 250 capacity, which is not large enough to house any of the schools as a complete swing space. We would need to analyze the space.

Q: Swing space – could we increase the size of Upham to house students from a renovation in the 3 school scenario?

A: Renovation numbers won't change. The numbers are conceptual and are relative to each other.

Q: Swing space – how do you think about where, moving, timing....

A: Examples of what other towns did: Concord -2 schools in sequence; Somerville – building on top so closed school and divided the population into 2 smaller schools; parents drop at school site and bus to swing space.

An option is to build a temporary swing space school of modulars that would need to survive all 3 school projects (2 years per project), provide utilities, develop a drop off/ pickup area. But it is easier to do if attaching to a building with gym and kitchen.

Could also look at schools that have closed within the community (parochial).

Q: With the 2 School option, will the Hunnewell students be redistricted across 4 schools or the whole school population go to 1 building?

A: Could transport everyone for 2 years or do a partial redistricting which gets certain kids to stay at a school forever; swing space cost is figured into project cost

Q: How estimate a swing cost if don't know solution;

A: We did know the swing cost

Q: Hunnewell schedule is 18 months but the school is not occupied for 7 months later; same for scenarios 3 and 5; scenario 8 occupies a month later. Why the delay?

A: It is a combination of 2 things; we don't want to relocate students in the middle of the school year. Also, 18 months is best case and could schedule could slip and take longer; conceptual, no certainty

Q: The SFC presentation included a parking lot for Hunnewell

A: Cost estimator looked at it but it was extracted; change in the capacity allowed to integrate parking (20 spaces) into the site, parking garage in library no longer needed

Q: Any way to get access to all 40 scenarios?

A: M Kelly will locate the file and send to L Hicks

Q: In the SFC recommendation the cost was \$105,000,000 which included the garage;

A: It was extracted and dropped the cost by \$10,000,000

Any follow up questions to be sent to Lisa and she will contact Alex

Identify major concerns on your mind and we will report out

L Hicks will put together a Survey monkey questionnaire in order to get a sense of where we are as a group and to see where we go for the next meeting

### **PAC Members: Small Group Discussions:**

At 9:23 the PAC members broke out into small groups for discussion of SFC Recommendations

At 9:41 the full group reconvened for Small Groups report out and wrap up

### **Small Group Report:**

Group 2: What is expected of us? We were thrown a new scenario with such a short time period- Potential plan (#8). To keep Upham the same size is a lot to ask the town. A new school to be the same small school - too small for any cost and educational benefit

Group 1: Again concerned about what is expected of us with such a small amount of time. How do we come to a consensus? Late entry of scenarios considered earlier on by SFC. SMMA response - some got ruled out based on criteria that failed certain tests (3,5,7 been around) #8 came in late. If

Hardy is closed what is the use of the site? PAWS currently spread across 3 campuses, could it be considered at this site? SC response – PAWS can't wait 7 years

Group 3: Understand more about what a proposal would look like around a 3 school scenario. Also, understand the emotional heart strings around your school closing; need to weigh it somewhat

Group 4: Agreed that it comes down to the enrollment data. Look at methodology and existing data (precision). When enrollment is redone (Lexington used housing demo metrics closer to reality) should consider using this other method. The Cropper report shows a decrease of 2000 – if it is off by 20% would be down 2400. Choices are do you want to have 3 section schools or want walk ability? The swing space plan – there is discomfort in the Hunnewell community in the unknown. What is the mandate of this group to solve this?

Group 5: Projections on enrollment – Catherine Johnson – told group to question the numbers; want to understand how far can the numbers be off and still have wiggle room.

Develop guidelines

Expectations – most important factors to weigh, things didn't consider; weigh in on what community thinks are the important factors

Q. What if group says want to do enrollment study?

A. The feasibility study would do an updated demographic study.

Enrollment #s

Elementary enrollment went up this year by 2, which is 6 more than administration projected but the Cropper projected up by 18 and only up 2

There will be variability year to year but need to consider a long term trend

No guarantees

School Committee hopes and expectations from PAC:

Guiding principles would be helpful;

A lot of what PAC is thinking about would be dealt with in Feasibility;

The Town would create a school building committee going forward similar to the High School building committee; The Town would follow the MSBA guidelines on who would be on the committee

### **Review Next Steps**

The committee will have its fifth meeting on December 21, 2015

#### Pros

Liked Breakouts

Liked SMMA's presentation

More collaboration and brainstorming on solutions

#### Cons

Consider more time for citizen speak

Wish had info/docs in hardcopy beforehand

Q: Overwhelming amount to do in a short amount of time. If don't reach a consensus what does it mean?

A: Go through phases, part of consensus, recommend move forward with a direction for next phase?

The outcome may be you might meet consensus or might not. Similar to when Advisory votes –majority vote

**ADJOURNMENT**

At approximately 10:09 pm, upon a motion made by Ms. Paul and seconded by Mr. Kelley, the School Committee **voted unanimously** to adjourn.

HHU PAC – Ms. Hicks asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Fallon made a motion and Ms. Hoglund seconded the motion, the Committee **voted unanimously** to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Ball  
Administrative Assistant to the  
Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations