

HHU Master Plan Committee Minutes: September 1, 2016

Great Hall, Town Hall

Committee Present: Ed Cloaninger, Sara Jane Shanahan, Nancy Calderwood, Scott Vaughn, Jack Morgan, Allen Port, Jose Soliva, Sharon Gray, Maura Sullivan, David Lussier, Ellen Gibbs, Hans Larsen, Matt Kelley, Stephen Gauldie

Committee Absent: Lara Pfadt, Tom Ahern, Seong-Il Ahn, David Stern, and Todd Ofenloch

Staff: Michael Zehner and Judy Belliveau

Meeting Documents: September 1, 2016 Meeting Agenda; RFQ Public Outreach Coordinator; FutureThink WPS Enrollment Projection Study; 8/31/2016 HHU Newsletter

Welcome

Ms. Shanahan called the meeting to order at 7:14pm

Review of Minutes from Prior Meeting

Ms. Shanahan indicated that there were several sets of minutes available for distribution, but that they would hold them and distribute to the Committee sometime in the next week, and the Committee can consider them for approval at the following week's meeting.

Report from Subcommittee on Communications Regarding:

RFQ for Public Outreach Coordinator

Ms. Shanahan asked for a report from the RFQ Subcommittee, recognizing Mr. Gauldie. Mr. Gauldie indicated that the RFQ has been released, discussing where and to whom the RFQ had been released. Mr. Gauldie indicated that the date for responses was September 9. Ms. Shanahan indicated that they will plan to provide bids to the Committee for discussion on September 15.

Community Newsletter

Mr. Gauldie reviewed the draft community newsletter with the Committee.

Ms. Sullivan, commenting on the RFQ, asked whether the Committee wanted to provide a date, perhaps September 22, when then respondents could present to the Committee. Ms. Shanahan responded that this was a good idea.

Ms. Shanahan asked whether there were any thoughts regarding distribution of the newsletter. Ms. Gray suggested the Townsman, Swellesley Report, Town website News and Announcements, Wellesley Patch, and emails to Town Meeting members and School email lists. The Committee discussed the idea of a direct mailing or including within utility bills. The Committee discussed the frequency of the newsletter.

HHU Website

The Committee discussed the usefulness of the project webpage and the need to update and reorganize the webpage. Mr. Larsen confirmed that the Committee should work through his office for any changes.

Mr. Cloaninger, commenting on the newsletter, noted that the distribution list should be comprehensive, and Ms. Shanahan suggested that members with distribution lists should send those to the Chairs so that a list can be developed.

Presentation by Superintendent Regarding Historical Attendance Zones and Walkability to Schools

Dr. Lussier provided handouts and made a PowerPoint presentation to the Committee that provided a summary of desired attributes of elementary schools and the history of the number of schools; Mr. Kelley assisted with the presentation of historical information. Dr. Lussier continued his presentation reviewing maps of the various attendance zones and changes to the zones over the years. The Committee members discussed their perspectives regarding the presented maps and attendance zones.

Dr. Lussier shifted his presentation to walkability, presenting collected transportation data and explaining how the data was collected. The Committee asked questions and discussed the data and different factors that may affect modes of transportation. The Committee discussed the potential effect of natural boundaries and the likelihood of walkability. The Committee discussed the context of neighborhood schools.

Mr. Vaughn discussed the geographic relationship of schools and how the elimination of Hardy or Upham would affect walkability.

Dr. Lussier reviewed school populations based on ½ mile and 1 mile radii, as well as under Scenario 1 with closure of Hardy. In general, Dr. Lussier summarized that the closure of Hardy was found to not have a negative effect on walkability.

Mr. Cloaninger asked if there were any questions for Dr. Lussier. Hearing none, the Committee moved to the next agenda item.

Presentation by Executive Director Regarding Town Finances

Mr. Larsen presented a PowerPoint to the Committee regarding the Town-wide Financial Plan, reviewing guiding principles, the FY17 Budget, and capital projects. Mr. Gaudie asked about the amount of debt serviced. Mr. Larsen discussed the manner in which the debt is amortized. Ms. Shanahan asked questions about the debt and payments attributed to the High School. Mr. Larsen presented information on the existing and forecasted debt service. Mr. Larsen presented information reviewing the anticipated change in the median tax bill between FY16 and FY20.

Mr. Port asked for the total amount of borrowing. Mr. Larsen indicated \$96 million and discussed other considerations. Mr. Kelley noted that the \$96 million is a placeholder and that it is anticipated that number will change, stating that the longer things take the more expensive projects become. Ms. Gray noted that the School Committee expects SMMA to provide updated numbers. Ms. Shanahan stated

that she did not believe that SMMA was costing the scenarios, and that the Committee will need to ask SMMA to cost specific scenarios.

Mr. Cloaninger asked the Committee if there were any additional comments or questions. Hearing none, Mr. Cloaninger thanked Mr. Larsen for his presentation.

Ms. Shanahan, discussing future business of the Committee, indicated that Tracy Healey will be at next meeting to present the Enrollment Report, and suggested that if Committee members have questions to send them in for consideration. Ms. Shanahan asked if there were any other thoughts in preparation for next week's meeting. Mr. Gauldie raised a point for discussion but recognized that it was not a matter on the agenda.

Mr. Cloaninger indicated that SMMA should be coming to the Committee meeting the week after next, but that the Chairs would follow up with Joe McDonough to confirm.

Ms. Sullivan suggested that the Chairs verify that RFQ respondents will be able to meet deliverable date of September 15.

The Committee further discussed the release and posting of the newsletter.

Citizen Speak

The Chairs invited comments from the public.

Jamie Foley spoke, indicating that she has 4 children, 2 at Hardy. Ms. Foley offered thoughts on zone maps and walkability. Ms. Foley wondered whether walkability was more about the culture of schools, noting the difference in walkability between Bates and Upham. Ms. Foley offered that she was a little surprised to see just one scenario modeled for the school population distance chart, and asked why a scenario for Upham or for keeping all three schools had not been presented. Ms. Foley indicated that she would like to see information for other options. Making a final comment with respect to the history of the number of schools, Ms. Foley asked why the Town decide to have fewer schools with more sections, what was going on that made that the better model.

Lisa Fico spoke, indicating that she is also a Hardy parent and a Middle School parent. Ms. Fico indicated that she had been watching the Committee meetings on TV. Ms. Fico asked if the parents missed the walkability survey in the fall, and indicated that the survey that is offered indicates how parents pick students up, not how parents drop them off. Ms. Fico suggested that the survey should be more comprehensive and the purposes need to be clearer. Mr. Cloaninger responded that such work is in process.

Rebecca Bernstein spoke, indicating that she is a Hardy parent, but she was speaking as working parent. Ms. Bernstein indicated that she is really interested in accommodations for working parents, noting that she would love to walk, but needs to drop children off. Ms. Bernstein wondered about the effect of closing schools on after school programs, on working parents, and on walkability. Ms. Bernstein stated that she is a professional marketer and that fundamentally what the Committee is discussing is how to sell a very expensive project to Town, at a price that they may not agree with. Ms. Bernstein asked what the backup plan is if the town does not agree to a \$100 million project. Ms. Bernstein wondered how

the project is pitched and suggested that she is very interested to see the communications plan and how the Committee reaches out to the town.

Peter Adler spoke, indicating that he is a resident of the Upham District. Commenting on the presentation slide showing the history of the number of schools, Mr. Adler stated that he had a completely different impression, that there was almost 200 years of small schools and any change was recent. Mr. Adler stated that Bates and Sprague are bigger, but not large. With respect the School Facilities Committee recommendation for Upham, Mr. Adler stated that people in the Hardy and Upham districts were upset. Mr. Adler stated that Mr. Kelley indicated that those concerns were heard, resulting in the forming of the HHU Master Plan Committee. Mr. Adler asked whether the Committee is seriously considering other options besides a larger school at Upham, such as renovation, and whether the town wants bigger schools. Mr. Adler indicated that if Upham were built as proposed that a portion of undeveloped land will be lost.

Ms. Shanahan asked for other comments.

Closing

Hearing no additional comments, Mr. Cloaninger asked for motion to adjourn. Mr. Larsen moved to adjourn. Mr. Port second the motion.

The Committee's meeting adjourned at 9:21pm