

**School Building Committee –Minutes
May 2, 2019
Great Hall, Wellesley Town Hall**

Present: Chair Sharon Gray, Vice Chair Thomas Ulfelder, Jane Andrews, Virginia Ferko, Marjorie Freiman, Steve Gagosian, Joubin Hassanein, Ryan Hutchins, Meghan Jop, Matt Kelley, Matt King, David Lussier, Cynthia Mahr; Ellen Quirk, Heather Sawitsky, Jose Soliva, FMD Project Manager Dick Elliot, FMD Project Manager Kevin Kennedy; Alex Pitkin of SMMA; Kristen Olsen of SMMA, Tim Bonfatti of Compass Project Management and Jeff D’Amico of Compass Project Management. **Absent:** Charlene Cook, Jeffery Dees.

Ms. Gray opened the meeting at approximately 5:30 p.m. She announced that the meeting was being aired live by Wellesley Media and is being recorded for later viewing. She announced that the SBC Public Forum on May 9th at Wellesley Middle School will be aired live.

Ms. Gray noted that the SBC has recently received many emails from members of the community and that she has acknowledged receipt and informed senders of the details of the upcoming Public Forum.

Citizen Speak

Casey Bechtel, a parent of students at Hunnewell, spoke in opposition to the Internal Swing Space proposal calling it disruptive and complicated. She favors a plan that keeps Hunnewell students under one roof with transportation that is simple and short.

Martha Pott, a resident of Martin Road, spoke in opposition to any plan to remove the large oak tree at Hunnewell. She said that trees contribute to a healthy environment. Referring to information she received from a biologist colleague, she said that removing the tree will disrupt ground soil and disturb the natural habitat. She is a developmental psychologist and she said anxiety and stress are increasing at all ages and the tree is an important gathering place for socialization of children.

Hardy/Upham Project

MSBA Process update

Mr. D’Amico reported that six firms responded to the Request for Designer Services. Compass will perform reference checks and the MSBA Designer Selection Panel, which will include three SBC representatives, will review and select a short list of designers on June 4 and conduct interviews and select a designer on June 18. No pre-deliberation by the SBC is allowed; all debate must occur at the MSBA panel meeting.

Discussion/Vote: Review and approve project Invoice

Mr. Elliot distributed a project invoice from Compass Project Management for work in March 2019.

Mr. Ulfelder moved to approve the SMMA project invoice CPM 74-01 in the amount of \$12,888.00. Mr. Kelley seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Hunnewell Project

Sustainability Approach

Mr. Ulfelder said that the committee appreciates the work of SMMA on the approach to sustainability and the update to the public at the last meeting about the work being done to date. Mr. Pitkin reported that the SMMA team is working on a lifecycle analysis for presentation on May 16.

Review parking options

Mr. Pitkin reviewed considerations for Hunnewell site parking as follows:

- 82 spaces are currently projected or desired for a new Hunnewell.
- 20 spaces are currently allocated to Hunnewell staff in the Cameron lot.
- 5 spaces are currently allocated to Hunnewell staff in the Library driveway lot.
- 57 net new spaces are required.

The Addition/Renovation Option site plan currently shows an estimated 36 (+/-) spaces accommodated on site, which would require 21 additional new spaces in the Cameron lot or elsewhere.

The New Construction Option currently shows 28(+/-) spaces accommodated on site, which would require 29 additional new spaces in the Cameron lot or elsewhere.

Mr. Pitkin explained that if more parking spaces need to be accommodated on-site, the percentage of open space on the site will be reduced. He presented a chart that showed the impact of accommodating various numbers of parking spaces on site on open space, assuming a total of 82 spaces. That number (82) is based on a preliminary simple proration of the number of spaces on the current Hunnewell site, based on estimated number of staff in the new building.

Addition/Renovation:

- 24 (+/-) spaces on site would result in approximately 24.8% lot coverage
- 36 (+/-) spaces on site would result in approximately 25% lot coverage
- 57 (+/-) spaces on site would result in approximately 29.3% lot coverage
- 82 (+/-) spaces on site would result in approximately 31.8% lot coverage

New Construction:

- 28 (+/-) spaces on site would result in approximately 25% lot coverage
- 57 (+/-) spaces on site would result in approximately 30.7% lot coverage

Mr. Ulfelder said that the BOS agreed to allow the Cameron lot to be studied as part of the feasibility study but noted that the lot serves commuters (80% of commuter permits are held by residents) and retail district patrons, and the needs of both must to be balanced along with the needs of the school. The \$10-11 million estimated cost of decking the lot was a surprise and is a lot of money for an unanticipated capital project. There is an existing process for capital projects in town and absent exigent circumstances, the BOS does not think it is reasonable to ask the town to consider a deck outside of that capital planning process.

Mr. Ulfelder said that Police Department data on the general use of the Cameron lot revealed that the lot is full enough that it would not be easy to give up more spaces to school use, but not full enough to justify an analysis that there are exigent circumstances that justify asking Town Meeting to authorize the expenditure of \$10-11 million. He said that the BOS does not yet have enough information to commit to a parking solution that affects Cameron Lot parking. In

response to a request by Mr. Kelley for clarification, Mr. Ulfelder said that a late Hunnewell project would give the BOS more time to go through an analysis of parking generally in this part of town in light of the potential Tailby and Railroad lots projects and to satisfy the Town's capital project process before asking Town Meeting for an expenditure.

Ms. Jop said there is no zoning standard for the number of parking spaces required for schools and suggested there could be some potential avenues to pursue when permitting this unique site. Sufficient off street parking must be provided.

Mr. Hassanein described an idea of coupling the use of the Cameron Lot as swing space with interim parking provided on the Hunnewell site during construction. At that point, the Town could decide if it will deck the Cameron site. Mr. Ulfelder said he did not think the BOS is interested in the Cameron lot becoming the location for modulars.

Mr. Gagosian said that going to three stories will not reduce the footprint of the school significantly.

Ms. Gray said that she thinks the SBC should put forward its recommended package for Hunnewell and continue to work on the issues related to open space and parking.

Ms. Sawitsky asked if the Tailby project might add sufficient additional parking spaces in Wellesley Square to offset additional Cameron lot spaces allocated to Hunnewell. Ms. Jop said that some negotiation may be possible but the RFP for that project called for maintaining the existing parking and only a nominal increase in net parking is expected.

Mr. King asked if the SBC would be asked to recommend a solution irrespective of the availability of the Cameron lot for parking. Mr. Ulfelder clarified that it is hard for the BOS to respond to a speculative request for a range of parking spaces at the Cameron lot. There are many variables including whether an early Hunnewell option is available based on swing space and whether different lot coverage zoning assumptions may be developed. The BOS would respond to a presented package.

Review Design Options

Mr. Pitkin displayed slides comparing the site, circulation and floor plans for the Addition/Renovation and New Construction options.

He noted that the New Construction option features: a strong "Main Street"-style circulation plan; public elements (gym and cafeteria) in the front of the building; art, music and STEAM/19th classroom grouped together on the second floor; and an orientation of the building toward the neighborhood.

The Addition/Renovation option features: a circulation plan that includes the academic areas on one side of the building to the rear and public elements (gym and cafeteria) on the other side and to the rear, behind the 1938 portion of the building; art, music and STEAM/19th classroom grouped together in the 1938 portion of the building; and a courtyard orientation with the entrance in the 1938 building. Mr. Pitkin noted that the survivability of the oak tree remains uncertain in this option. This option could afford more opportunity for on-site parking.

Mr. Pitkin said that both options feature administration near the front entrance, a media center on the second floor and a 100-seat gym, if that is desired. Tightening both plans would be the intention during the design phase.

Ms. Gray reviewed the process that was used to develop the educational plan that has informed building design. She noted that the key design patterns identified in that process include:

- Neighborhood learning communities/flexible space
- Indoor/outdoor connectivity
- Safety and security
- Sustainability
- Community use and access
- Compact design

Dr. Lussier reported that the Hunnewell staff has extensively discussed both options.

Ms. Quirk summarized some key feedback from educators about the options:

- Learning neighborhoods in the New Construction option provide the synergy with special education spaces that is preferred.
- The location of the 19th classroom close to learning neighborhoods on the second floor is preferred to its more remote location in the Addition/Renovation option.
- Long travel time between classrooms and art, music and administration space is a negative feature of the Addition/Renovation option. She noted that the administration space includes not only the principal but the nurse and psychologist and others with direct student contact.
- The Addition/Renovation option has outdoor connectivity in front of the building, which is a security concern and provides less private play space in the rear. This option also has some classrooms near the front of the building which is not preferred. The New Construction option has classrooms in the rear, which is preferred.
- The New Construction option provides more natural light.
- The long, narrow cafeteria in the Addition/Renovation option will feel congested.
- The Main Street circulation plan of the New Construction is preferred, with every classroom off that main corridor. The long corridor from the 1938 building to the classrooms in the Addition/Renovation option seems very long for children to travel before seeing anyone.

Dr. Lussier added that there is a preference for community assets such as the gym and cafeteria to be at the front of the building, as in the New Construction option, as opposed to deeper into the building as in the Addition/Renovation option.

Heather Haskell, a Hunnewell teacher, said that staff reviewed multiple models and the learning neighborhood configuration in the New Construction option lends itself best to the team approach to learning that is preferred.

Ms. Quirk said that getting into the new space as quickly as possible is best for the children and the adults in the building.

Mr. Soliva asked if the components and adjacencies Ms. Quirk identified can be reconciled with the Addition/Renovation option. Mr. Pitkin said that some issues could be addressed during the design phase, but saving the portion of the 1938 building requires that some program be located there, distant from the learning neighborhoods.

Mr. Soliva asked if the Addition/Renovation option would be detrimental to the delivery of education, proposing a need to balance educational values with community values related to the 1938 building.

Mr. Lussier said, and Ms. Quirk agreed, that either option would be fundamentally better than what we have today, but that the New Construction option maximizes ability to meet program goals. Dr. Lussier said that the choice educationally is not even close.

Ms. Andrews said that she supports the New Construction option for the reasons educators have expressed but also because it provides an opportunity for the town to look forward and take advantage of the opportunity for a future-oriented design.

Mr. Gagosian said that the overall organizing geometry of the building is key to consider, not whether there may be tweaks to address specific issues. The educators have been clear as to which option solves the problem, which in this case is delivery of program. He said that this constrained site fights the Addition/Renovation option and will not allow a solution similar to what was developed for the Sprague School.

Mr. Hutchins said that based on his experience in the construction industry, the renovation of an existing building is about compromise and sacrifice. New construction allows us to create a plan for today's world.

Mr. Soliva said that the decision involves an assessment of whether the value of saving the old building merits the sacrifices in the educational program.

Ms. Ferko noted that positive features of the site are maximized by the New Construction option that provides more useable outdoor space while the Addition/Renovation option includes outdoor space in the front courtyard that is not useable.

Mr. Hassanein said the fundamental question is: what is the best possible school we can build from an educational standpoint? Other considerations are secondary. He prefers the option educators think will provide the best environment to teach our children.

Mr. Ulfelder asked about the aesthetics of the loading door on the north corner of the building. Mr. Pitkin said the berm created by the change in elevation will screen that corner and during the design phase, massing issues may be addressed. Mr. Gagosian noted that this is not a true loading dock but a grade-level double door, as is included at other elementary schools.

Ms. Gray noted that Mr. Pitkin has done a very good job in an effort to fit the educational program into a plan that includes the fixed 1938 building but the New Construction option is superior.

Ms. Freiman said that if all things were equal, it would be great to save the tree and the 1938 building but the forced location of the 1938 building requires the school to be set up in a way that, according to educators, is not ideal. She was impressed on the visit to the Anger School by the way students interacted in that classroom configuration that houses each grade in its own alcove and by the amount of natural light that there was between the alcoves.

Ms. Jop asked how the plans would be modified if all of the school's parking needs were to be provided on site. Mr. Pitkin said that in the Addition/Renovation option, more parking would likely be placed in the courtyard area. In the New Construction option, there is concern about

turning the entire front of the building into a parking lot, but parking should be kept proximate to the Cameron lot. Mr. Pitkin said he does not think 82 spaces could be accommodated on site in this option, but 57 spaces are achievable. Mr. Pitkin said that the 82 space number included projections of spaces beyond those needed by staff and should be further reviewed. In response to a question by Mr. Ulfelder, Mr. Pitkin said that approximately 55-60 spaces will be needed for school staff. Mr. Soliva said it would be helpful to see the parking laid out on the site plans.

Ms. Gray asked Mr. Pitkin to review permitting issues associated with each option. He said that the existing Hunnewell building extends over the side setback a bit and that the plans peg that side of the building to that existing nonconforming use in order to protect as much open space as possible to the south and east. Both options would exceed the interpretation for the footprint of the building.

Ms. Gray noted that the Library Trustee's representative has expressed concern about parking for after-hours gym use. Mr. Kelley noted this gym usage would occur primarily when staff is not there.

Ms. Sawitsky said that saving the oak tree does not make sense given what we know about its likely survivability but it would be good to include a way to honor that tree and also to preserve the grove of large trees near the playground.

Ms. Gray noted that the Community Preservation Committee might be able to fund some efforts to honor the tree and to preserve some elements of the historic structure in the building design.

Ms. Ferko asked if the SBC would revisit the evaluation matrix as a way of illustrating the SBC's analysis to the community. She suggested that the six design features identified in the Educational Program be listed separately on the matrix to better represent the relative weight given to educational programming in the decision process. She suggested that impact on the Wellesley Free Library be included among the criteria on the matrix and that the matrix draft be amended to show that the New Construction option is "less advantageous" in its acknowledgment of historical aspects rather than "neutral".

Ms. Andrews suggested that security be separately included in the matrix.

Mr. Gagorian said that school future growth should not among the criteria since the site would not support it.

Mr. Hassanein said that flexibility and adaptability of space should be a factor.

Ms. Sawitsky said that a rough prioritization of criteria on the matrix would be helpful.

Mr. D'Amico said that an evaluation matrix is a more useful tool when categories of evaluation criteria are kept broader.

Swing Space

Ms. Gray reported that the SBC has received many emails concerning the internal swing space option. The administration has developed some refinements to that option to present at this meeting.

Ms. Quirk said that she has heard and discussed with members of the Hunnewell community concerns about the internal swing space option. She said at this point, the effort is to determine if the option is feasible. If the decision is made to go with this option the administration will rely on parents to help on a planning team to work out details. She applauded teaching staff and the principals at other schools for their willingness to make this option work.

Dr. Lussier, Cindy Mahr, and WPS Transportation Coordinator Deane McGoldrick presented updates to the Internal Swing Space plan related to transportation and to issues for families with children in multiple grades.

A hybrid transportation model would involve a staging area in the Hunnewell attendance zone for one bus to Fiske and one bus to Schofield for the students in the grade levels assigned to those schools. The buses would go directly to those schools resulting in about a 15 minute ride. Students in grade levels assigned to each of the other four schools (Sprague, Hardy, Bates and Upham) would board a bus in their neighborhood zone (there are six neighborhood zones in the Hunnewell attendance zone). The bus would travel to each of the four schools with ride times ranging from 8-12 minutes to 35-38 minutes. These ride times are within the range of existing ride times for other elementary schools in the district. The hybrid bus model would cost approximately \$1.4 million over two years, including costs for the buses, bus monitors and before school supervision at Sprague, Hardy and Fiske where the students might arrive early enough to warrant it. Dr. Lussier noted that Upham has space constraints that might mean it is not included in the internal swing space plan and if so, ride time for Hunnewell students would be reduced since the neighborhood buses would go to only 3 rather than 4 schools. Mr. Kelley asked and Mr. McGoldrick confirmed that supervision will be needed for kids waiting for the bus at the end of the day at some schools. Mr. McGoldrick said that the current Hunnewell bus drive time is 22-25 minutes.

Dr. Lussier said that an option for families with children in multiple grades who are assigned to multiple schools would be to enroll all of their children in one school via the open enrollment process. In response to a question by Ms. Ferko, Ms. Quirk said that one-third of the Hunnewell students have at least one sibling at the school.

Dr. Lussier noted that some families will elect to drive students or to carpool. Mr. Ulfelder asked if there is a way to assess how many families will use the bus. Dr. Lussier said because the swing space would be used so far in the future, it would be hard to assess now with a survey. He noted that given the declining enrollment at the elementary level it is possible that any extra car trips resulting from Hunnewell parents driving their children will not result in car circulation levels above what the other schools currently experience.

Mr. Hassanein raised the possibility of expediting construction. Dr. Lussier said that mid-year moves are difficult at the elementary level. Ms. Quirk said she thinks the community could rise to that challenge if presented.

Ms. Sawitsky asked if the St. Paul School option could be revisited. Ms. Gray said the project team will look at it again including developing a schedule. Renovation to the St. Paul School would be a town project that needs to follow the usual town process.

Mr. Hutchins said that he left the last meeting with an understanding that there was support for the Internal Swing Space option among Hunnewell parents and he was grateful that Hunnewell parents had subsequently expressed their concerns, which were largely unsupportive. Mr. Ulfelder said that community sentiment had not been previously misrepresented, but that the

details of the internal swing space option, including the transportation times presented, had just been developed shortly before that meeting. Ms. Gray noted that there was tentative support expressed by Hunnewell parents at a meeting at the school in early April but as details have evolved over time further feedback from parents has been important.

Mr. King noted that there will be a certain level of pain in the process but the end result school will be worth it and exploring the internal swing space option is well worth the effort.

Ms. Andrews asked how the other school communities are reacting to the Internal Swing Space idea and Dr. Lussier said he was in the process of scheduling meetings at each school. Ms. Quirk said it is important to remember we are all one school district community but acknowledged that parents at those schools will have questions.

Public Forum Planning

Ms. Gray said that the plan for the forum was to provide a presentation covering the building options, the sustainability approach, costs, parking and swing space followed by questions and comments from the community. Various members of the project team and SBC will be available to field questions.

Adjournment

At approximately 8:15 p.m., upon a motion by Mr. Gagosian and seconded by Mr. Kelley, the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn.

Documents and Exhibits Used

- Project Invoice: Compass Project Management CPM 74-01 (\$12,888.00)
- Compass Project Management and SMMA Power Point Presentation to SBC 5/2/2019
- Evaluation Matrix Draft for Discussion updated 5/1/2019
- Wellesley Public Schools *Overview of Hybrid Transportation Model* Power Point Presentation to SBC 5/2/2019

Approved June 6, 2019