

**School Building Committee – DRAFT Minutes**  
**May 9, 2019**  
**Public Forum, Wellesley Middle School Auditorium**

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

Ms. Gray opened the meeting at approximately 7:05 p.m. She announced that the meeting was being aired live by Wellesley Media.

**Introduction**

Ms Gray said that the SBC was charged with conducting a feasibility study for a 19-classroom Hunnewell School. The committee is responsible for the analysis necessary to identify and recommend a solution that can move forward to the next steps of design and construction and be supported by Town Meeting and the Town as a whole.

The SBC has been investigating Addition/Renovation and New Construction options, asking the following questions:

- How to design a school to serve students for the next 50 years?
- How will the school fit in the surrounding environment?
- Where will students go during construction?
- When will the school be built?

Dr. Lussier said his role in the process has been primarily to focus on the educational vision for the school going forward.

Ms. Quirk said that the existing building is not meeting the school’s current needs and noted that the Educational Program outlines the building’s deficits in detail. She thanked the Hunnewell staff for their support and participation in this process.

Jeff D’Amico of Compass Project management reviewed the SBC work plan since August of last year and noted that many town boards, groups and individuals had been engaged in the process. He noted that the SBC is on track to decide on a recommended design option by the end of this month but that a swing space decision is more complicated and will take more time.

**Educational Program**

Ms. Quirk reviewed the process that was used to develop the Educational Program for Hunnewell as part of the feasibility study and listed the design approaches and features that emerged from that process:

- Neighborhood learning communities/flexible space
- Indoor/outdoor Connectivity
- Safety and security

- Sustainability
- Community use and access
- Compact design

## **Design Concept Options**

Mr. Pitkin of SMMA outlined the key considerations in the development of design concepts for the project:

- Retain classroom neighborhood learning commons configuration
- Locate core educational environment at the quiet side of the site
- Cafetorium and gym linked to outdoor play environments
- Maximize outdoor play area at back of the site
- Access to community use

He noted that these considerations were pursued along two primary strands: Addition/Renovation that preserves the front part of the 1938 building and New Construction. The oak tree suffered distress related to the 1995 addition and likely would suffer some level of distress in any design option, and therefore did not drive either design option.

Mr. Pitkin presented site, floor and massing plans for the Addition/Renovation and New Construction options. He noted that massing images were more detailed for the Addition/Renovation option in response to the SBC's interest in understanding the challenge of adding a modern addition to the existing 1938 building. Both are 2-story options.

Ms. Quirk discussed how she and the staff at Hunnewell have assessed each option in relation to the design approaches identified in the Educational Program:

- Learning neighborhoods in the New Construction option are preferred. They provide synergy with special education and other learning spaces, lots of natural light and easy access to outdoor areas;
- The location of the 19<sup>th</sup> classroom close to learning neighborhoods on the second floor is preferred in the New Construction option as opposed to its more remote location in the Addition/Renovation option;
- The Addition/Renovation option has outdoor connectivity in front of the building, which is a security concern while the New Construction option connects with more private secure play space in the rear;
- Both options include the gymnasium on the Brook side of the school, but the long, narrow cafeteria in the Addition/Renovation option will feel congested and the square configuration in the New Construction option is preferred;
- 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 and puts the Administration area (which will house the principal, nurse, psychologist and other staff) farther away and will feel less physically or emotionally safe for children.

- The compact design of the New Construction option is preferred for making transitions quicker.

Ms. Quirk stated that the Hunnewell staff wants the best possible design for students and staff and they prefer the New Construction option.

Dr. Lussier added that for ease of access and security 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.

## **Parking**

Mr. Pitkin spoke briefly about parking and noted that parking related issues will be addressed more fully in the design phase. He noted that the Board of Selectmen control the Cameron Street lot and will engage in a process to more broadly assess parking concerns for the downtown area.

## **Sustainability**

Martine Dion, Director of Sustainability at SMMA reviewed some key considerations related to achieving sustainability goals for the project. She noted that during the study, design and construction of the building (about 4 years), the energy code will change, narrowing the gap between the Stretch Energy Code and Net Zero Ready.

She outlined major design strategies for achieving a net zero ready building which include:

- Maximize envelope insulation and air tightness;
- Maximize mechanical system efficiency;
- Efficient lighting system;
- Limit or eliminate gas fuel systems for heating and cooking;
- Maximize space available for Solar PV on school rooftop; and
- Plug load reduction and management, which includes training users to optimize energy reduction.

She said that the recommended base system for heating and cooling is a VRF air source heat pump and that analysis of an all-electric building will continue through the schematic design phase.

Ms. Dion said that the predicted Energy Use Intensity (EUI) for both options could change as designs are refined. She noted that the range of predicted EUI for New Construction is 23-27 and about 28 for the Addition//Renovation option.

Ms. Dion presented a preliminary assessment of photovoltaic panels, comparing the New Construction and the Addition Renovation options in these categories:

- the solar PV offset required;
- the solar PV area required ;
- roof area available;
- additional roof area required; and
- preliminary cost estimates for school-roof-only array (\$1.0-\$1.2 Million)

She noted that the estimates are for school roof arrays and that further area may be identified for PV's on adjacent properties.

Ms. Dion reported that the final study report will include:

- Owner's Project Requirements, developed working with FMD;
- LEED v4 Recommendations
- Preliminary Energy Performance Goals
- Planning for Solar Photovoltaics

## **Swing Space**

Jeff D'Amico of Compass Project Management reviewed Swing Space options. He said that since 2014 approximately 24 swing space options have been evaluated.

Options still being analyzed to determine their feasibility are:

- Full school of modulars at Sprague parking lot, which would allow the new school to open in 2023 and cost approximately \$8 million;
- Half school of modulars at Schofield and half school of modulars at Sprague, which would allow the new school to open in 2023 and cost approximately \$9 million;
- Internal Swing Space, which would allow new school to open in 2023 and cost approximately \$4.5 million (the School Committee has recently removed this option from consideration in light of lack of expressed support from the Hunnewell community, but some analysis continues);
- St. Paul's School, the scope, cost and schedule for which is being re-evaluated;
- Late Hunnewell with 2 schools on one campus, which would delay the opening of the new school until 2026 and cost \$10 million;
- Late Hunnewell with redistricting, using Hardy or Upham with modular, which would delay the opening of the new school until 2026 and cost \$11 million.

Mr. D'Amico reviewed the key considerations for each of the swing space options and noted that they present tradeoffs in cost and other factors.

Mr. D'Amico then reviewed the Conceptual Project Budget Summary for both the New Construction option at \$56.4 million and the Addition/Renovation option at \$56.0 million. He noted that the request to Town Meeting for design funds would be \$5 million for either option.

Ms. Gray then invited members of the community to provide comment and feedback.

Approximately 120 people attended the forum, including members of the SBC and other Town boards and committees. Approximately 30 people provided comments or asked questions, which are briefly summarized below.

There were questions and comments about the process for vetting swing space options and potential impacts on other schools.

- Liz Baldwin (Tappan Road) asked what input other school communities implicated in the swing space discussion would have and what opportunity Hunnewell parents would then have to be further involved in that discussion.
- Liz Murillo (Donizetti Street) urged the SBC to reach out in a meaningful way to the Sprague community about swing space plans.
- Michelle Shaw (Bayview Road) expressed concern about the impact of Internal Swing Space on other schools.
- Mari Passananti (Oakland Street) expressed concern about the condition of other schools in the district and the impact of swing space on those schools, noting particular concern about modularity at the Schofield School and preferring to wait for the H/U decision and Late Hunnewell.
- Joelle Reidy (Prospect Street) supports a Hunnewell School project but expressed concern about the placement of modularity for swing space at Schofield.
- Ansley Martin (Bayview Road) expressed concerns about modular swing space at Sprague and noted that the area is a major hub of activity not only for the school but for walking routes to other schools, playing fields and potential nearby development. He was concerned about loss of the grass playing field for students. He also had questions about escalation costs.

Ms. Gray replied that the SBC would come back to the community with more specific information and to seek more community input about any swing space option that the SBC considers viable and worthy of further examination. She reiterated that a feasibility study is done to develop a variety of ideas and to assess their viability.

There were some questions specific to the schedule for the Hunnewell and the H/U project:

- Margaret Nyweide (Radcliffe Road) asked if disruption could be minimized by a one school year (15 month) construction plan;
- George Stathis (Willow Road) expressed support for a Hardy project and concern that the Hardy project was being delayed;
- Mona Marimow (Winthrop Road) wondered what assurances we have that the Hunnewell construction will not take more than 2 years and asked when town votes might happen;
- Niki Ofenloch (Sabrina Road) favors Early Hunnewell and the Internal Swing Space option and asked about the timeline for a decision on the Hardy/Upham project.

Mr. D'Amico replied that 17-18 months is the usual amount of time required to construct an elementary school but that abatement issues during demolition could contribute to uncertainty relative to the duration of the project. He said that an early Hunnewell would come online in 2023, one year earlier than is estimated for the Hardy/Upham building, projected for 2024. It is estimated that in the Fall of 2020, Town Meeting and voters could be asked to approve funding for construction of Hunnewell and design and construction for Hardy or Upham.

Several speakers expressed support for revisiting the St. Paul's School option for swing space.

- Andy Bechtel (Woodridge Road) said that there are upsides to St. Paul's as swing space: it would be less disruptive to other schools, it would be convenient because it is in the Hunnewell neighborhood and is appropriate since it has been a school building. He asked about the cost of this option. He said he had a positive reaction to the design presented for the new school and had come to the meeting prepared to speak about the negatives associated with the Internal Swing Space option.
- Michael Mastrianni (Pembroke Road) spoke in support of getting Hunnewell built by 2023 and favors the use of St. Paul's School for swing space for this project and potentially as swing space for other construction projects and for the PAWS program.
- Ezra Benjamin (Dover Road) said he had a positive reaction to the new construction option and expressed support for St. Paul's as the best choice for swing space.
- One speaker who did not identify himself asked if the fact that St. Paul's is an asset that does not belong to the town should be a deterrent to pursuing that option for swing space, given the disposable qualities of some of the other options being explored, such as modular classrooms.

Mr. Pitkin said that SMMA studied the St. Paul building 18 months ago and the cost of the work then identified was approximately \$7 million. Mr. D'Amico said the St. Paul's option will be re-investigated but since the property is not under Town control there are process- and schedule-related issues associated with using it for swing space. Dr. Lussier said that the renovation of St. Paul School for swing space would be its own project for the town to undertake and would require time and money. It would need to be approached within the town process for managing and funding projects and the time that takes could diminish the premium associated with an early Hunnewell.

Several speakers expressed support for an early Hunnewell generally:

- Ashley Quates (Benvenue St) favors Early Hunnewell and expressed disappointment that the Internal Swing Space option is no longer under consideration, noting that she would potentially have 4 children in four schools under that option but was still in support of it. She is concerned that the building deficits be addressed soon for the sake of children and teachers.
- Susan Clapham (Atwood Road) said that the issues with the Hunnewell building have been obvious for decades and need to be addressed. The issues related to swing space should not detract from the need to keep an eye on the big picture and to keep the project moving.
- Catherine Mirick (Kingsbury Street) said that there has been a long process exploring the elementary school building needs that has gotten the town to this point. Further delay will mean a whole generation of students at a school will not be in a new building. She said there will be cost and disruption for both the early and late options.
- Lynn Kaminsky, a teacher at Hunnewell School, said that issues related to the condition of the school have existed for all 27 years she has worked there. She said that Hunnewell teachers favor the New Construction design option and although swing space

will impact many schools, Wellesley is one overall school community and parents and staff can make it work.

Several speakers asked questions or expressed concern about reaching a decision about Hunnewell before knowing the plan for Hardy/Upham:

- Kelly Friendly (Willow Road) expressed concern about a piecemeal approach to going forward without figuring out the Hardy/Upham scenario. She said that Rt. 9 access at Hardy due to acquisition of new parcels provide a benefit for swing space there. She also expressed concern about parking at the Hunnewell site.
- Katherine Cort (Fisher Avenue) said that in her estimation the study has shown that an early Hunnewell is not feasible and that the Hardy site is the option she prefers for swing space.
- Wendy Magnan (Willow Road) said that the Hardy parcel is large and flat and has access from Rt. 9 and Weston Road. She urges a decision about the Hardy/Upham school before going forward with Hunnewell.

Ms. Gray noted that the process for the Hardy/Upham project is on its own timeline as an MSBA project, distinct from the Hunnewell project.

There were questions seeking clarification as to certain aspects of the SBC's swing space investigation:

- Michael Tobin (Cottage Street) asked if the Late Hunnewell without redistricting option (2 schools on one site) had taken into considered the attributes of the two possible sites (Hardy or Upham) as part of the analysis to determine which would work better for this option.

Ms. Gray said that the SBC will engage in the feasibility study for the Upham/Hardy project and has not assessed the advantages of one site or the other as swing space for Hunnewell.

- Amy McCarron (Lawrence Road) expressed concern about including escalation costs as a factor for this project when the cost of delay is not generally factored into the Town's discussion of other capital projects. She asked if the decision to demolish the vacated structure on the site of the MSBA project had been made and if it was appropriate to include demolition as a \$1million cost item for that swing space option.

Mr. D'Amico clarified that mothballing of one school until needed, but not two, has been the assumption. He clarified that the \$1 million cost for delaying demolition that is reflected on the slides should be corrected to reflect that that is the cost including associated site work that will be needed if two schools are operated on one campus as a swing space option.

- Mona Marimow (Winthrop Road) asked if the Warren site had been explored since it seems to have advantages.

Ms. Gray and Mr. Kelley said that the Warren Building had been a school in the past but was renovated to house other town departments and was the subject of a complicated permitting process that restricts the intensity of use there, making it an unlikely option for swing space, even if it had sufficient space.

- Ezra Benjamin (Dover Road) wondered about the availability of Morton Park as a swing space site.

Ms. Gray said that site is park land and it would be extremely difficult to use it otherwise.

- Lin Wayzen (Willow Road) asked if the purchased parcels at Hardy were under consideration for swing space or construction of the school.

Ms. Gray clarified that the acquired parcels will be included in the Hardy site that is studied in the feasibility study for the H/U project.

Two speakers asked for clarification of sustainable design features included in the options presented:

- Pamela Posey (Bradford Road) asked if there are differences in the Health and Wellness features included in the two design options. She said also that a compelling case had been made by the educators for the New Construction option.
- Quentin Prideaux (Emerson Road) asked about energy production on the Hunnewell roof and if the building can be Net Zero. He also inquired about the factors that will influence the decision as to whether to include natural gas and expressed opposition to doing so.

Ms. Dion said that both design options presumed the same Health and Wellness features which include aspects beyond building design but also practices within the building.

Mr. Pitkin replied that the PV on the Hunnewell roof may supply 35-40% of the energy for the building. The building will be net zero ready and the analysis related to natural gas is being done.

Other comments were as follows:

- Josh Dorin, a representative of the Wellesley Historical Commission (WHC), read a statement from Grant Brown, WHC chair, expressing support for preserving a portion of the 1938 structure at Hunnewell and a belief that modifications can be made to remedy design features of the Addition/Renovation option so that it better meets educational needs.
- Huan Huang (S Woodside Avenue) said that building a smaller school (fewer than 19 classrooms) at Hunnewell would be preferable.

- A resident at 55 Denton Road said that the town should support the option that is best for students and that taxpayers will support that cost.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:48 PM.

**Documents and Exhibits Used**

- Forum Presentation