

West Elementary School Building Committee Minutes Thursday, August 20, 2020 – 7:30AM

Participating via remote

Access Voting Members: Chair-Paula Colby-Clements, Shelley Berman, Andrew Flanagan, Rick Almeida, Jennifer Hunt, Susan McCready, Janet Nicosia, Siggy Pfendler, Paul Rollins, Elizabeth Roos, Donna Walsh, Heather Eigen

Non-Voting Members: Mark Johnson, Esq., Tracey Spruce, Esq., Steve Nembirkow, APS Chief Operations Officer

PMA Consultants (remote): Kevin Weeks, Brian DeFilippis,

SMMA Architects (remote): Lorraine Finnegan, Matt Rice

West Elementary School Building Committee Chair (SBC), Paula Colby Clements, opened the meeting at 7:30AM. Because of the emergency state of government due to Covid-19, all SBC members are participating via Webex. All votes will be taken by roll call at this meeting.

Approval of Minutes; Vote expected

Minutes were reviewed, some changes were made and approved.

On a Motion made by Shelley Berman and seconded by Liz Roos, the West Elementary School Building Committee approved the August 6, 2020 meeting minutes. On a roll call vote, the motion for the August 6, 2020 meeting minutes was approved on a 10-0 vote.

Discussion of Reductions to Pre-K. Vote Expected

Mr. DeFilippis explained the spreadsheet on the Pre-K space which was previously shown. The spreadsheet still includes the flexitorium. The Pre-K spaces would be a savings of \$3M if the Committee votes on this. There are some square footages in rooms that changed such as: teacher workrooms spaces were reduced in size; staff lunchroom was increased in size. The total gross square footage of the building was 34,000 sq. and now 29,625 sq. ft. (net 3,400 x 1.5 = 5,100 gross sq. footage). The Pre-K construction costs have gone down. The Chair commented that these Pre-K costs are similar to the original estimates.

For the most part, there is no detriment to the education programming with these reductions. It is functional according to the Superintendent and Principal Ms. Hunt. For the most part, reductions were made at office spaces; all the special education spaces were kept intact. The cafeteria and library will need to serve both Pre-K students and the elementary students.

On a Motion made by Shelley Berman and seconded by Heather Eigen, the West Elementary School Building Committee approved the Pre-K reductions as presented. On a roll call vote, the motion was approved on a 10-0 vote.

Discussion of Flexitorium, Vote Expected

Ms. Finnegan described the four options with no flexitorium.

Option A

This was the option that was shown at the FAS meeting

First floor plans were displayed, lot of flexibility with this option in floor space.

If the flexitorium comes out, (6000 net sq. ft.), we would be adding in approx. 1000 sq. ft. for the platform (stage) which is reimbursable. There's some concern about natural light, so modifications were made.

Option B

There's some concern about having enough natural light, so there were some modifications were made in this option. The gym doesn't open up into the dining commons in this option.

Option C

This option pulls the kitchen in-board, pushes the gym out. This option offers multi-flexibility for scheduling issues from cafeteria to the gym. Receiving and custodial is not ideal as it crosses the corridors for kitchen deliveries. Ms. Finnegan stated it can work as she has seen it in other school projects.

Option D

This is the most dynamic version and starts to take the building apart. It takes the form of having academic pods, gets natural light in dining commons; kitchen and receiving all to one side. Fitness and multipurpose rooms are in one area- the public zone in the front. Ms. Finnegan is very excited about this option.

Committee Responses:

Superintendent Berman asked about Option D that the multipurpose room seems to change in shape. The Chair asked if the kitchen looked like it was across from the dining common. Ms. Finnegan responded there are no real walls. It's a shared space area, so there would be a crossover from one side to the other.

Ms. Nicosia stated the vestibule needs to reach the administrative offices. She liked Option A with the music room going out to the stage in particular. She feels there good be a double purpose for the area. Ms. Hunt likes Option A and Option D. She likes the gym on the side, but asked about the lighting. Ms. Finnegan responded that the lighting is not at the student level, just at the stair level. They could try to get natural lighting in the corners. The Superintendent thought that having a dark cafeteria changes the whole scenery and feeling of the cafeteria. Ms. Spruce understands the options of natural light. She sees as a potential benefit in Option A. There could be an opportunity for revenue with functional green room areas and rental space purpose. Ms. Spruce feels this is important as this is a town project funded by the tax payers. Ms. Finnegan said there could be modifications made to make this work.

Ms. Pfindler asked if a decision was needed on an option today. Ms. Finnegan said the options were presented to inspire a discussion on the subject, but an option doesn't have to be picked today. They just need to let MSBA know if the flexitorium is in or out. In schematic design (SD), more work would be done to work on the option chosen.

The Chair thought that Option C seem to have an ability to use the gym or cafeteria for an assembly which is what the flexitorium would be needed for. Ms. Hunt said she is unsure of the functionality of a cafetorium during the school day. Ms. Finnegan replied chairs and tables are moved in and out of the cafetorium. Depending on the specified time, the custodian would just need to adjust the room for the school needs. There are some lessons learned from Bancroft for this design (solid doors vs rolled down grills for noise control). There will be two operable partitions to be opened up and pulled down for noise control. The Superintendent wasn't sure if this really would be space to be rented. Ms. Roos agreed with this thought and felt that people would prefer the Collins Center. She also said that natural light is the number one priority for staff.

The Chair asked the Committee if any of the options would allow them to make a decision on the flexitorium. Ms. Spruce said there should be some tweaking in the options but that they can work with them. She feels responsible to reduce the costs of the project within reason and moving forward without the flexitorium is the right thing.

Ms. Roos worried that large areas created problems with students who have sensory issues. Ms. Finnegan responded that these designs are creating different spaces and alcoves/zones for students. Learning commons within each of the pods can be used for flexible seating options. These designs will allow for 3 seatings at dining tables and enough seats for 991 students without tables.

Ms. Finnegan reminded the Committee they will meet with all the educators again and go thru every single space and what the needs are during the schematic design ("SD") process. There is a huge component of educational programming during SD.

The Superintendent asked to review Option D. The music rooms could be at the bottom and the fitness rooms could be at the top of the space design. He asked if the gym could be rotated to the northwest so it opens up a wider area from the front of the building. More work still needs to be done in this design. Some natural light would at least come in. Mr. Rollins like Option A but feels it is a non-starter because of the lack of natural light. He thinks Option D would be better choice.

Ms. Nicosia like the functionality of the kitchen, cafetorium, receiving, custodial and stage in Option B. All the activity is near the administrative offices. The position of the gym is not optimal but perhaps that can be moved.

The Chair asked if there was anyone who still wanted to keep the flexitorium in or whether the Committee considered these options without the flexitorium. Ms. Pfendler asked to see option floor designs with the flexitorium which Ms. Finnegan displayed. Ms. Roos feels there's possibilities to work with these options. She is sad about not having the flexitorium, but understands the Committee and the Town may not support the idea. Ms. Hunt concurred that these options give them creative space designs to work with. Other design options with risers and expanding the music room areas were discussed as possibilities.

Ms. Nicosia stated she wasn't in favor of the flexitorium. There's a problem with equity having something here that's costly, when there are other buildings still in need. She supports the Pre-K at this new building. Ms. Roos agreed equity is important. She would like to see the staffing to be equal to the services provided at the school. The personnel piece is as important as the space needs. Ms. McCready stated she supported Ms. Roos in the personnel issue. She also doesn't want to see the West Elementary project lose support because of the flexitorium costs. There are many options and creativity to get the school what it needs. Ms. Hunt appreciates their perspective on this personnel issue.

On a Motion made by Susan McCready and seconded by Shelley Berman, the West Elementary School Building Committee voted to formally remove the Flexitorium from the West Elementary project. On a roll call vote, the motion was approved on a 9-0 vote.

The Superintendent asked if there could be some reconfigurations and increase the music rooms size by having the music rooms next to each other and provide alternative space so that these rooms can be used during the day. Ms. Finnegan said it would not be in the district's best interest to change the room sizes now. Changes can be made at schematic design. Committee members discussed what options they preferred and chose Option D as the design to present at the MSBA presentation.

The Chair asked what next steps should be done and what information can be made to the public. Mr. DeFilippis stated there should be another public forum scheduled soon. Ms. Finnegan also asked for new financial numbers based on the now reduced project costs which she hopes the Town Manager can provide the Committee.

On a Motion made by Shelley Berman and seconded by Jennifer Hunt, the West Elementary School Building Committee, voted to approve to go into the schematic design phase contingent upon MSBA approval. On a roll call vote, the motion was approved on an 8-0 vote.

The next public forum meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 13th at 7PM. Mr. Johnson suggested providing a video update on the website to give the public updates before this forum. Also, the SBC will start to meet in the evenings and set Tuesday, September 8 as their meeting date. Meetings every other week will be scheduled as needed.

On a Motion made by Susan McCready and seconded by Jennifer Hunt, the West Elementary School Building Committee voted to adjourn the August 20th SBC meeting. On a roll call vote, the motion was approved on an 8-0 vote. The meeting was adjourned at 9:15AM

Respectfully,
Alison Phelan, Recorder

CERTIFICATION
Town Clerk and Chief Strategy Officer
Austin Simko

Date:

Town Stamp: