

SBAC Meeting
August 13, 2014

Attendees:

SBAC Members - Steve Perlmutter, Owen Beenhouwer, Doug Adams, Becky McFall, Peter Sugar, Vin Cannistraro, Maggy Pietropaolo, Buck Creel
(absent - Tim Christenfeld, Hathaway Russell, Ken Bassett, Gary Taylor)
Dore & Whittier – Don Walter, Jon Richardson, Jason Boone
Also Present: Jennifer Glass, School Committee

Introductions of the SBAC members and the Dore & Whittier Architect Team were made.

Jennifer Glass, School Committee Chair provided an overview of the work to be done related to the Lincoln School project. A summary of comments is provided.

There is a need to transition from a school project to a Town project.

We are looking for visionary pragmatism, understanding that there are the nuts and bolts of the school building that need to be taken care of and we want to do this in a way that is fiscally responsible to the community with good value. Regarding the visionary aspect – we know that no matter what the approach the Lincoln School will require a significant amount of money. We need to know that we aren't just putting dollars into bricks and mortar and need to create a vision and mission of educational improvement. There have been pieces where we have been successful conveying the vision for the school and times where we have not.

All of this work has to be done with the community.

D&W: How was outreach done during the first feasibility study?

Response: Explained SBC, mailers, neighborhood coffees, presentations to organizations and boards, town meeting presentations. If could go back in time, there was a point in working w/ OMR where we had 11 options that were narrowed to 3. Two of the three options kept the bldg configuration and one did not. The decision to go with the one that did not keep the current building configuration and then following the MSBA process without a town vote and clear communication with the Town about the choice of preferred option was a fork in the road where looking back we would have had more community discussion and a vote.

D&W: do you think the right option was chosen?

SBAC member 1: The right options were considered. The Town expressed a preference for keeping the current site plan.

SBAC member 2: average citizens felt we were saying come see what we are doing, they weren't really interested in hearing our perspective. The communicated benefits were too wishy washy, people didn't see the value.

Landscape has changed. Superintendent's leadership style is notably different from her predecessor.

Approved 8/26/2014

Audience member: It's important to know that the MSBA building process was taking place during a severe economic down turn which was also a factor.

SBAC member: The communication process following the failed vote generated consensus amongst participants and was a process more in tune with the Town.

SBAC member: The town will always support the schools as long as a clear rationale is given for the needs.

SBAC member – The schools are a large portion of the town budget. The Town is very supportive of the schools as evidenced by their support of the school budget.

SBAC member – Discussed what SBACI wasn't able to do. You [the architects] have an opportunity to carry the work of the SBAC forward.

Recommend spending time with the superintendent and the School Committee to understand the educational priorities. These priorities need to drive the plans and the value communicated. Identify what would be eliminated from components based on funding limitations. Bring options that provide educational value at a price that the town will accept. There may be a value of having an all in option so the town can see its cost.

SBAC member - Read the press release on the selection of D&W. That's why you're here. This will be a challenge given the varying opinions of the members of the town. The last time around the citizen was left out of decisions about Town Hall and the School.

D&W - What does the town know about this process and how do they feel about going through yet another of the same study?

SBAC member 1: It's not the same study but a continuation of the work that has been done.

SBAC member 2: You need to start with the work since the failed vote.

SBAC member 3: You need to have an objective, non-political perspective and bring a higher degree of professionalism.

D&W- We know what we need to do. We will get into the building and take a facilities perspective first and then work from that point (create baseline).

School Committee member: There are different conceptions of what is baseline. There needs to be some early conversation that includes wrestling with defining what is included in a "baseline" concept and to work with the community to determine what should be included.

D&W- Explained the MSBA process – 1) do nothing option, cost of operating the building if you do nothing 2) new construction option on the other end of the spectrum 3) Repair project and addition/renovation options

Audience member: There's a different way to view this...the preferred option and subsequent L shape were aimed at meeting all of the elements of the SOI. If meeting all of those elements is above the acceptable amount it won't fly. Leads to what are options that are at an acceptable cost level.

SBAC member: I don't know what the baseline is. Loading up the baseline will be very expensive and the visionary stuff will be crowded out. There must be a way of prioritizing what needs to be done. Can we cut back on some of the facility items to make way for the visionary items?

D&W: We'll identify all of the facility needs. They don't all have to be done immediately.

D&W: There's a tension between the MSBA process and an independent path.
SBAC member: I have concerns about the political aspects and stewardship of the building. Not taking care of the building in a comprehensive manner will lead to successive overrides for subsequent projects. I am not sure that there will be an appetite for this approach over time.

The SBAC with Dore and Whittier Architects discussed the schedule of tasks and began to create a preliminary schedule of meetings and community outreach events. During this process, there was discussion about the intersection of the school building project with the possible community center project. Concerns were expressed about the timing of these projects and the need for communication and synchronization between these groups was emphasized. We will meet 8/19 to finalize the schedule.

Vin Cannistraro and Steven Perlmutter agreed to man the table at the PTO Picnic on September 10th from 5:30 – 7:00. They will be available to talk with parents about the work being done and provide information about upcoming community forums.

Peter Sugar made a motion to approve the SBAC minutes of 8/5, the motion was seconded by Doug Adams. The SBAC voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12pm.

Respectfully submitted by Becky McFall