

School Building Committee
Town Hall Room A, 25 Green Street
Wednesday, August 10, 2016 – 7:00 p.m.

Acronyms used within:

MSBA: Massachusetts School Building Authority

PDP: Preliminary Design Program

OPM: Owner's Project Manager

PSR: Preferred Schematic Report

SBC: School Building Committee

BDG: Birchwood Design Group

1. Call to Order

7:05 p.m.

Attendees: Jeff Anderson, Dr. William Hart, Barry Hopping, Richard Howard, Mitchell Lowe, Sheila McAdams, Kevin Murphy, Steve Solomon, and Chub Whitten.

Also Attending: Joseph DeSantis of PMA Consultants, Owner's Project Manager. Robert Bell of Perkins Eastman, Project Architect. Ashley Iannuccilli of Birchwood Design Group, Landscape Architect. Greg Gagnon, Chief of Ipswich Fire Department

Not Attending: Robin Crosbie, Joanne Cuff, Jonathan Elder, Nishan Mootafian, Sarah Player, and Bill Hodge.

2. Review and Approval of 8/3/2016 Meeting Minutes & PMA Invoice #3

The Building Committee unanimously voted approval of the minutes from the 8/3/2016 Building Committee Meeting. The Building Committee also unanimously voted approval of PMA invoice #3, in the amount of \$14,608 for OPM services during the months of June and July 2016.

3. Meeting Introduction & Acknowledgements

Kevin Murphy began the meeting by thanking Dr. Hart, Sheila McAdams, and the rest of the teachers for answering the questions asked by the MSBA in an immediate manner. Kevin Murphy mentioned that the goal of this meeting is to provide a platform for the community to share ideas and thoughts concerning the Winthrop School site, and for Perkins Eastman / Birchwood Design Group to discuss progress on their preliminary designs for the Winthrop School site.

Kevin Murphy, William Hart, and Barry Hopping provided an outline of "how we got here" for any community members who may not have been following along during the entire process: 3 SOIs submitted to MSBA, PMA/Perkins Eastman selected, investigation of 5 sites, removal of Town Hall / Mile Lane sites, development/approval of educational program, Doyon site removal, creation of a sub-committee to identify any alternate sites (no land owners of viable sites were interested in selling), two School Committee votes on school configuration of 1 school with 775 students, Bialek Park / Article 97 analysis with Town Counsel, and mention of the information that is available on the Ipswich SBC website (www.IpswichSBC.org).

4. Perkins Eastman / Birchwood Design Group Update- Part 1- Existing Site

Ashley Iannuccilli from Birchwood Design Group (BDG) began the design team's presentation on progress at the Winthrop School Site. The existing site was discussed first (orientation/sun path, 92 parking spots, trees, playground, etc.). Bob Bell discussed the existing building's design and highlighted some challenges concerning the existing site (no emergency evacuation route around building, not energy efficient, etc.). The most

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striking potential challenge involves the fact that construction would need to take place at the front of the site, but this is where cars currently enter.

Bob Bell discussed the vision/goals (vibrant, natural light, community, etc.), the key components of the educational program (“what you’re doing now versus what you want to be doing”), and the space needs (MSBA requirements, etc.).

5. PE/BDG Update- Part 2- Discussion of 4 Preliminary Designs @ Winthrop

Bob Bell showed the 4 preliminary site options for the Winthrop School Site (Design W1A, Design W2A, Design W3B, and Design W2A.1). For Design W1A, multi-phasing requirements, lack of parking spaces, the community center on Central St., and the media center not being centered in the academic wing were discussed. Design W2A was introduced as a semi-mirror image of Design W1A. For Design W2A, increased construction phasing requirements (3 phases), increased potential costs and timeline, the 2nd floor location of the media center, the improved location of cafeteria/gym, and better traffic circulation were discussed. For Designs W3B and W2A.1, Bob Bell explained that the placement of the gymnasium above the cafeteria would require a variance due to a ceiling height of over 37 feet.

Bob Bell explained that massing and shadow studies are being conducted for the Winthrop Site. Bob then opened the floor to any community questions and concerns.

6. Community Q&A Session

During the Q&A session, ten (10) community members (including Selectman Ed Rauscher), approached the podium. Many asked more than one question. Their questions and answers are summarized below.

Question #1 (Ipswich citizen): *Is the new school going to be run as two elementary schools on one site, or as one big school? (Administration, etc.)*

K. Murphy/S. McAdams: The goal is to construct a building that is flexible, under one administration structure. Educational needs must be addressed. The preliminary designs allow the building to work either way, and provides the option for students to be arranged by grade, competence, or school. R. Bell showed plans to demonstrate their point, also discussing the use of operable partition walls for enhanced flexibility over time.

Question #2a (Manning Street abutter): *Please further discuss the following question from the FAQ of the Ipswich SBC website: “Will there be re-configured roads to support whatever location is ultimately selected? Is funding included for re-configurations needed? A.) Sidewalk support? B.) Pick-up/drop-off?”*

Question #2b (Manning Street abutter): *Please explain the process by which the following needs get identified: vehicular flow, drainage issues, decibel levels, emergency access. More specifically, are they identified before an individual site is selected? Will this information be disclosed to abutters?*

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R. Bell: There was a feasibility study that took place, along with an expansive traffic study that was more comprehensive than the norm. Sound metering began last week.

K. Murphy: The acoustical engineer will design a shielding around all exterior mechanical equipment to dampen sounds. Equipment with lower decibel levels will be selected. Drainage/water quality will be studied in great detail. Fire/Police Department inputs have been discussed for evacuation/emergency access purposes.

Question #3a (Winthrop abutter): *What is the status on the cost estimates?*

Question #3b (Winthrop abutter): *Has there been input from the Fire Department in terms of their need for a new facility?*

Question #3c (Winthrop abutter): *Does one plan have a shorter construction window than another? Please provide some insight on an estimated timeframe.*

R. Bell: Fire Department input has been considered. For cost estimates, there has been a report which estimates construction cost, total project cost, and the district share.

K. Murphy: There is a great deal of preliminary cost information on the SBC website (www.ipswichsbc.org). The FAQ on the SBC website (www.ipswichsbc.org/faq.html), has an answer to your scheduling question. September 2020 is currently the earliest targeted completion date.

Question/Comment #4 (Ipswich citizen): *My biggest concern is traffic for both sites. My kids walked to school at the Winthrop ES. I am wondering, what number of kids who are supposed to be walking are actually walking? How can you encourage more walkers? Will there be adequate bussing to the combined school?*

K. Murphy: This is an important question that the SBC needs to work through. Currently, there are 8 busses (5 for Doyon, 3 for Winthrop). A combined school at the Winthrop School site will create the need for more Doyon School students to be bussed to the Winthrop site. Say that a 9th or 10th bus is added. Now the question is how many cars this alleviates from traffic flow. Obviously car traffic is a big issue, especially on snowy, rainy, or cold days.

S. McAdams: This is a cost issue as well. I have been speaking to Safe Routes, who does discussions/safety programs with kids, and makes towns eligible for enhanced state funding. It is the job of all of us to “make walking cool again”. At the Winthrop School, they did “walking school busses” where faculty would join kids on the walk to school. This boosted the number of walkers, as the students and parents, felt more comfortable with walking. I do not believe that this is an issue with the children, but rather with the parents.

SBC: There is only 1 Doyon walker currently. There are students who attend the Doyon who live at the buffer zone and may be able to walk to the Winthrop site. Creative solutions are needed.

C. Whitten: A 10 queue bus plan, which is separate from a 33 car queue, is incorporated into preliminary Design W2A.1.

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Question #5a (Ed Rauscher, Selectman, *acting as a citizen*): *What is the number of cars queued up on any given day?*

K. Murphy: The total traffic count (not queue) is 100 cars at Doyon, and 134 cars at Winthrop during a 30-45 minute period at the end of the school day. This doesn't include cars that were parked across the street.

Question #5b (Ed Rauscher, Selectman, *acting as a citizen*): *How many parking spots are currently at each school?*

R. Bell: 92 spots at Winthrop, approximately 85% of which are utilized. 86 spots at Doyon, approximately 77% of which are utilized.

Question #5c-1 (Ed Rauscher, Selectman, *acting as a citizen*): *Each preliminary plan shown for the Winthrop site mentions that off-site parking will be required. Can R. Bell please discuss offsite parking ideas and their associated costs?*

R. Bell: This discussion is just starting.

Question #5c-2 (Ed Rauscher, Selectman, *acting as a citizen*): *How long will this discussion take?*

R. Bell: This is unclear; however, most likely over the next few months.

Question #5d (Ed Rauscher, Selectman, *acting as a citizen*): *Can R. Bell please discuss the timeline of each preliminary design option shown earlier?*

R. Bell:

- Design W1A: 2 large phases, roughly 2 years.
- Design W2A: 3 phases, roughly 3 years.
- Design W3B: Add/reno, roughly 2.5 years
- Design W2A.1: Roughly 2.5 years

Comment (Ed Rauscher, Selectman, *acting as a citizen*): *I am deeply concerned over the size of this project at this small site. I have concerns with diminishing the historic appearance of this site.*

K. Murphy: Offsite parking is an important future consideration.

Comment/Question #6 (Ipswich citizen): *I don't see the Winthrop School site supporting 1 large school due to traffic/parking issues. Parking is solvable, but driving is not. Can we consider charging parents to drop their kids off?*

No comment from SBC.

Question #7 (Ipswich citizen): *How much money has been allocated to the Feasibility Study?*

K. Murphy: \$945,000, of which 49.05% is reimbursed by the MSBA on a monthly basis. This leaves a district share of \$525,000.

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Question/Comment #8 (Ipswich citizen): *I agree with the previous two speakers' comments about the parking/traffic. In town, we have been patching the fire and police departments' buildings together. I think that the Winthrop School site is an ideal spot for a community safety center.*

Question #9a (Ed Rauscher, Selectman, acting as a citizen): *Can you explain the MSBA reimbursements again?*

K. Murphy: \$945,000 has been allocated to the Feasibility Study, of which 49.05% is reimbursed by the MSBA on a monthly basis. This leaves a district share of \$525,000.

Question #9b (Ed Rauscher, Selectman, acting as a citizen): *Does the MSBA still reimburse the \$420,000 if the project doesn't pass the town vote?*

K. Murphy: Yes.

Question #9c (Ed Rauscher, Selectman, acting as a citizen): *Will the \$945,000 allocation be exceeded?*

K. Murphy: No. Roughly \$845,000 has been spent to date. PMA / Perkins Eastman's contracts will leave approximately \$40,000. If the Bialek Park site is selected, there may be more costs incurred (Railroad consultants, etc.).

Question #10 (Ipswich citizen): *There has been a great deal of effort to find a viable site for this project. Has there been any consideration for a site for the public safety building?*

K. Murphy: The town will have to work equally hard to find a site for the public safety building.

Question #11 (Bialek Park abutter): *If the process moves forward at either site, what considerations have been given towards re-use of the then-vacated school sites?*

K. Murphy: Yes. If the Bialek Park site is selected, some playgrounds/fields would remain at Bialek, and the Doyon Building would be removed so new ball fields could be built at the Doyon School site. This would free up the Winthrop School site.

Dr. Hart: If the Bialek Park site is selected, the School Committee would vote to release the Winthrop School site to the town for whatever they want to do with it.

K. Murphy: If the Winthrop School site is selected, there would need to be consideration as to what to do with the Doyon School site.

7. Workshop Activity #1- Existing Winthrop Site Components **8:35 PM**

Bob Bell requested that all community members present cluster into groups of 8 and provide comments / observations on the existing Winthrop School site that the design team may have missed (e.g.: thicker trees on one side, students cutting through the

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woods, etc.). Tables were set up through the room, each with a large print out copy of the existing Winthrop School site plan.

After 10 minutes of discussion, the results were presented. Bob Bell plans on formally composing and distributing the results.

Some comments include:

- Desire to keep playgrounds.
- Conversation about where parents park/walk to get students downtown.
- Sidewalks are wide and in great shape.
- Massing issues.
- Parents park on Mineral St. and Manning St., sometimes parking halfway onto the sidewalk.
 - There are no curbs, just a sloped sidewalk that meets the road.
- On Central Street, people park on the North side of 133.
- Parking on Mineral Street is usually bearable as there is a strictly enforced “parking on one side only” rule.
 - The Mineral Street abutter suggested enforcing this on Manning Street as well.
- Asking neighboring businesses if they want to sell their land to the town for parking
 - One citizen mentioned that “Cumberland Farms has wanted to move forever”.
 - Kevin Murphy said that purchasing property for off-site parking is a great idea.

8. Workshop Activity #2- Winthrop Preliminary Design Options 9:10 PM

Bob Bell handed out red, yellow, and green sheets of paper to everyone present and asked them to write the following on each sheet for the 4 preliminary design options.

- Green paper- What do you like about this design?
- Yellow paper- Do you see any possible opportunities for improvement of this design?
- Red paper- What questions/concerns do you have about this design?

At 9:25pm, Bob Bell discussed some of the comments on each of the 4 preliminary design options. Bob Bell reminded the committee that he plans on formally composing and distributing the results.

Some comments include:

- W1A- Green comments: Community areas up front, good natural lighting, drop-off looks like a nice layout. Yellow comment: Stacked busses.

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- W2A/W2A.1- Green comments: Good room configuration, nice long car queue. Red comment: Timeline too long.
- W3B: Yellow comment: Possible idea for a shuttle from a downtown municipal parking lot.
- All options: a footbridge could be used to alleviate traffic from people crossing Central Street.

9. New Business

There was no new business discussed.

10. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the School Building Committee was scheduled for 8/24/16 at 7:00 p.m. in Room A of the Town Hall to focus on the Bialek Park site. Kevin Murphy informed the remaining crowd that on Monday 8/15/16, the Board of Selectmen have a meeting that will include discussion of the Bialek Park site.

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:41p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Joseph DeSantis, PMA Consultants LLC, Owner's Project Manager