

**BELMONT HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE
FINAL MEETING MINUTES
January 23, 2018
Wellington School Cafeteria
7:00 PM**

2018 FEB -5 PM 2:31

Meeting #37

Committee Members Attending:

Chair Lovallo; Members: Adam Dash, John Phelan, Tom Caputo, Pat Bruschi, Dan Richards, Phyllis Marshall, Bob McLaughlin, Joe DeStefano, Joel Mooney, Diane Miller, Chris Messer, Emma Thurston, Jamie Shea

Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator

From Daedalus: Tom Gatzunis

From Perkins+Will: Brooke Trivas, Patrick Cunningham, Rick Kuhn

BHSBC Members Absent: [none]

School Committee (SC) Members Attending: Chair Lisa Fiore, Catherine Bowen, (Tom Caputo), Andrea Prestwich, Susan Burgess-Cox, Murat Bicer
[Chair Fiore called the SC to order at 7:06 p.m.]

Board of Selectmen Attending: Chair Jim Williams, Mark Paolillo (arrived 7:29 p.m.) and Adam Dash
[Chair Williams called the BOS to order at 7:06 p.m.]

There were roughly 85 citizens in attendance at this meeting.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m. by Chair Lovallo. Chair Lovallo reviewed the agenda and he stated his hope that the dialogue (and engagement with the community) would continue to be open and respectful.

II. Comments from Belmont Residents

Ms. Hyon-Jee Voigt stated that the decisions made tonight will impact the younger students in Belmont. These decisions could negatively impact the growth of the community as well.

Ms. Gerri Cummings, a lifetime resident of Belmont, stated that she is not interested in supporting a new high school; Belmont students are doing well with the current high school.

Ms. Ellen Schreiber thanked all the committees involved who have worked on this project. This has been a transparent and informative process.

Mr. Justin [Backley? sp?], stated that the overall new building costs are a concern, and perhaps the

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public should be able to comment *after* the discussion pertaining to costs. The price of the building is a concern for the community, he said, even if it is an investment in the future.

Mr. Jack Weis asked whether the project is at greater risk of failing at the polls if the most expensive grade configuration option is put forth to the voters. Perhaps the grade 9-12 option would stand a better chance of passing, he wondered.

Ms. Fizzie Cowing, BHS graduate and Belmont parent, spoke to her concern about the Brendan Grant Memorial Baseball Field. Brendan's memory needs to be preserved wherever the new baseball field is relocated to. She also requested that consideration be paid to other sentimental aspects of the current building. Chair Lovallo commented that the Building Committee is very sensitive of the Brendan Grant Memorial Field and contacted the Brendan Grant Foundation at the onset of design. The Foundation is aware that the Brendan Grant Memorial Field is moving and continues to provide comments to the Building Committee.

III. Project Costs

Chair Lovallo provided some background information on the cost factors of the project. He spoke to the many factors that impact the cost of the project. There are construction costs as well as project costs. Project costs include construction costs ("hard costs"), but also encompass many other cost components. He then explained how the construction cost estimates are arrived at during this phase of estimation – mainly they are derived from the square footage of the project, which is controlled by the MSBA. He explained several other factors that impact the cost of the project, including the escalation costs.

The building committee, he said, is working very hard to control the costs. A better-defined cost estimation should be known over the next few months. He explained that the MSBA will define its reimbursement of eligible costs, which will help identify Belmont's contribution. The MSBA has a construction cost cap as well as exclusions, i.e., things they will not reimburse for. The current estimated reimbursement rate for Belmont is roughly 36.89 percent, and is based on socioeconomics and demographics.

Ms. Shea summarized that the project cost is driven by construction costs, which are based on square footage. She then asked: to reduce the size of the building, and therefore reduce the costs, would the predicted enrollment need to decrease? Chair Lovallo agreed that the building size (square footage) is based on enrollment.

Member McLaughlin noted that if the grade configuration for the new building is 7-12, Belmont will save money by not needing to build an elementary school. Mr. Phelan agreed and noted that a grade 9-12 school will not handle the enrollment issues at the lower grades; in that scenario, costs incurred to handle lower-grade enrollment would be around \$54-56M. Even if the new building is grades 7-12, some right-sizing would be needed at the Chenery and elementary levels, costing about \$18M. He noted that it would not be possible to build an elementary school near the high school; in fact, no space has been identified in Belmont where an elementary school could be built.

Mr. McLaughlin then spoke to the tax impact (an average of \$1,800 per year for 30 years) and added that the new high school would likely increase home values in Belmont.

Mr. Phelan added that, while there is financial help from the MSBA to fund a new high school, there

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are no corresponding vehicles to fund the building of a new elementary school or make additions to the existing schools. The grade 7-12 option may therefore provide the best and most cost-effective option to the community.

Mr. Gatzunis spoke to the MSBA process for supporting another elementary school. It would be a very long way down the road, he said, and could not even begin until the high school process comes to completion.

The BHSBC and SC discussed issues relating to the potential costs of the various design options.

Preliminary Design Program (PDP) Comments from the MSBA

Mr. Gatzunis noted that the MSBA's comments on the recently submitted PDP report were not at all atypical. The MSBA asked for some clarification on certain points. The responses will be submitted in the Preferred Schematic Report (PSR) document.

IV. Subcommittee on Building Systems and Operations

Chair Lovallo explained what this subcommittee might be responsible for and why it is necessary at this stage in the process.

Member McLaughlin moved: To form a Subcommittee on Building Systems and Operations. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Preliminary Site Design Updates

Ms. Trivas explained the MSBA requirements around the various design options. She explained some of the differences among the options. The pool and the field house would not be allowed in the option that is total new construction C3.1. She explained the work that has been ongoing with various consultants, e.g., landscape, traffic, ZNE, etc. The playing fields (except the tennis courts) are accommodated within the new options. It was noted that the designs would continue to evolve and that conversations related to traffic would also continue.

Mr. McLaughlin raised several issues relating to phasing, which drives much of the decision-making process. He advised that it might be cheaper to separately fund a new pool, rather than to finance an expensive building, in order to save the existing pool. He said that he favors options C2.3 and C2.4.

Ms. Trivas briefly reviewed some of the points of the four design options.

Mr. Phelan noted that community feedback has been incorporated into the design options. He agreed that the staging of the work is a very important consideration and has a high education value to it. He said that he also favors C2.3 and C2.4. Both of these options have profound educational benefits for students as well as teachers. Ms. Shea concurred with Mr. McLaughlin and Mr. Phelan's reasons for favoring C2.3 and C2.4. She said C2.4 provides multi-age educational opportunities. Ms. Miller explained why she prefers the C2.4 option, e.g., open spaces, natural light.

Selectman Dash expressed his thoughts on the four options. C2.4 is more circular in design, keeps more greenery intact, and does not hug Concord Ave.

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Chair Lovallo noted that the School Committee would now opine on the grade configuration options: 9-12, 8-12, 7-12.

VI. Selection of Grade Configuration (School Committee)

Superintendent Phelan spoke to many of the challenges facing the school district over the years. He acknowledged the community for its commitment to education. He then reviewed the historical district-wide enrollment growth as well as the enrollment forecasts, which clearly continue to trend upwards. He described the impact on the lower grades (as well as some of the cost implications) of each of the grade configuration options. He outlined several challenges of only building a 9-12/8-12 building. He then outlined his support for and the overall benefits of the 7-12 configuration option.

SC Chair Fiore then asked for a motion in support of the Superintendent's grade configuration recommendation – 7-12.

SC Member Caputo moved: That the SC accept the Superintendent's recommendation for a 7-12 grade configuration option for the BHS project as required by the MSBA.

The SC then discussed the grade 7-12 option and how they came to support this grade configuration.

The motion passed unanimously.

[The SC adjourned at 9:18 p.m.]

VII. Selection of Preferred Solution (BHSBC)

Member McLaughlin moved: To instruct the design team to pursue the C2.4 proposal.
The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Lovallo thanked the Superintendent and the SC for all of their efforts.

VIII. Next Full Building Committee Meeting

Thursday, February 1, 2018 at 6:30 p.m.

X. Related Meeting Documents

1. Concept Cost Summary - PDP
2. BHS Design Selection Options

XI. End Meeting

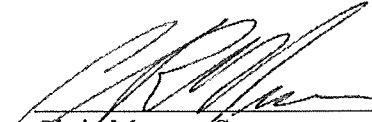
The meeting ended at 9:22 p.m. by Mr. McLaughlin.

Respectfully submitted by:

Lisa Gibalerio

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Approved:


Chris Messer, Secretary

Date

2/5/18