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BELMONT MIDDLE and HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE
FINAL MEETING MINUTES
July 24, 2019
Homer Building Gallery
7:00 PM

Meeting #76

Committee Members Attending:

Chair Lovallo; Members Mike McAllister, Tom Caputo, Pat Bruschi, Joe DeStefano, Joel Mooney, Diane Miller, Chris Messer, Emma Thurston, Steve Dorrance, Kate Bowen, Ellen Schreiber, Patrice Garvin

From Daedalus: Tom Gatzunis

From Perkins+Will: Brooke Trivas, Chris Karlson, Patrick Cunningham, Rick Kuhn, Vital Albuquerque, Elizabeth Dame

From Skanska: Jim Craft

BMHSBC Members Absent: John Phelan, Bob McLaughlin, Jamie Shea

There were about 25 citizens in the audience.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Chair Lovallo. He began by showing a few photos of the construction site from the live webcam. He next reviewed the agenda items and turned to the first item.

II. Minutes of Previous Meetings

Ms. Bruschi moved: To approve the Minutes of 7/17/19.
The motion passed unanimously.

III. Façade Brick Discussion

Before turning to the brick topic, BMHSBC members and others at the table introduced themselves.

Regarding brick for the building, Ms. Trivas noted that the actual brick selection will not be made this evening. She then reviewed some of the samples that were on display prior to the meeting (i.e., starting at 6:00 pm). She reviewed various brick color palates and brick samples. She discussed panel varieties, durability, hues, size, layout, jointing, and blending.

BMHSBC members offered feedback and asked questions concerning the brick façade samples.

Ms. Trivas then discussed types of mortar (light or dark, straight or flushed, joints/tooling, etc.).

BMHSBC members offered feedback and asked questions concerning brick mortar.

Chair Lovallo referenced a 1995 Brick Report for Chenery Middle School, which was prepared by Ms. Mary Kennedy who was in the audience. She shared some information on this brick design study. She noted Harvard brick (and suggested that Committee members go and look at this type of blending), which is very pleasing to the eye.

Another round of brick sample panels will be prepared based on the comments received and should be ready in September for the Committee to revisit and discuss.

IV. Auditorium Design Presentation

Mr. Cunningham began with an overview of the auditorium. He pointed out the lower and upper seating areas, the exits and entryways, the stage, ramps, catwalks, restroom locations, and the balcony. He discussed accessibility for those with mobility issues. He noted that student artwork will be on display and will be visible from the school's exterior. He explained that wood would be used to add warmth to the interior design; the wood has an acoustic function, as well. He described the ceiling lighting and materials, and showed views of the auditorium from different perspectives. Seating, aisle lighting, and sight lines were discussed.

Chair Lovallo explained some of the new technology that will be used, e.g., live cameras that feed into nearby rooms. Ms. Trivas explained the educational uses of this. Chair Lovallo noted that the light board and sound board will all be new.

V. Regional Auditorium Comparisons (Orchestra Pit Research)

Ms. Thurston reviewed that she and Mr. Messer surveyed other schools to see if they had an orchestra pit. She noted that there are various pit options that can be considered. She showed photos of pits that were recently built in Billerica, North Reading, Brockton, etc. She noted that *sound* is definitely an issue with the current setup at BHS. She also explained limitations with sightlines and space.

Mr. Matt Cubstead, Patrons Co-Chair, thanked the Committee for their work. He noted how impressed he has been with Belmont's commitment to the performing arts. He talked about how important the Theater Arts programs are to the students and to the community. He spoke to how important the pit is to support the music and theater programs. He acknowledged that this will cost money.

VI. Orchestra Pit Options

Mr. Kuhn reviewed several pit options. A middle-of-the-road option was presented and discussed. There would be space for musicians slightly recessed into the floor. Chair Lovallo described the component floor system – a platform foldable floor. Ms. Thurston agreed that there are various in-between options.

Mr. Asadorian, Director of Performing and Fine Arts, explained some of the specifics of the Belmont Middle High School. He said the space will be used almost daily (e.g., middle and high school concerts, performances, Town Meeting, etc.). It will be too onerous to have people lifting and storing platform flooring on a daily basis. He said that the \$300,000 (needed for a mechanical lift) might be spent on manpower over a few short years. Chair Lovallo suggested that perhaps students could do the floor lifting and storing.

Mr. Messer stressed that the foldable floor is a workaround solution. Perhaps the mini-pit option can stay in place and Town Meeting (etc.) can work around this depression in the floor.

Mr. Flam, Theater Director, agreed that the space is very busy and he agreed that the button pushing option (mechanical floor lift) is ideal. However, a manual system in the new space might be workable. He said it will be considerable effort and work, but it might be worthwhile.

Chair Lovallo noted that cost comparisons will need to be explored. He suggested that a final decision should be made next month.

Mr. McAllister requested price and pit component clarification.

Mr. Messer noted that the pit-related costs will need clarification. Chair Lovallo said that the mini pit option might cost about \$300-400K – which is half of what the full mechanical lift and full re-moveable floor system will cost.

Ms. Thurston noted that, if nothing is altered, the new space will be either the same as what we have or – in reality – not even as good as what we’ve had. The theater and music programs deserve a better pit design.

Committee members asked questions and offered feedback. Several committee members suggested that, with some out-of-the box thinking, perhaps the permanent mini pit could be workable. Town Meeting could be set up on the stage, for example. Chair Lovallo stated that various Committee members will do some homework.

VII. Comments from Belmont Residents

Mr. Clemmons Myer asked about the acoustics consultant. He said that the labor costs over the years will add up and might surpass the cost of a mechanical lift. This should be looked at in the context of the entire school.

Mr. Scott Shettfield said that spending money on the auditorium is money well spent as the auditorium is well used. This will be a good investment for the community.

Ms. Jen Thomas asked why Town Meeting (TM) can’t meet at Chenery? Ms. Brusch explained that the neighborhood did not want it held there (unless the AC is needed) and it was promised that it would not be held there. Ms. Thomas asked that this issue be re-visited. Where TM is held should not supersede the needs of the kids and the community. Especially since TM is held roughly six times a year, at most.

Ms. Alana [?], BHS student, encouraged the Committee to support the pit.

Mr. Nathaniel Myer, BHS graduate and musician, expressed the importance of and need to have the appropriate pit set up. He said students need the appropriate resources.

Ms. Samantha Thurston (?), a BHS graduate, advocated strongly for some sort of pit. She underscored how helpful this will be to the overall acoustics.

Chair Lovallo noted that this topic will be revisited in about a month. Pricing research will need to

occur.

VIII. Interior Design Team Planning

Chair Lovallo summarized what Perkins+Will have done so far on the Interior Design.

Ms. Trivas reviewed what might happen at three upcoming interior design meetings. She noted that colors and materials on ceilings, walls, and floors will be reviewed, and that student artwork and a potential mascot will be incorporated as well. These meetings will happen at the P+W offices in Boston; the first meeting will be on August 7 in the afternoon. Chair Lovallo asked that interested Committee members connect with him.

IX. Updates: South Terrace, Plaza, and Landscape

Chair Lovallo stated that this topic will be covered at a later date.

X. Committee Site Tours

Mr. Gatzunis informed the Committee on how to schedule a site tour. He said to contact him or Mr. Nolan to set up the tour. Chair Lovallo suggested that the Committee could tour the site together.

XI. Other/New Business

None.

XII. Next Full Building Committee Meeting

Wednesday, August 7, 2019 at 7:30 a.m.	Homer Building, 3 rd Floor
Wednesday, August 21, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.	Beech Street Center
Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2019 at 7:30 a.m.	Homer Building, 3 rd Floor

XIII. Related Meeting Documents

1. Brick Report 1995
2. Orchestra Pit Research
3. POMS letter of support
4. Perkins+Will Interior Design

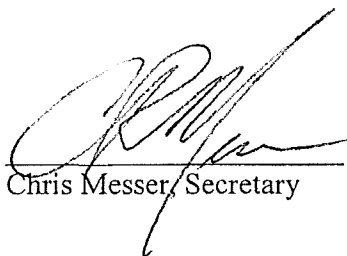
14. Adjournment

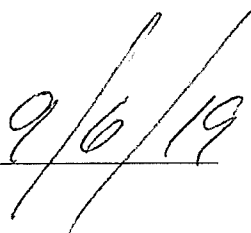
The meeting ended at 9:15 p.m. by Mr. Mooney.

Respectfully submitted by:

Lisa Gibalerio

Approved:


Chris Messer, Secretary


Date