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WELLINGTON SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE
MINUTES
May 9, 2012
School Administration Building Conference Room
7:30 AM

Meeting #151

Committee Members Attending: Joe Barrell, John Bowe, Laurie Graham, Mark Haley, Bill Lovallo, Heidi Sawyer, Eric Smith

Liaisons Attending: Amy Wagner

Clerk: Chris Kochem

Guests: Bob Berens (Acentech)

Members of the Public: John Asimakopoulos, Don Becker, Susan Carey, Monica Sainsbury

Mark Haley, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:50 a.m.

Mr. Haley reported that he had met with the landscaping contractor yesterday (May 8). By June 1, the landscaping contractor will replant and top dress the grass around the school.

Neighborhood Concerns

1) **Lower School Playground** - Mr. Don Becker spoke to the Committee on behalf of John Asimakopoulos, whose property abuts the Wellington School on the School Street side of the building. Mr. Becker said that he has been retained by Mr. Asimakopoulos regarding the lower school playground that is adjacent to his property. Mr. Becker stated that the playground is too close to Mr. Asimakopoulos' property and that the noise from the playground is a violation of his family's peace and quiet and also that of his tenants. Mr. Asimakopoulos would like the playground to be relocated away from his property. Mr. Becker presented a letter from Mr. Richard DiGirolomo dated January 10, 2012 and also an application for a real estate abatement due to the excessive noise. Mr. Becker expressed doubt that the Committee's offer to plant trees between Mr. Asimakopoulos's property and the playground would resolve the noise problem.

Mr. Haley noted that the location of the playground was on the building plans during the planning process and the public hearings. He said that the WBC is willing to put up a fence and screening. Mr. Haley said that it would be very cost-prohibitive to move the playground because the special surface area would also have to be moved.

Mr. Haley noted that some of the issues in the letter from Mr. DiGirolomo need to be raised with other town departments. For example, parking issues at Mr. Asimakopoulos' driveway need to be addressed to Glenn Clancy's office. Usage issues are for the School Department.

Mr. Lovallo asked to hear from Amy Wagner regarding the playground and its use for the school. She said that the lower school playground is used much less than the upper school playground. A group

uses it for a short while after school, typically past 4:30 p.m. When she sees weekend use, it is usually families and small groups of children

The children who use the lower school playground during school are Pre-K, Kindergarten and first grade. It has swings to accommodate children who have physical disabilities. Recess begins at 10 a.m.

After some discussion, Mr. Becker said that he and Mr. Asimakopoulos want to work with the WBC, the Planning Board, etc. to resolve this in a positive way. Mr. Asimakopoulos wants to work this out. Mr. Becker will attend whatever meetings that are productive and he will approach the other appropriate committees regarding the concerns stated in the letter.

Mr. Becker and Mr. Asimakopoulos left the meeting at 8:30 a.m.

2) Noise Issues - Monica Sainsbury of Colonial Terrace asked for some assurance that the noise issue will be resolved in June. She said she feels the noise and vibration from the air handlers on the roofs. Both Mrs. Sainsbury and Susan Carey said that the night of Patriots' Day (April 16) was a noisy night. Joe Barrell said that there was an imbalance in the units that has been corrected. Susan Carey also said that there continues to be noise every night but that the noise is inconsistent. Bill Lovallo noted that Fred Domenici is in charge of the system operation. It was agreed that, if the Carey family is tracking issues, then the info could be helpful to the WBC. The neighbors (including the Careys) will send the information to Darrell King who will send it to Mr. Domenici.

Mr. Lovallo noted that the building is designed with all the controls necessary for operation and the School Department has to address operational issues such as occurred on Patriots' Day. The committee is trying to identify all the acoustic improvements that need to be done and take it to the Planning Board so that the work can be done during the six weeks from June 18 to July 31.

Susan Carey said what matters to the neighbors is the ultimate outcome.

Acentech Report on RTU Noise

Bob Berens has completed a draft report regarding measurements and potential recommendations for noise mitigation. Mr. Berens reported that he was doing the noise testing in the neighborhood at 2:30 in the morning. They took measurements with all the units running and also after shutting down everything. They took many measurements, including at the second floor level by mounting microphones on 15 foot poles. He noted how quiet the neighborhood was when everything was off. When the Wellington equipment turns on, there is a change to the noise in the neighborhood. The noise impact of the southern cluster (Orchard Street) of equipment is higher than the impact of the northern cluster (School Street). They did a test where they put up some temporary screening, which did reduce the sound towards the Carey home (Orchard Street). Mr. Berens does not think there is a ground-shaking issue; thinks it is the airborne noise. The former Wellington School had no ventilation equipment on the outside.

Joe Barrell asked about the specifications of the equipment for the roof – the target was the Town's noise bylaw – 45 dBA at the nearest home. Mr. Berens said that the equipment does meet the Town's noise bylaw of no more than 45 dBA at the nearest property line. Mrs. Carey said that the noise is a 24/7 intrusion on her family's property and that there is a dramatically different change in terms of the quality of life in the neighborhood. She noted that, while daytime noise is expected, night-time noise is not.

Amy Wagner said they are not feeling any vibration in the building. Bob Berens said that, with the operation of the furnace for the heating mode, there would be a whir of the combustion at start up. It might sound like a big rumble.

Mr. Lovallo asked for summary of the discussion with Cavanaugh Tocci. Mr. Beren's discussion with Cavanaugh Tocci is that the WBC could spend a lot of money and not make anybody happy. He said that they should be able to get a 5 dBA reduction at the noisiest location and it is possible to try for more. He noted that the units are not meant to run 24/7; there is a different heat source that will keep the building heated when no one is in the building. There are strides being made so that the rooftop units do not go on at night.

Mr. Lovallo summarized potential mitigation proposals:

- 1) Fill in gaps on the screening (Skanska is working on the pricing for this and will have it next week)
- 2) Extending the height of the barrier by 6 feet at the southern clusters
- 3) Lowering the base of the barriers to just above the roof surface

Mr. Berens said, by doing all three, improvement would be in the range of 5-6 dBA.

Mr. Lovallo asked how to get to '10 dBA' - Mr. Berens said the WBC could also find out what it can buy from the manufacturer (Aon), what the manufacturer will permit for noise mitigation that can be added to the units but that will not void the warranty for the units.

Mr. Lovallo noted that the WBC will have to get pricing information and the conceptual diagrams and then present the request for the change to the Planning Board to review. Mr. Barrell said that we have to know that this will solve the problem. Mr. Lovallo said that it is likely that nothing but shutting off the units will make everyone happy.

Mr. Berens said that, with a 5 dBA reduction, the noise from the units will still be heard in the neighborhood. To get to 10 dBA, there would likely be a need for a substantial redesign of the cost of the units.

Mr. Lovallo noted that consideration could be given to buying a different unit that has better acoustics and that building a barrier six feet high is going to be expensive because there will be a lot of steel.

After discussion, Mr. Lovallo said he will ask Skanska for the pricing for the three screening options and also to try to identify another unit that would run substantially quieter. He noted they will have to do the pricing quickly if they want to do the work in June/July.

Monica Sainsbury and Susan Carey left the meeting at 9:15 a.m.

Landscape Report

Heidi Sawyer reported that she and the landscaper had met. The lawns need to be re-done in the next two weeks. The landscaper agreed that they need to replace 40-50% of the trees. They reviewed all the bushes and the soil quality. They need to re-do the field by the lower school playground. The WBC has to work with Amy Wagner to identify what can be done during the school day.

The landscaper has provided a reimbursement value for items that either have not grown or were mis-sized. The landscaper has offered \$3,895 for replacement. In addition to this value, there is an offer for

additional amounts for replacement, which the committee has to decide to accept. Mr. Haley said that Heidi Sawyer should work with Burke (landscape consultant) to verify that the replacement values are accurate. Once the Landscape team has the info of what is needed to be done, Ms. Sawyer should contact Bill Endicott for Skanska and ask that he submit a work plan and a schedule for the school department to review and approve.

Screen for RTU-3

The plumbing inspector has agreed that the screen wall can be left in its current location. Skanska needs to show that there will be access if the coil needs to be replaced.

Other Items

Mr. Haley showed a binder that Skanska has created with a list of the items that need to be resolved to begin the project by mid-June.

Bill Lovallo reported that the School Department has written a letter regarding the floor of the core. Mr. Domenici has identified a product that is substantially better than the current system.

There was discussion regarding whether to redesign the building entrances without the fins.

RTU Move

Mr. Lovallo reported that the leak from the shifting/moving RTU #3 dried up fast and the areas are ok with Fred Domenici. Skanska plans to repair the damage over the summer break.

Heidi Sawyer made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 a.m. The motion was seconded by Laurie Graham and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Haley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, stylized 'H'.

Mark Haley
Chair

**LAW OFFICES of
RICHARD G. DI GIROLAMO**

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Michael LaRosa, Legal Assistant

January 10, 2012

Mr. Mark Haley
Chair, Wellington School Building Committee
455 Concord Ave.
Belmont, MA 02478

Re: Property located at 73 School Street, Belmont, MA 02478

Dear Mr. Haley:

My clients, John and Helen Asimakopoulos, are the owners of the property 73 School Street, located adjacent to the new Wellington School in Belmont, Massachusetts. They have lived in the house for over thirty-eight years and have become accustomed to the tranquil neighborhood that existed for decades until recently.

Before construction, they attended a hearing at the town hall and a meeting at the Wellington School. The Asimakopouloses expressed their concern that a playground bordering their property would cause considerable disturbances to both them residing on the Property and to their tenant who resides on the first floor.

The Asimakopouloses were advised at the time that the playground would not cause any disruptions. The board informed them that the playground would only include a few swings for the nursery school; leading to the assumption that playing would only occur in the morning. The board also informed them that the plans were unalterable. As such, during the preliminary phases of planning and construction the Asimakopouloses did not pursue the matter further.

While construction was underway this summer, the heavy equipment and constant activity forced the Asimakopouloses to leave their home, because the disruptions became unbearable.

Upon the Asimakopouloses return, they were disappointed to see that their concerns presented to the board were not taken into consideration.

Rather than a small swing set for a nursery, a large playground with multiple swings, slides, etc., was constructed. The playground is now directly adjacent to the property and it is aesthetically unappealing. In addition to the nursery school, kindergarten and first grade children, children after school hours and on the weekends use the park. The constant activity is loud and intolerable. The children play through the day unimpeded by any restrictions on the hours to use the playground.

Thank you for your time in considering these matters. We look forward to rectifying the issues presented and I hope to be in contact again soon.

Sincerely,

Richard G. DiGirolamo, Esq.