

**BELMONT HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE
FINAL MEETING MINUTES**

2017 MAY 10 PM 2:50

April 6, 2017

COMMUNITY FORUM – BEECH STREET CENTER

7:00 PM

Meeting #16

Committee Members Attending:

Chair Lovallo; Members: Adam Dash, John Phelan, Tom Caputo, Gerald Boyle, Pat Bruschi, Dan Richards, Bob McLaughlin, Joel Mooney, Diane Miller, Phil Ruggiero, and Jamie Shea

Members Absent: Phyllis Marshall, Joe DeStefano, Chris Messer, Joel Mooney

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m. by Chair Lovallo.

Chair Lovallo reviewed the evening's agenda and then turned to the first item.

Project Introduction

Chair Lovallo began by providing some background information on how the Belmont High School Building Committee (BHSBC) was formed. He then introduced himself and the members of the Building Committee. He thanked outgoing Selectman Baghdady for his service to the committee and welcomed Selectman Dash to the BHSBC.

Chair Lovallo explained the role of the MSBA (Massachusetts School Building Authority), which is to oversee the project and contribute to the cost of the project. However, Belmont must follow their rules and is currently following their 8 Modules (phases). He then explained that, for 10 years, Belmont submitted a Statement of Interest (SOI) to the MSBA. This is a critical first step to the new building process. The SOI submitted in April 2015 was accepted. In January 2016, Belmont began the first Module – The Eligibility Phase. This first phase included creating the Educational Profile (which involved compiling enrollment data), forming the Building Committee (via the Town Moderator), and identifying the initial feasibility study funding: \$1,750,000.

Chair Lovallo then raised the issue of addressing Belmont's burgeoning enrollment during the eligibility phase. Three building configuration options are being studied for the new building: grades 7-12, 8-12, and 9-12. Design enrollment is the metric used to figure out the number of classrooms. Building capacity is a slightly different metric.

The MSBA's funding contribution is currently estimated to be 36.89% of *eligible* costs. However, not all costs will be deemed eligible. The BHSBC will have an opportunity to increase the MSBA's funding contribution by a few percentage points.

Chair Lovallo explained that the Feasibility Phase has four main parts:

1. establishing the professional teams (Owners Project Manager [OPM] and the Design Team)
2. the feasibility study (studying the three configurations against the possibilities of a new building, part renovation/part new building, and renovation – the latter would only apply for the

- 9-12 configuration, since there is not enough existing square footage to add the grade or two needed in the other configurations if it was renovation-only)
3. the schematic design
 4. obtaining the funding agreement with the state

The funding for this project will need to come from a town-wide debt exclusion vote. He then noted that the BHSBC has a webpage. This webpage contains lots of helpful and relevant information.

He then explained the role of the OPM, who partners with the Building Committee. He noted that a subcommittee (of the BHSBC) was formed to engage in the process of selecting the OPM. He explained the process by which Daedalus was selected to be the OPM for this project. Daedalus is a known entity in Belmont and oversaw the Chenery project 20 years ago. Also, Tom Gatzunis, Project Director, is a former Belmont employee who understands the workings of Belmont. He then introduced Richard Marks, the President of Daedalus.

Owner's Project Manager (OPM) Introduction

Mr. Marks provided some background information on Daedalus. He introduced the team who will be involved in this project. He then reviewed some related projects they were involved in (Dearborn STEM 6-12, Franklin High School, Rockland Middle and High School, etc.)

Mr. Marks provided some general information on the project, the workings/oversight of the MSBA, and other key project constituents. He explained how the Design Team will be selected, which is a collaborative process that the MSBA oversees.

OPM Update

Mr. Gatzunis began by stating that it was great to be back in Belmont. He reviewed the Design Team selection (architect) process, the projected key dates through 2019, as well as the OPM tasks and responsibilities. He reviewed the OPM's role as liaison to the MSBA, providing cost oversight, overseeing the project schedule, and engaging the public in the process.

Superintendent Education Plan Update

Mr. Phelan thanked the community and acknowledged that the School Department feels well supported by the town. The main challenge concerning the district, he explained, is the steadily increasing enrollment. Belmont averages roughly 100 new students per year. This has had a clear and significant impact on class sizes. Almost half of the elementary classes are above the desired class sizes. To deal with the rising enrollment, modular classrooms have been added and space has been creatively allocated in school buildings throughout the district. He noted that McKibben Associates was hired (in the fall of 2016) to collect (and verify) enrollment data.

Belmont, he said, is in need of more space to deal with the issue of burgeoning enrollment. He then explained the three grade configuration options for the new BHS facility:

1. Grades 7-12
2. Grades 8-12
3. Grades 9-12

He explained the impact of each option, noting that the 9-12 model does not remedy the space issue. The grade 8-12 model would help at the middle school level, but not at the elementary level. The 7-12 option, however, does positively impact the district-wide space needs. It raises many questions for programming and for the management of such a wide range of student ages. He noted some programming connections and the potential curriculum synergy that could benefit the 7-12 students.

The configuration option that will ultimately be pursued will be determined by the Board of Selectmen, the Building Committee, and the School Committee. The MSBA will play a key role, as well.

[Chair Lovallo briefly consulted with the BHSBC and determined that the BHSBC will meet next on Thursday, April 13 at 7:30 a.m.]

Public Comments

Chair Lovallo invited the audience to ask questions and offer comments.

Ms. Mary Lewis expressed concern about moving fourth graders to the CMS. She suggested another model (K-6, 7-12) for the committee to consider.

Mr. Tiao Xie said that, in China, there are two configurations: K-6 and 7-12. He then expressed a concern about the potential cost of this project. He also asked about the need for new elementary schools in the future. Chair Lovallo replied that cost controls are in place. He noted that the 9-12 option will not resolve the district-wide enrollment issues, but will cost less.

Mr. John O'Conner asked when there might be a "shovel in the ground"? Chair Lovallo offered his best guess at this point by restating the stages that would need to be passed through before that could happen. Mr. O'Conner said he hopes the project is kept on budget and is done well. This is the biggest project the town will likely ever do, he said.

Mr. Phil Thayer read a passage on potential cost cutting impacts, e.g., utilizing net zero energy design.

Mr. Dave Zipkin asked how feedback is being gleaned from current high school students and recent graduates. Mr. Phelan said that students will come to the May forum and that students will provide ongoing feedback.

Ms. Kristin Patel asked about what it will be like for kids attending the BHS while the building is under construction. Chair Lovallo provided some information on the "active building site". He noted that safety is always the number one concern. Mr. Marks explained that building projects are phased and, as such, the disruptive impact to their educational experience is mitigated. The temporary units are often nicer than most classrooms and can be equipped with air conditioning and other desired amenities.

Mr. Jack Weis asked about the design enrollment configurations. He noted that BHS will be at capacity on the day the door of the new building opens, according to the figure put forth. He asked if a larger school could be considered? Chair Lovallo said the MSBA will not let the building be any bigger.

Mr. Don Mercier spoke to the enrollment projections. As taxes rise, people may not choose to settle in Belmont. Chair Lovallo noted that this issue was discussed at length and that Belmont's growth is

expected to continue to trend upward.

Ms. Carolyn Bishop stated that there is a history, in Belmont, of not building for the appropriate (enrollment) size. Chair Lovallo provided some background information on the enrollment capacity projection process.

Ms. Abigail Donner stressed her hope that the best pedagogical model be utilized. She hoped the grade configuration choice would engage a very thoughtful process. She noted that the upcoming community seminar should be very inclusive of the entire community (handicapped, deaf, etc).

Mr. Han Xu expressed concern about the price of the project. He also asked if the community would be allowed to give input on the grade configuration decision. Chair Lovallo reiterated that cost controls will be in effect and stated that, yes, the community's input will be sought.

Mr. Kevin Cunningham asked about how the community – as a whole – will engage in the process concerning the philosophy of teaching, the education philosophy, etc. He specifically asked where those conversations would take place and how they will be decided. Mr. Phelan provided some information on the process that will utilize the education consultant, Mr. Locker. He noted that these kinds of conversations will take place in May and in the fall. Mr. Cunningham suggested that the community be kept abreast of this process.

Ms. Maura Finley asked about how SPED fits into the configuration options. Mr. Phelan explained that SPED will be a consideration throughout the process.

Ms. Jessie Bennett asked if the high school had been properly maintained? Mr. Phelan stated that the building no longer meets the needs of the number of students. The high school was well taken care of, but the building is old and we have outgrown it. Ms. Bennett suggested that the existing buildings be reviewed for efficiencies, for maintenance needs, etc.

Ms. Kate Clark, stated that she went through the Belmont system, moved away, and now is back with her two children. She said she chose Belmont for its stability and continuity. She said she liked the idea of minimizing the number of transitions. New kids offer a great opportunity for the town.

Mr. [?] spoke to the issue of using carcinogenic materials, e.g., paint, flooring, furniture. He requested that this be a consideration when selecting materials. Mr. Gatzunis responded that building codes are strict these days. Appropriate materials will be selected with care, consideration, and respect for the building codes.

Related Meeting Documents


1. BHSBC Community Forum PowerPoint Presentation

Adjournment

The meeting was ended at 9:01 p.m. by member Robert McLaughlin.

Respectfully submitted by:

Lisa Gibalerio

Approved: 
Gerald R. Boyle, Secretary

5/10/17
Date