

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

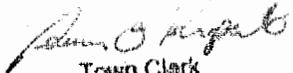
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TOWN OF NEWINGTON, CT

ANNA REYNOLDS SCHOOL PROJECT BUILDING COMMITTEE

2021 JUL 14 PM 3:16

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

July 8, 2021, Zoom Event


Town Clerk

- I. Call to Order – Committee Chairperson Stephen Woods called the meeting to order at 5:15 PM.
- II. Roll Call – Members present: Stephen Woods, Chairperson; Michael Camillo, Steven Silvia, Cindy Stamm, Carol Duggan, and Jeremy Whetzel. Others present: Paul Dominov, Jennifer Mangiagli, and Katherine Jessup, Kaestle Boos Associates; Tom DiMauro, Newfield Construction; Maureen Brummett, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools; Lou Jachimowicz, Chief Finance and Operating Officer; Jason Smith, Reynolds School Principal; James Krupienski, Town Clerk; and Jeff Baron, Director of Administrative Services.
- III. Public Participation – None.
- IV. Architect’s Status Report – presented by Ms. Mangiagli. It consisted of a power point presentation showing concepts of the site and the building, for the Committee’s consideration. No formal action was taken. The Project Architect observed the existing conditions at the site during the morning student drop off time and the afternoon student pick-up time. There was a co-mingling of cars and busses, coming in off of Reservoir Road and exiting onto Fenn Road. It is a little more chaotic in the afternoon. They would propose two possible modifications (Proposed Site Concept A and Proposed Site Concept B) for both cars and buses. These would have the parents, in cars, use the Reservoir Road access and do a loop. The busses would use the Fenn Road access and also do a loop. This would require widening of the entrance on Reservoir Road. It would also improve the front entrance way and lengthen the area. There would be separation, with fencing for parents. The fence would only be open at the crosswalk and would provide a safer route to the main entrance of the school. The bus area would see improvements near the gym to make the line of busses a little longer. Sidewalks would be improved to run from Fenn Road all the way to Reservoir Road, providing complete pedestrian access through the site. One option would add 13 parking spaces for better circulation for cars, and eliminate the dead end. There would also be some widening of the Fenn Road entrance, so the busses would have two-way access. There would be improved access to provide acceptable routes to the swings and play area for the upper grades. The kindergarten – first grade play area would have improved access with better security (only one means of egress). There would be courtyard improvements as well.
Ms. Stamm said that she likes the idea of separated parking and also the island with the fence in the middle, and better security for the younger grades’ play area. Ms. Duggan said she liked the traffic pattern. She asked what would prevent first time visitors, who are unfamiliar with the school, from coming in off of Fenn Road? Ms. Mangiagli responded that signage would be needed. She noted that the landscape architect was on vacation, but could

address that at the next meeting. The Chair noted that you could also have a gate that could be closed. The district has this situation now at the High School. A security presence is needed there. There would also be a big sign. Dr. Brummett observed that John Wallace Middle School has this also. Mr. Jachimowicz stated that after the initial changes occur, these are good conceptual options. Mr. Woods added that it is all one way now. People are familiar with this now. Ms. Duggan said that she was wondering about first time visitors. More parking is better, there is never enough. Mr. Woods told her that the landscape architect was asked to squeeze in more parking. Mr. Silvia said that he loved the separation. Thirteen parking spaces is wonderful. They are next to the gym also, which is good for community events. He also concurs with getting more parking spaces, and reducing the parent's egress along the wing is also good. He asked if safety bollards had been considered? Ms. Mangiagli stated that she was surprised they were not specifically called for here, as they have been used on other projects. They will be identified on the plans.

Mr. Silvia asked about the discussion on ingress and egress to the school during the day. Ms. Mangiagli replied that each school district sets its own policy. That amounts to what they will need to enforce. She expected that exterior doors would be locked, and that there would be signage directing all visitors to go to the main entrance. The district may choose to have certain doors open. All doors would otherwise be locked and the architect recommends signage on each one. They are not proposing eliminating doors that head out at the end of connectors for required access/egress. Mr. Whetzel stated that he likes the layout where the traffic flows better. Parking could be at a slant. Every classroom has an exit. He asked what the purpose of those doors was, and also asked how one door provided better security? Mr. Woods responded that all schools had a door to the outside and to the hall in the 1950's and 1960's. This is being eliminated now. Ms. Mangiagli added that there were some life-safety reasons in the past, which is why they did that for non-sprinklered buildings. They needed another way out of the classroom, and exits were required. It is a fully sprinklered building now. They might have fewer doors, but they have to be large enough and within a certain distance for travel. Mr. Whetzel felt it was a bit of a schlep to get into the main entrance, the sidewalk is the biggest thing. Ms. Mangiagli stated that she would have the landscape architect address the slanted parking when he returns. Mr. Woods informed the Committee that slanted parking actually gave the landscape architect fewer spaces. He may need to change the slant by the Reservoir Road entrance. Ms. Mangiagli notified the Committee that Kaestle Boos Associates would be proposing the ideas in the power point presentation in a schematic submission, and they would be looking for pricing for schematic estimates for these options. The landscape architect would be directed to drop the dead-end parking proposal.

Kaestle Boos also looked at the development of the courtyard. It could include outdoor learning areas. They are proposing a patio area off the main entrance lobby. This will improve the view from the lobby, and allow for a level patio that is accessible. It could be an outdoor dining area, a classroom area, or (as it is near the music space) it could also be an outdoor performance area. It leads down a couple of steps from the patio to the pre-school play area. They are proposing a more defined area with a variety of surfaces – artificial turf, a rubberized area, and a hardscape area. You could add a ramp to access this area also. There are also areas to allow students to gather and collaborate more informally. There is another outdoor area near the east wing. There is a patio area along the media center. They will have completely accessible routes. There is a ramp at one location. On the west wing students will access the asphalt play area. The architect needs to make it accessible. The memorial garden may be moved but it will remain. Different items and materials are being considered

for the courtyard. The architect is also considering sunshades. The playscape is to scale, and will be suitable for its intended age group. Plants would be low maintenance.

Mr. Silvia said that he loved all these ideas. He prefers no grass in the inner courtyard. Ms. Mangiagli responded that all green areas would be artificial turf. That would be ideal if the budget supports it. Mr. Silvia stated that he also loves the sun shades. He has a mental block on using a lawnmower in the courtyard. Ms. Duggan stated that she also loves the ideas presented. The sun shade and trees, shade would be great. She requested that milkweed plants be returned to the courtyard, as the students will study about butterflies. She also requested that the "memorial garden" be named a "celebration garden" instead. Mr. Woods stated that it could also be called an "honor garden". Mr. Woods said that he loves the design, but doesn't know if the budget can carry it. Mr. Whetzel asked if a lawnmower could go in the storage shed that is shown on the power point? Ms. Mangiagli said that the storage shed is for pre-school tricycles, not for maintenance equipment. The pre-school students have storage now, but the shed is at the bottom of the grade. There is also an elevator going in that area. What doors will be maintained is being determined. Mr. Whetzel stated that some parents may be opposed to artificial turf because of the presence of children. Mr. Dominov stated that Kaestle Boos Associates has a resource that is knowledgeable about artificial turf issues. That source can speak to them. Mr. Woods discussed some of the concerns with artificial turf surfaces. He noted that maintenance will be an issue. They will try to limit maintenance to keep it looking nice.

Ms. Jessup presented the programming diagram. This was used to develop a floor plan. They met with the staff and others about educational programming and goals. They developed a bubble diagram, which is an idealized relationship diagram. She spoke about having the administrative area in the front of the building, student support services, having public spaces separate from private spaces, the progression through the grade levels, future planning areas where intervention services could be closer to the students, and outdoor play with an indoor-outdoor connection. They took a number of stabs at what this could look like and developed a proposed floor plan. Ms. Mangiagli walked the Committee through the grade level clusters, starting with the pre-kindergarten and the youngest learner services. She then moved through the classroom wings, talking about the student common areas and the teacher planning areas. She pointed out that the grade two area was opposite the media center. Mr. Silvia asked for an explanation of what a zen room is. Mr. Smith responded that the school needs a space where students can calm down before returning to class. The zen rooms are a place where they can go but they don't disrupt others. No one gets locked in the room. Ms. Mangiagli returned to the floor plan. The east wing will house grades three and four. They will have a breakout area, student commons, a zen area and a math intervention area. The floor plan wraps up with the gym, kitchen and music area. The programming diagram is where most of the overall layout comes from. Mr. Silvia said that he is not seeing a teacher lounge or a conference room. Ms. Mangiagli responded that there are two meeting rooms, a teacher planning area, and a teacher dining area. Mr. Silvia asked about a Parent Teacher Organization Room, where parents can store stuff. Ms. Mangiagli stated that there was no longer storage in the cafeteria. The Physical Education office had been relocated, which could free up some storage space.

In the cafeteria, physically challenged access to the stage for performances is a challenge. The architect grappled with how to fit in a ramp for the stage. They captured some lobby space to do this. Then they were concerned about the lobby space being too small and too tight. They took some space for the lobby from another side. They are adding an elevator to bypass the stairs. The elevator can access the lower level also. Mr. Silvia asked

about the opportunity for seating in the gym for parents on weekend or evening Parks and Recreation programs. Ms. Mangiagli responded that they didn't hear that it was important. It could be done, but it is a small gym and the seating would take away from the play area.

Ms. Duggan asked about the kindergarten square footage. Ms. Mangiagli responded that she tried to make them as equal to what they have now as she could, so it was comparable. She wouldn't propose making them any bigger. Ms. Duggan asked if there were bathrooms for the kindergarten areas? Ms. Mangiagli told her that there were, and the pre-school area would have bathrooms also. The first and fourth grades are taking their existing classroom spaces; they are the same size. Mr. Silvia stated that he loves what he is seeing. He asked if there was any thought about future growth; if the school had to add classrooms, what are the options for expansion? Ms. Mangiagli stated that the architect had not been focused on that. Mr. Smith replied that they could use the learning centers for two additional classrooms, so there is some potential for expansion internally.

Ms. Mangiagli then presented an exterior elevation study. This looked at the façade, with "before" and "after" concepts. The "after" was like the materials used elsewhere. At Anna Reynolds at the present time the envelope goes right down to the asphalt. The architect is also looking at the structural system and what systems will work well with it. They are looking at window patterns. Operable windows have been requested. The architect is exploring options. They are looking at costs and how the envelope can be improved. Comments are welcomed on materials. Mr. Woods stated that he loves the look in the "after" picture. It will make the building look brand new. It would be really nice. Mr. Silvia stated that he enjoyed the same picture due to the contextual changes and the feel. Paneling would be nice if you didn't have to paint it. Mr. Woods noted that the skin went on the building 35 or more years ago. Ms. Stamm said that she likes that look also. Mr. Woods stated that the budget may not support this but the Committee wanted to give the architect a direction to move in. Mr. Dominov stated that the architect was looking to complete the schematic design package in the following week.

Ms. Mangiagli stated that the Project Architect was also asked to look at the schedule. She contrasted the contractual schedule with the revised schedule. The architect feels it is possible to deliver bid documents by the end of March. They will continue to work and not wait for estimates to come back, recognizing that they have to stay within budget. The Chair thanked them for staying on top of it. Mr. Silvia asked the architect to keep the Building Committee apprised if the Committee needed to do anything to keep the architect on the revised schedule.

- V. Owner's Project Manager Status Report – None.
- VI. Any Other Business Pertinent to the Committee – No action taken. The Committee agreed to hold its Regular Meeting on the scheduled date of July 15th.
- VII. Public Participation – None.
- VIII. Comments by Members – None.
- IX. Adjournment – the meeting adjourned at 6:56 PM.