

WORKSHOP SESSION of the Town Council held Wednesday, August 11, 2004 at 7:08 P.M. in the Council Chamber, Town Building, Harrisville for and within the Town of Burrillville.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Council President Wallace F. Lees, Councilors Jacqueline Zahn, Louis Bleiweis, Ronald E. Faford and William E. Gonyea.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Councilor Edward F. Bonczek was excused. Councilor William A. Andrews was absent.

OTHERS PRESENT: Barbara A. Von Villas, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools, School Committee Chairman Donald Waterman and School Committee members Dorothy A. Cardon, Mary Margaret Karmozyn, Edwin R. Pacheco and Raymond J. Trinque.

VOTED to open discussions and considerations relative to the W.L. Callahan Elementary School Facility Feasibility Analysis.

Motion by Councilor Jacqueline Zahn. Seconded by Councilor William E. Gonyea. The vote was unanimous by the five members present. Voting in favor of the motion were Council President Wallace F. Lees, Councilors Jacqueline Zahn, Louis Bleiweis, Ronald E. Faford and William E. Gonyea. Councilor Edward F. Bonczek was excused. Councilor William A. Andrews was absent.

Donald Waterman, Chairman of the Burrillville School Committee, indicated that the School Committee has been concerned about the situation at the Callahan School for many years. The School Committee, he said, reviewed the efforts of the School Committee in gathering input. The School Committee, he said, employed the services of the Robinson, Green, Beretta Corporation (RGB) to prepare a feasibility study, which has been approved and recommended by the School Committee. Mr. Waterman asked that the Town Council approve the feasibility study and a renovation of the W.L. Callahan School.

Michael C. Wood, Town Manager, explained the purpose of the workshop was to review the project proposal and to determine the process moving forward. Mr. Wood suggested that, in his opinion, the matter was not ready to go before the public for a vote in November 2004. He recalled that, when the High School was renovated, a booklet was sent to the voters beforehand, suggesting that it might benefit the voters to have information about the Callahan project before the election. Additionally, Mr. Wood said that a financial examination of the project must be conducted.

Councilor Jacqueline Zahn supported a flyer, emphasizing the importance of public information. Councilor Zahn suggested establishing a committee of interested parents and other residents. School Committee member Raymond J. Trinque agreed in the importance of public information and cautioned that information must be clear and accurate.

Councilor Louis Bleiweis agreed that a renovation is necessary. Councilor Bleiweis briefly discussed other major projects that are currently being addressed and stressed the importance of handling projects in a sequence that would not unduly burden the taxpayers.

David L. DeQuattro, AIA, Executive Vice President of RGB Corp., Providence, RI addressed those present. He briefly summarized other communities in which RGB is working. Mr. DeQuattro briefly reviewed the analysis, which is on file with the record of the meeting. The analysis has been updated to address changing code requirements and projected population changes, he said. He spoke of the importance of all schools in the community offering comparable programs.

David L. DeQuattro of RGB Corp. discussed specifics of various school spaces. He said that classroom space would conform to Department of Education (DOE) standards and that each floor level of the school would have a different grade to allow improved operation and communication. The computer lab, cafeteria, and gymnasium space would be expanded to meet DOE standards. The existing gymnasium, as well as other existing spaces, would be converted to a media center that meets DOE guidelines. The fine arts section (music and art rooms) would be placed on the top level of the building and expanded for better sound control. Mr. DeQuattro briefly elaborated on each aspect of the plan and the importance of following the DOE guidelines.

David L. DeQuattro addressed the issues of the administration area, principal's office and nurses' room. He described the problems with the existing space and detailed the plan to correct these shortcomings. Mr. DeQuattro discussed security, controlled access, and proper space for special needs instructors.

David L. DeQuattro of RGB, Corp. supported the plan to renovate the W.L. Callahan Elementary School and discussed the importance and feasibility of utilizing the quality structure of the original building. He displayed the existing floor plans and described the proposed renovation, as illustrated in the analysis, which is on file with the record of the meeting.

David L. DeQuattro of RGB referred to the budget for the project, indicating that the budget allowed for inflation and stating that on their recent Cumberland, RI project, RGB completed the project within budget. He concurred with the Manager's comments that the financial data should be reviewed before the referendum was placed before the voters.

Michael C Wood, Town Manager, asked for a comparison of the cost of renovation to the cost of new construction. Mr. DeQuattro indicated that new construction would be at a much higher cost than renovation. Mr. Wood suggested that this information is important to voters.

David L. DeQuattro of RGB, Inc., addressed the question of the play yard, which is currently located across the street from the school. He briefly described the proposed play yard and changes to parking. Council President Wallace F. Lees asked about bus drop off, which is proposed for the back of the building.

Donald Waterman pointed out that the discussed had focused on State requirements. He asked those present to keep in mind that there have been other issues, including inadequate heating and plumbing systems, problems with windows and safety on stairways. Capital improvement funds, he said, are not sufficient to address these problems. Mr. DeQuattro discussed the various degrees of renovation, ranging from light to heavy renovation. He discussed compliance with the 2004 Fire Code.

In response to a question, Mr. DeQuattro indicated that the renovation would be a twelve to fourteen month process, because the school will remain open during the renovation. The renovation would be accomplished in phases to accommodate the student body. There was a brief discussion of the timeframe for the process, beginning with a special election, through the planning and bidding stages, into the construction phase.

School Committee member Raymond J. Trinke briefly discussed earlier construction projects and those committees established for planning the educational programs in Burrillville. He noted that the renovation of the W.L. Callahan School is the final link to equalize the educational experience of students throughout the elementary schools. There was a general discussion of the schools' populations, how school assignments are determined and the proposed capacity of the W.L. Callahan School after the renovation.

In response to a question, Mr. DeQuattro described the bus drop off and parking area proposed for the rear of the building. Pedestrians and cars would continue to use the front entrance. Nevertheless, there was some concern that the space behind the building would not suffice. Mr. DeQuattro discussed the preliminary nature of the analysis. Barbara A. VonVillas emphasized that the analysis should be viewed as a feasibility study rather than design-to-build. There are many options, she said, and many features that might change as the project moves forward.

Michael C. Wood, Town Manager, suggested that it would be an appropriate course of action to secure architectural services for the project to be completed in phases and appoint a facilities committee. He suggested that this would allow for preliminary information that could be distributed to the voters. The facilities committee might not be the same people who would eventually be appointed to a building committee, should the voters approve the bond.

Councilor Jacqueline Zahn asked about the process of securing an architect. Mr. Wood explained that services would be secured in phases and if the voters disapprove the bond, the services would end after preliminary plans. If the bond is approved, then additional phases are implemented. There was a brief discussion of the process of appointing a facilities committee.

VOTED to adjourn at 8:04 P.M.

Motion by Councilor Louis Bleiweis. Seconded by Councilor Ronald E. Faford. The vote was unanimous by the five members present. Voting in favor of the motion were Council President Wallace F. Lees, Councilors Jacqueline Zahn, Louis Bleiweis, Ronald E. Faford and William E. Gonyea. Councilor Edward F. Bonczek was excused. Councilor William A. Andrews was absent.

The meeting was taped. The tape is on file with the minutes.

Louise R. Phaneuf, Town Clerk