

Minutes of the Little Compton School Building Committee

January 6, 2010

I. Call to Order – The meeting of the Little Compton School Building Committee was called to order by Chairperson T. Alder at 7:00 p.m. in the Wilbur/McMahon School Commons. A quorum was present.

Members Present: T. Alder, B. Borden, L. Brousseau-Lebreux, B. Gauthier, J. Gibney, D. Gomez, M. Harrington, D. MacGregor, M. Manning, R. Mushen, J. Osborne, R. Racette, M. Rapp, BG Shanklin, M. Shapiro, and J. Talbot.

Others Present: Members of the public

Members Absent: T. Arkins, H. Devine, D. Freeman, D. Wordell

II. Approval of Minutes – On a motion made by J. Gibney and seconded by BG Shanklin, it was voted to approve the Minutes of the December 12, 2009 meeting.

III. Public Input – A member of the audience, stated her agreement that work needs to be done, but felt that the town can't afford what she believes to be \$37 million for a new school. She strongly

endorsed the idea of a new science lab, as she understood that Portsmouth High School has found our students to be ill-prepared in science. While she wants the school to do as well as it has done, she fears if taxes are raised we risk losing the people we should be serving.

IV. Reports –

a. Report from chairman

The chair discussed the timeline for next steps, which will be guided by the work of the subcommittees.

b. Architect's report

The chair reported that JCJ is not going to provide schematics at the contracted price. BG Shanklin suggested we refer to JCJ as the planning consultant, as distinguished from the architect. It was agreed that we ought to review what we're entitled to before we close out the process with JCJ. M. Harrington will request of JCJ any outstanding items, such as background material used for the master plan, interview data for programming needs, and electronic site plans, if any.

c. Sub-Committee reports –

i. Site sub-committee

BG Shanklin reported that this subcommittee has met twice and is

developing a list of pros and cons. More information on the present site is needed, however, as there is no site survey available. The subcommittee therefore recommends a RFP be issued for a site survey of lots 8 and 11, plat 20. A survey is essential in order to identify property bounds, zoning setbacks, wetlands setbacks, water table, location of services, suitability of the existing septic system, etc. and will be required for a design schematic. It is expected cost is between \$7,000 and \$9,000. The committee also feels a title search is advisable at this point in order to identify any deed restrictions, easements, or covenants, etc. In addition, further inquiry on the relationship between the school and the town with regard to ownership and RIDE requirements is required to determine what is possible but also the legal manner in which to do it.

ii. Architectural sub-committee

J. Talbot reported that this subcommittee has met once. They discussed whether JCJ had fulfilled its contract. An invited guest, Don Powers, spoke on the importance of fitting in within the context of the town and Commons. Direction will be needed soon from the site subcommittee. Since we need a design for Stage II, they are working on a RFP for consideration at the next committee meeting. They also discussed the process of how to hire. They felt that design-build was not a good option since there are so many considerations at stake. They have opted instead for slate-select-negotiate.

iii. Finance sub-committee

B. Gauthier said the role of this subcommittee is as a ways and means to find the most economical way to implement the plan of this committee. He said we need open, explicit descriptions and apples-to-apples comparisons of all numbers. There is concern that all JCJ estimates are high. We need more consideration of rehab vs. reconstruction costs as far as what RIDE will reimburse, and the impact of state participation in interest payments. There is a portfolio of alternate funding sources, but we don't want to build a house of cards. If another site is under consideration, we need to price the cost of making this site well, since in that scenario RIDE won't participate in demolition costs.

V. Reaction to reports:

D. Gomez asked if we had revisited the JCJ estimates on new construction with the recent figures Mr. da Silva shared. He quickly calculated, for example, that using \$220- sq. ft., the cost is closer to \$14.3 million. Since we have several estimates – Mt. Vernon, JCJ, and RGB -- BG Shanklin suggested it would be helpful to refer to them along with their dates.

B. Gauthier reported that he has asked the school for data on energy usage. B. Mushen mentioned that the newly created Renewable Energy Committee is also working on these numbers and may be of help.

The question about historic use and limitations was discussed. BG Shanklin understands this to relate primarily to exterior aesthetics. M. Rapp said he didn't believe the use had to stay the same, only that we would need to show a rehab plan if it were to no longer be used as a school.

T. Allder noted that this process we are going through will winnow out the most economical solution that is palatable at the state and local level. BG agreed that this process is essential and emphasized that we can't be fixated on one option, we need to be flexible. While he felt we ought to be able to identify a site soon, he said we should continue to keep in mind alternatives that might save town money, enable a better design, and be less disruptive for the students.

It was noted that for the purposes of issuing an RFP for an architect, we don't need to be specific about a site at least initially. It was thought we could get someone to begin to take us through the process until a site is determined, but we would have to know the site before the design schematics. R. Racette concurred that the architect RFP does allow leeway when it comes to site. The importance of a good traffic survey was underscored.

There was a discussion of whether the survey should be part of the architect RFP or separate. While the value of an architect/engineer team working together from the start was recognized, it was felt that in the interest of time, it was more expedient to keep the survey

separate and allow work to proceed concurrently. BG suggested that we should involve the Village Improvement Society in these discussions. M. Harrington reiterated that a title search is also essential before making any determination on site, but felt that it should be considered separate from the site RFP.

On a motion made by D. MacGregor and seconded by B. Gauthier, it was voted, with R. Racette opposed, that the site subcommittee would issue an RFP for a site survey that would not include a title search. R. Mushen noted that by implication, this means the site subcommittee does not need further approval of an RFP by this committee.

B. Mushen will report back at the next meeting on the relationship between the town and the school with regard to the control of the lots and the process for authority to use them.

M. Harrington will find out who can do the title search, how much it will cost, and report back at the next meeting. On a motion made by M. Shapiro and seconded by B. Gauthier, it was moved to allow M. Harrington to hire someone to do the title search, after consulting with the chair, as long as it comes in under \$5,000.

M. Steers, chair of the Planning Board, reported on feedback from the Planning Board meeting that took place the night before. He said the discussion focused on two general concerns: 1. The role the school

plays in the community – shelter, meeting, fundraising, etc. – and keeping that significance wherever it is; and 2. Safety issues- fire, parking, and traffic, etc.

BG Shanklin requested permission, as professor of architecture at RWU, to engage his Advanced Studio class of 10 -12 students in this issues. He would give them the JCJ package and students would attend meetings. On a motion made by J. Gibney and seconded by B. Borden, it was voted to approve this request.

At the request of B. Gauthier, T. Allder will contact Joe da Silva to review Stage II packages and will ask Dr. Devine to set up meetings or site visits with other schools.

VI. Next Meeting:

The next meeting was set for January 20, 2010 at 6:00 p.m..

VII. Adjourn:

On a motion made by T. Allder and seconded by M. Shapiro, it was voted to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted by M. Manning, Secretary