

Minutes
Long Term Facilities Planning Committee Meeting
October 23, 2013

Superintendent D’Agostino called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm with the following in attendance.

Richard D’Agostino	Mark Carruolo	Mary Townsend
Dennis Mullen	Catherine Bonang	David Testa
Robert Bushell	Ed Racca	*Nancy Plumb
Amie Galipeau	Jacqueline Harris-Connor	Patty Nazareth
William McCaffrey	Lynn Dambruch	Stephanie Van Patten

* Arrived at 4:10 pm

Action Item:

Approval of Minutes:

Motion 2013-28: Moved by William McCaffrey, seconded by Mark Carruolo, to approve the October 17, 2013 minutes.

Motion passes (14-0)

Superintendent Remarks:

Responding to Ms. Van Patten’s question from the last meeting, Superintendent D’Agostino distributed a memorandum from Bill McCaffrey which highlighted enrollment numbers from the three Warwick high schools, as of October 1, 2013, at the Career Center. They are:

Toll Gate	108
Pilgrim	83
Veterans	97

Mr. McCaffrey pointed out that these numbers do not include West Warwick students who attend the Career Center.

Dr. D’Agostino stated that at the last meeting Mr. Racca asked the administration to provide a guide to help the committee with discussion of topics covered previously. The superintendent disseminated a “Point of Discussion” paper which central administrators believe to be the items of priority to assist the committee in determining a specific high school for consolidation.

1. Location – access:
 - a. Rt. 95
 - b. Career Center - transportation
 - c. Career Center – future plans

Discussion followed. Toll Gate High School is located South in the City and Pilgrim is located North in the City with Veterans in the middle. The superintendent said Veterans’ location can be looked at as a “swinging type of facility” for junior high students who would have gone to Aldrich or Gorton. Cathy Bonang expressed concern that schools would be divided into a “high end” area and a “low end” area.

The committee as a whole pointedly disagreed with that vision. Mrs. Bonang said that Oakland Beach, a Title 1 school is the most populated elementary school. Mr. Bushell said that both Sherman and Cedar Hill are more populated than Oakland Beach. Mrs. Bonang said she wanted to be certain that a more balanced population split would be considered. Ms. Van Patten, Mr. Bushell and other committee members said adjustments in numbers would be made. Dr. D'Agostino said the population balance will have a lot to do with transportation and numbers that were seen on material distributed at the last meeting were not final, they were demonstrating scenarios. Mr. Bushell said as far as elementary schools, as he stated at the last meeting, Norwood could be more flexible...it is near highway access, Holliman is in the heart of Pilgrim and would go to Pilgrim and Park would be incorporated into the Toll Gate block.

Dr. D'Agostino said that transporting students back and forth from Pilgrim to the Career Center is easy because of access to Interstate 95. The Marine Trade Program at Veterans could possibly be moved into Pilgrim High School and, with the two remaining high schools, plans to develop specific Career Center programs to fit into each school where students would go to a high school based on their Career Center path, thus eliminating busses in the afternoon and allowing Career Center students to choose electives and receive more instructional time, will be looked at.

2. Building Condition:

a. Cosmetic vs. Structure

Discussion followed. Dr. D'Agostino said none of the three high schools are in perfect condition. All must be included in updating. Mr. Testa pointed out that all three high schools locker rooms need work. Pilgrim, the superintendent said, needs paint, ceiling tiles replaced, a "quick fix," which could be done over the summer, whereas Veterans needs not just cosmetic work but a new roof, boiler, lighting, and more structural work. The elevator at Veterans is electric and you cannot get parts to repair it....the elevator needs to be replaced. Veteran's projects would take a year to complete.

David Testa said he would like to see a capital improvement plan. The public, he stated, needs to know what the plan is for our schools. There might be access on the school website that provides updates on improvements as they are being made at each school. These schools have been longtime neglected and he said the community needs to see a capital improvement plan. Dr. D'Agostino agreed and referenced the editorial in the Beacon which talked about wanting more schools or fewer quality buildings for students. Mr. Testa said he saw a lot of cosmetics that were just "cobwebs and windows." The committee questioned the condition....is it a matter of "manpower?" Should the custodial staff numbers remain....just relocate them to another school. The committee agreed this type of decision defers to central administration. The superintendent said Kevin Oliver is a new area supervisor who has done a great job in getting the elementary schools cleaned up and is trying to do the same at our secondary buildings. He reminded the committee that the dust they saw in touring the schools, especially that in the locker rooms, was 20 years accumulating.

3. Special Programs:

Discussion followed: The superintendent said ESY is housed at Pilgrim and eight rooms at Pilgrim have been air conditioned for this summer program. Students do not need to be transferred to Winman for the summer program. Pilgrim has the largest special education population which includes: growth opportunities, autistic, and an 18-21 year old program instituted just this year. The central kitchen is located at Pilgrim which serves lunches to the feeder schools. Cathy Bonang asked why a special education program was started at Toll Gate and Dr. D'Agostino said because it was needed on that side of the city.

David Testa said we need to look at the intangible....The physical layout, students, ages 12-14 or 11-14, navigating their way. He stated that Veterans High School reminds him of a junior high school..."it's square with the classrooms around the outside." He said we need to keep the populations in mind that will be attending the schools. Pilgrim, he stated, is very sprawled out and better suited for high school age students. Cathy Bonang said that you could divide "quads" at Pilgrim and keep 6th graders and 7th & 8th graders in different locations.

Mary Townsend asked if the committee will present more than 1 option to school committee. Dr. D'Agostino said no. The school committee requested a 5-year plan. The committee agreed, the recommendation will not be "piece meal." We will, Dr. D'Agostino said, "rip the bandaid off." Bill McCaffrey said he agrees with Dave Testa that we need to impart a capital improvement plan, look at libraries and make sure the decision is what's best for the kids. Patty Nazareth said she saw a vast difference at the schools involving technology. More overhead projectors used at Toll Gate and more smartboards at Pilgrim and Veterans. Mr. Bushell said that is because it was a teacher's choice to go to the RITTI class where upon completion each teacher received equipment. This equipment will move with those teachers to another school. Mr. Mullen said the purchase of chromebook carts for the high schools will continue. Mrs. Nazareth said that technology improvement should be a major concern and needs to be part of the plan.

4. Finances:

The superintendent said there is about a \$150,000 difference. He said it's not a whole lot of money, but it could buy.... 2 new teachers, 3 teacher assistants, 15 chromebook carts, 300 computers @ \$500 each.

David Testa said this is a financial decision, but not a pure financial decision. This committee looked at everything before talking finances. Do we want to displace the special education population at Pilgrim? Pilgrim's feeder population is the largest and Pilgrim does have the central kitchen and is the primary distributor to other schools.

Stephanie Van Patten asked about the decision process of the committee....after we make a decision on a high school, where do we go from there? Dr. D'Agostino said we have decided that whichever high school is chosen for consolidation Aldrich and Gorton students, beginning in year 2015, will attend the new repurposed junior high school. The next phase, he stated, will be for central administration to come up with a final plan on curriculum (6th, 7th, and 8th grades) and all day K. The committee will at some

point come back and look at the elementary schools. Mr. Bushell said there will be an impact on elementary schools, Common Core curriculum demands all day K. Amie Galipeau asked what is the vision for reconvening....when? Dr. D'Agostino said our decision here is for a 5-year plan. It's like "building a house." A senior high to consolidate for September 2014, repurpose the closed high school for consolidation of two juniors high schools into the newly repurposed school for September 2015. He plans on keeping this committee in the loop, but "we wait to see what the school committee votes on."

Jackie Harris-Connor said that parents need to get involved and challenge city officials (city council members and the mayor) to visit our schools and "help put our house in order." The city side has been reluctant to give money to the school department, but with the big changes over the next two years, they need to come around.

David Testa spoke of bonds and paying for everything...it's a "balancing act." Dr. D'Agostino said we will be paying for this for 20 years. Nancy Plumb said central administration needs to get a plan together. David Testa said we can move before January, January was just a cut off month from school committee. Stephanie Van Patten asked if this committee will have a say on where students would be transported. David Testa said no, that is for central administration to figure out.

Motion 2013-29: Moved by David Testa, seconded Amie Galipeau to vote for the consolidation of a high school.

Mark Carruolo asked for discussion. He said it's not his motion but perhaps a secondary motion on a time table (vote to close high school in 2014) or amend the motion to also include a vote to close junior high schools the following year, 2015. Mr. Mullen said the motion should include the words "repurposing the high school".

David Testa withdrew his motion.

Motion 2013-30: Moved by David Testa, seconded Amie Galipeau to vote a high school be repurposed to a junior high school in September 2014; with the understanding to close Aldrich and Gorton Junior High Schools and those students, in 2015, will be moved to the repurposed junior high school.

Motion passes (15-0)

Each member was called to vote which high school to close. The call read as follows:

Richard D'Agostino – Veterans HS
Dennis Mullen – Veterans HS
Robert Bushell – Veterans HS
Amie Galipeau – Veterans HS
William McCaffrey – Pilgrim HS

Mark Carruolo – Veterans HS
Catherine Bonang – Pilgrim HS
Ed Racca – Veterans HS
Jacqueline Harris-Connor – Veterans HS
Lynn Dambruch – Veterans HS

Mary Townsend – Veterans HS
David Testa – Veterans HS
Nancy Plumb – Veterans HS
Patty Nazareth – Veterans HS
Stephanie Van Patten – Veterans HS

With a 13 to 2 vote the recommendation is to consolidate and repurpose Veterans High School.

David Testa said that when the previous LTFPC met and brought forth a recommendation to school committee he felt it was a “short cut” (Gorton closure). This time around he is very confident that this is the right plan and commends everyone who served on this committee.

Superintendent D’Agostino said that he will call another meeting of the LTFPC so they may read through the recommendation report before it’s presented to school committee and ensure this committee’s approval of its’ statement.

Motion 2013-31: Moved by Mark Carruolo, seconded by Richard D’Agostino to adjourn.

Motion passes (15-0)

Meeting adjourned at 4:55 pm