

LITTLE COMPTON SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Meeting – November 15, 2010

Wilbur School Commons – 6:00 pm

Members Present: Chairman Tom Alder, Superintendent Kathy Crowley, Margaret Manning, Jacob Talbot, Ben Gauthier, Mike Steers, John Osbourne, Bob Mushen, Beryl Borden, BG Shanklin, Don Gomez, Tom Arkins

Members Absent: Mark Rapp, Jim Gibney, Micah Shapiro, Dorie Freeman, Lynn Brousseau-Lebreux, Dave MacGregor

Chairman Tom Alder called the Meeting to Order at 6:02 pm

A motion was made by Tom Alder, seconded by BG Shanklin to approve the Meeting Minutes of November 8, 2010, with Committee stated amendments. Motion carried unanimously.

Deign Review Subcommittee Report:

BG Shanklin reported on the Design Review Subcommittee's first

meeting that convened at 5:00 PM on November 15, 2010. The Subcommittee walked the site of the school and grounds, looking at existing conditions and discussing possible alternatives to the current site plan. The Subcommittee is not ready to make any recommendations at this time, and will be meeting again at 5 PM on Monday, November 22, 2010, to discuss alternatives to the site plan, particularly to the western side, parent drop-off, student safety and a possible eastern drop-off and the impact of relocating the maintenance building. The goal of the Subcommittee is to have the best alternative solutions on the table for Committee discussion and recommendation. Ben Gauthier stated that Durkee Brown would need to have any Committee approved alternative concepts by the end of the month, the 1st week in December at the latest. Ben suggested submitting 2 concepts, not to exceed the Bond cost, one regarding the maintenance shed. Ben stated that perhaps this would be a good time for another conference call between himself, Bob Mushen and Joe DaSilva regarding the submission of 2 site concepts, while continuing negotiations with the Town on issues such as parking and the maintenance building issues. Kathy Crowley suggested that Joe DaSilva could possibly inform the Committee asap after the application submission, as to what exactly is eligible for reimbursed by the State. Ben stated that asking at this point would really put Joe on the spot to respond prior to the proper review of the application, although he may be able to supply a ballpark figure. Ben also stated that the Design Subcommittee could also take a look at the design of the building and how that would relate to the

possible site plan alternatives. Mike Steers had concerns that any design changes to the building would certainly have a ripple affect on the site plan. BG Shanklin stated that the discussions from the Design Subcommittee were on the entrance and exit to the bus drop-off sites and parking. Eliminating parking at the school site may not meet RIDE's parking requirements for a building project. Tom Allder stated that he believes that eliminating parking will not meet the school's requirements, and has concerns that parking, such as an alternative of using Veteran's Field for parking will become the Town's project and may not be eligible for State reimbursement. Ben Gauthier also had concerns that any utilization of town property for parking could become the responsibility of the Town Council to resolve. BG stated that at this time, there are too many what ifs, and that maybe Ben should delay a call to Joe DaSilva until after the Design Subcommittee has an opportunity to discuss the drop-off and parking issues. Ben will need a draft for Joe on the scope of consideration for any changes to the site plan. Bob Mushen stated that in his opinion, the Stage II Application submission should be delayed until the site issues are resolved, but in speaking with Joe DaSilva, Joe was absolutely adamant that the application submission should be sent as incomplete, but not delayed. Bob stated he did not like that answer, but that is the answer that was given to him. Tom Allder is trying to figure out where all the opposition is coming from for delaying or changing the Committee majority approved Stage II Application.

Tom Arkins stated that since the Committee had received the Budget Cost and Scope of Work, “things have come together that only can come together over time”. Tom Alder thought that the #6 Site Plan was the Plan that the Building Committee accepted, and asked who on this Building Committee wants everything to the West of the school eliminated? Beryl Borden said that the majority of the Committee, at the last meeting, wanted to revisit the current site plan.

BG stated that the reasoning behind this is that the decisions approved need to be the right decisions. Ben Gauthier said that the Stage II Application has been compiled for submission, that it is a feasibility study for RIDE to review, that unresolved issues can be discussed and resolved at the same time that the State is reviewing the application, giving the Committee more time to complete a comprehensive plan. Ben also stated that over time, the building plan has become tremendously lean, and he cannot image what else could possibly be eliminated. Tom Alder agreed that the Committee should continue on having discussions ideas and improvements to the design.

Discussions continued on the process and time-line requirements for the Stage II Application submission to RIDE. Bob Mushen stated that the evening prior to the November 19 deadline for the application submission, the Town Council will be considering concurrence that the application process should move forward to the next step, but there is no reason to suggest that the Town Council should be approving a design concept. Don Gomez stated that the School

Committee approved the application for continuation at their meeting last week.

Bob Mushen read the requirement words, which states that the project application submittal requires local support and that districts must submit School Committee and Town Council approvals for a proposed project. Bob stated that the Town Council is not ready for an approval of a project that has not been fully defined. Tom alder stated that he believes that RIDE just wants to make sure that town councils and school committees are aware of a design, and are not looking for an actual approval of projects. Discussions continued on the intention of RIDE's requirements. Tom Alder reminded the Committee that the building proposal has been approved by the majority of the Building Committee, and that RIDE is looking for Town Council input, not approval. Tom went on to explain some of the ideas suggested regarding parent drop-off, and possibly flip flopping the parking. BG Shanklin reminded the Committee that RIDE would be recommending changes to the design as they move the application review process. Tom Alder is worried that some members if the Committee will be trying to drastically change the building plans after application submission, when the incomplete section of the application is for the site only. Tom Arkins stated that he was impressed by the revisions that the architects devised in a short period of time, at the tune of \$5 million reduction, and will feel slighted a few weeks from now if the option that he suggested to take another look at funding for the necessary fixes only, is not explored by the Committee. Margaret Manning agrees with Tom Arkins, that

this exercise is doing due diligence to the process, and that weighing and exploring all options is a RIDE requirement. John Osbourne stated that the Committee voted on Site Plan #6, that time is running out, and he is tired of talking about things over and over again that have already been voted on, and that there should be no more changes. Tom Alder agreed that the Committee, on October 25, 2010, voted on a building design, as well as a site design with a caveat to take another look at the site for consideration of more feasible options. Beryl Borden stated that for instance, the cafeteria proposed that will take the present 3 lunch periods and move into a 2 lunch period, requiring a much larger space, is also proposed as a flexible area that can be used for a larger classroom, and that if that were to happen, they would have to go back to the 3 lunch period anyway, and although 2 lunches is recommended, it may not be a RIDE requirement, which is understood by Joe DaSilva.

Topics for RIDE cover letter:

The draft cover letter, was provided to the Committee for discussion and revision. Ben will include areas that the Building Committee will be exploring and grooming for more efficiency, and on a suggestion from the Committee, will change the 4th paragraph, deleting the 2nd sentence and replacing with the words “the town and school district looks forward to suggestions from RIDE”. Ben will also add language regarding a second cost estimate within the last paragraph. BG Shanklin suggested, and the Committee agreed, that there could be two separate approval letters accompanying the application package,

one from the School Committee and one from the Town Council, each with their own wording. Joe Quinn, School Committee member sitting in the audience, did not believe that the School Committee discussed all aspects of the cover letter contents. Don Gomez will review the minutes of that meeting, and will clarify the five votes taken in regard to approvals for the Stage II Application submission. There was consensus of the Committee to have 3 signatures on the cover letter, School Committee, Superintendent Kathy Crowley and the School Building Committee Chair, Tom Alder. Beryl stated that she had a problem with the words “foreseeable future” in the cover letter. The discussion ended and no votes were taken.

Mount Vernon Group repairs concept discussion:

Tom Arkins requested an agenda item to discuss an exercise to consider previous Mt. Vernon and RGB options for comparison and justification of the proposed Durkee Brown plan. He did a comparison analysis and stated that the proposed plan is twice the cost of the previous plans. Tom Alder also went through a comparison between the two plans using the same square footage, but stated that Tom Arkins’ comparison is fundamentally flawed because RGB’s option did not include any site plan. Discussion continued on whether the Committee should opt for spending the time, and cost, to go through this exercise, as well as whether to ask Durkee Brown to develop this as a potential option. Tom Arkins stated that not doing this from the beginning was a mistake on the Committee’s part, that Durkee Brown did a great job, but that the

Committee “owes it to ourselves and the town” to ask them to go through this discipline, even if it would cost another \$1,000. Don Gomez does not believe that comparing the RGB plan to the proposed Durkee Brown plan is comparing apples to apples, because the RGB option does not address some of the compliancy issues. John Osbourne agreed with Don. Tom Alder stated that the School Committee asked the Building Committee to develop a design that meets the needs of the school and community, but did not ask them to develop a Plan B. Mike Steers agreed with Tom Arkins, that by doing this exercise, it will establish a baseline to help sell the plan to the community. Ben Gauthier stated that there is a portion of the community that just does not want to do anything, and that by going through this exercise, the Committee has the opportunity to prove to the community that doing nothing is not an option. The Mt. Vernon report was clear that the building has educational deficiencies, and this exercise would go a long way in educating the town on all the legal ramifications of doing nothing to address the safety and educational deficiencies. Durkee Brown should do this, and “give us a price to run away and relieve ourselves of liability on fixing issues”. Jake Talbot agreed. Mike Steers asked what the Committee is afraid of in doing this exercise. Tom Alder cautioned that the School Committee does not want to change the design, they charged the Building Committee to develop a great design, and the Committee did. Tom Arkins stated that he wants to feel comfortable that the Committee has put the best design forward, and that the Committee should take the time for more investigation to build community

support. Margaret Manning agreed that going through this exercise will make the final design educationally sound, will give the public more options, will do due diligence to the final plan, will not affect the submission of the Stage II application and would allow for the most current information for a comparison cost alternative required for the Stage II Application. Tom Alder stated that he is not convinced that the exercise proposed is for public information only and that any re-design would have to be the decision of the School Committee. Don Gomez believes that the School Committee will not release any more money to develop other options, that he feels the Building Committee has explored all kinds of options. Tom Arkins stated that it was unfair of Tom Alder to assume the intentions of other members of the Committee in opting for time to explore this exercise, and there is no deception on his part, he just wants to present a good case to the community for the proposed school project. BG informed the Committee that Joe DaSilva was a part of the Mt. Vernon Group that did the initial report, and by asking Durkee Brown to go through this exercise would help prove that the proposed plan has added value and will convince others that the Committee has done everything possible to elevate a great plan. Ben Gauthier suggested that by using Durkee Brown, the documents will be in the same format for easier comparison, that they know the building, and can do this more efficiently allowing a comparison of an absolute minimum cost. Tom Alder stated that he does not agree that RIDE requires the kind of comparisons that members of the Committee have proposed. Tom Arkins wanted to make a motion to direct Durkee Brown to

develop a minimum comparison alternative to the proposed plan. Tom Allder stated that a vote is not on the agenda, and therefore, the Committee cannot vote on a motion. Tom suggested that the School Committee discuss the proposal at their next meeting. Kathy Crowley stated that the action item could go to the School Committee for discussion and approval. Don had concerns that the RGB plan did not address some educational issues that are now present, and that a footnote would have to be added to say that the plan does not meet the State BEP. Discussions continued on addressing present educational deficiencies, and what that impact would be.

Ben Gauthier will submit a 20 and 30-year funding plan to the Chair within the next day.

Public Input:

Mr. Lint: In his opinion, the priorities should be 1. asbestos issues and fire code issues, 2. to improve educational issues and 3. improvement of town fields.

Mrs. Allder: stated that for the record, she is speaking as a taxpayer and not as Chairman Tom Allder's wife. She would like to applaud Mr. Osbourne, "he is right on the ball" in stating that the Committee is wasting time, that the application is due on Friday, November 19, let the application go through the process. Mrs. Allder is satisfied that Committee has done their job.

Mr. Lord: agrees with Tom Arkins, it's a small investment to save a bit of money by doing the comparison exercise. Mr. Lord asked what is educationally deficient about this facility

Tom Allder responded to Mr. Lord, stating that he would call the small library deficient. Mr. Lord asked, if the Committee just recommended renovations, would RIDE tell you to rip it apart? Tom Allder did agree that RIDE does have latitude, that the Committee was back and forth with options, and that not everyone will agree on deficiencies. Don Gomez stated the EdSpec is quite specific, and our deficiencies are across the board.

Tom Allder challenged Mr. Lord to state what he agrees is deficient in the building. Mr. Lord agreed with the 2nd floor deficiencies, and said that what we need and what we want could be defined with the useful comparison exercise. Option #5 was a change that the Committee made, so they can change it again.

Joe Quinn: stated that he was intrigued with a Plan B, but has seen this scenario before. Previously, JCJ was brought in, came up with a plan for \$22M, took a look at RGB, then was \$17M. The Town Council, with some prodding, get RGB, they came back at 10.5M, chair said lets make assumptions, then up to \$18M. RGB did not have much good to say about Plan B because they wanted Plan A. Mr. Quinn would like to see a Plan B, he is not satisfied with Plan A, but thinks it should be priced out by an independent company.

Kevin: agreed with Don Gomez, should learn from history. The present architects would be prejudiced. This could be a waste of time, probably folks will not listen anyway, it should be an independent company.

Mr. Lint: asked how does the Committee know what people are thinking? He suggested that the Committee go to the PTA, Grange, all organizations in town and set up meetings to explain what the Committee is about and also to diffuse the rumors. The Committee needs to find out what the public thinks.

Kevin: asked the Chair what would happen if the voters turned down the proposed plan. Tom Alder said there is no alternative plan at this time, but perhaps the School Committee needs to have a Plan B, as the Building Committee was not asked to develop an alternative. Tom does not understand the logic of redesigning this project.

Next SBC Meeting is scheduled for November 22, 2010 at 6 pm.

Motion to adjourn at 9:43 PM by Bob Mushen, seconded by Mile Steers. Motion carried unanimously.

Next meeting Monday, November 22, 2010 at 6 PM

(These minutes unanimously approved 11/22/2010)