

Joint School Advisory Committee Meeting

Minutes of the August 16, 2006 Meeting

A meeting of the Joint School Advisory Committee was held on Thursday, August 16, 2006 in Council Chambers at City Hall.

Attendance

Present:

Chair: Joanne Grasso, Councilor

City Council Members: Mayor Steve Marchand, Tom Ferrini, Laura Pantelakos, Ned Reynolds, Harold Whitehouse, and Chris Dwyer

City Manager: John Bohenko

School Board Members: Kent LaPage, Nancy Clayburgh, Carson Smith, Ann Walker, Brendan Ristaino, Mitchell Shuldman, Sheri Ham Garrity

Planning Board: Anthony Coviello

Advisory Members: Rose Sulley, Eric Weinrieb

Ex-Officio: Robert Lister, Stephen Bartlett, John Stokel, Helen Maldini

Presentation Speakers

Dan Bisson, Team Design

Jim Delisle, Team Design

Edward Murdough, N.H. Department of Education

Call to Order

Chair Grasso called the meeting of the Joint School Advisory Committee to order at 5:30 p.m. in Council Chambers at Portsmouth City Hall.

Mayor Marchand opening remarks and welcome to everyone.

Kent LaPage gave a brief history of the committee. This committee first started on October 23, 2003. It ended this past January when Team Design came back and presented to the school board its finding of the middle school, Jones Ave and the other sites. We allowed Councilor Reynolds to present alternatives on March 29th. The committee has been delayed because of budgets and other things that have come up. Mr. LaPage expressed his sincere appreciation to everyone, especially Team Design and their firms. Also recognized Carl Diemer and Helen Maldini. They have given 3 years of time looking at this and they are still working on it. By the middle of December the Mayor and I agree

we want to see this try to wrap up to see what is available and how the council and school board are going to move forward.

John Stokel then reviewed what the committee has done since it was created. In fall 2003 formed school facilities committee to take a look at the middle school and to make recommendations to the board for renovations or build a new building. Primary charge was to look at educational narrative, educational needs of early adolescents and the physical needs for early adolescents. Contracted with Dr. Robert Spear, the Executive Director of New England League of Middle Schools to give us input to the physical needs and facility needs for early adolescents. He brought a number of topics to our attention and then provided us with a number of middle school sites to look at that have been either newly constructed or renovated in the past few years. The committee toured these facilities and talked with staff members. They did not start out with the premise that we immediately wanted to build new. We spent a year meeting to discuss all the ideas. We then contracted with Team Design to do an educational needs assessment. Interviews were held with all faculty and staff members for their input and to look at the facility itself, the state standards and what was available and what could happen. June 2004 the committee presented to the school board and the recommendation from the committee was to look at building a new facility just because of the drawbacks from the current facility.

Team Design Presentation

Dan Bisson. Reviewed the assessments completed by Team Design – two-fold one was the facility (all the different types of code requirements) and looked a variety of all the systems. The second was the program analysis. This is reviewing the Dept of Ed guidelines with the current facility. The critical area there is for financial aid. We want to make sure that we have the proper capacities in the school. Out of those two reports it was very clear that the building was basically an older facility, very easy to renovate but the issue became cost and replacing major systems. The program analysis proved that classroom size were well under the guidelines of 900 square feet, especially the areas of the library, art rooms, tech ed; all were significantly under the state guidelines.

Reviewed current site and abutting properties including alumni field and JFK library. Parts of that building are on alumni field. There is very little potential growth on that site. Diagrams with both Option 1 - major renovations and Option 2 – minor renovations were presented (attached). Both these options include

a list of objectives, what renovations would include, concerns and costs.

Map of available properties within Portsmouth. Using tax maps and overlays for soil, mitigation, setbacks and ledge focused on each site. Jones Avenue came to the surface even though there are some issues there. Some sites just not viable as you would need to buy out the current owners. Need 16 build able acres and that is a challenge.

Mike Penny from Geo Insight reviewed the Jones Avenue site and the fact that it was previously used as a landfill. Reviewed how the town of Goffstown successfully converted an old landfill into their athletic fields.

Gregg Mickolaicis from Appledore Engineering did a preliminary review of the Jones Avenue site. This site does warrant more analysis; additional studies need to be done.

Ed Murdough from the Department of Education reviewed the financial aid and meeting the American Disabilities Act. A complete plan would have to be submitted showing how we would meet the state standards with either Option 1 or Option 2 of renovations or building a new school. Need assurance that they find it acceptable. Waivers are given only to meet standards in another way. Local code officials and the state fire marshall's office would also need to approve any renovations. They would also want to know if new was considered and why we did not choose to build new.

- Recess** At 6:30 p.m. the **JSAC** committee adjourned to Conference Room A for organizational purposes.
- Next Meeting** The next meeting will be on Wednesday, August 30, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. at the Portsmouth Middle School, Room 106.
- Other** A DVD of the presentation is available at the City Clerk's office.
- Adjournment** The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m. by Councilor Grasso.