

## Joint School Advisory Committee Meeting

### Minutes of the January 24, 2007 Meeting

A meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee was held on Wednesday, January 24, 2007 at Portsmouth Council Chambers, City Hall.

**Attendance:** Present:  
**Chair:** Joanne Grasso, Councilor  
**City Council Member:** Ned Raynolds, Tom Ferrini  
**School Board Members:** Nancy Novelline Clayburgh, Sheri Ham Garrity, Mitchell Shuldman  
**Planning Board:** Anthony Coviello  
**Advisory Members:** Rose Sulley and Eric Weinrieb  
Ex-Officio: Robert Lister, John Stokel, Steve Bartlett And Helen Maldini

**Call To Order:** Chair Grasso called the meeting of the Joint School Advisory Committee to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Minutes Approved:** The Chair called for the approval of the January 10, 2007 minutes. Ms. Ham Garrity moved and Ms. Novelline Clayburgh seconded, the minutes be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Presentation:** Ms. Grasso explained the procedure for the evening which would be a presentation only, with questions accepted by members of the committee. A public commentary will be held on February 7, 2007 in the Portsmouth Middle School Library at 7:00 where community members may speak on the presentation. The School Board and City Council will hold Public commentary as the process proceeds.

Dr. Lister introduced the presenters and those in attendance who will assist in answering questions from the committee.

Team Design – Dan Bisson, Jim Delisle and Nery Bordas  
Appledore Engineering - Greg Mikolaities  
Department of Education – Edward Murdough  
City Attorney – Bob Sullivan  
City Manager – John Bohenko  
GEO Instight – Mike Pettis

Dr. Lister also thanked the members of the City Council in attendance, Chris Dwyer, Harold Whitehouse, and School Board Member Ann Walker, teachers and community members.

Mr. Dan Bisson, Team Design, along with Mr. Delisle and Ms. Bordas presented to the committee 3 proposals; two at the Parrot Avenue site and one at the Jones Avenue site. Originally Team Design had developed with a total of 5 proposals at the Parrot Avenue site but narrowed it down to the 2 which would most meet the educational narrative of building a middle School. A Site Comparison report was given to all committee members with details including size of the building, parking spaces, playing fields, needs for permits, land purchase, waivers and other items necessary to complete the sites including estimates.

***Questions and Discussion:***

The current buffer at the Parrot Avenue site would no longer be maintained due to the need of the parking lot. The entire Peirce parcel would be needed. Using the fields at Leary Field as the school fields would require the city to sign those fields over to the school department and would require a waiver from the State Department of Education.

Parking at the Parrot Avenue site would be a shared agreement with the city. The parking spaces needed at the Parrot Avenue site are based on the number needed for staff. Because of parking in the area downtown parking lots, no additional spaces would be needed for events held at the Middle School. Presently only 6 parking spaces are on school property. The rest are on the Peirce property with a total of 125 – 130 parking spaces. The Team Design proposal would have 199 spaces. At the Jones site, there are 339 parking spaces.

Both Parrot Avenue proposals would take about the same amount of time to complete and is estimated that building expenses go up about 5% per year.

If the building at Parrot Avenue site were built in phases, such as building the addition and then renovating the existing building, to allow for the staff and students to remain in the building during the construction there would be many expenses such as electrical work and a boiler room both of which would be abandoned once the entire construction was complete. It would still require some staff and students to be housed elsewhere. A discussion revolved around the idea that this would not be the best use of funds.

Building at the Jones Avenue site would have an emergency entrance on Jones Avenue with the main access road from Route 1. There would be sidewalks connecting the high school and the middle school. Two fields at the high school would be raised with excavated materials that would be available with site development. Tests were completed on the Jones Avenue site on the soil and on settlement with both insignificant results. The gasses on the land have been monitored by the city and there is no gas being produced. The land has settled and now has leveled out.

A house that was once at the Jones Avenue site is long since disappeared but a foundation remains. If nothing significant is found to be of historical significance, it will be recorded and the plan will continue.

The construction at Jones Avenue would take approximately two years.

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation is working at improving the area of Route 1 near where the entrance would be. The NHDOT is keeping in touch with Team Design about the possibility of building at the Jones Avenue site and the need for an entrance on Route 1.

Building fields at Jones Avenue would include looking into artificial turf to reduce maintenance on the fields and allow for a longer playing season. The current fields already there would be improved as well as the existing road.

Mr. Murdough stated that all proposals would be workable with the Department of Education. The contribution from the state of 30 – 40% could be the same at either site as long as the fields are available for school activities. An additional 3% building aid program is available if sustainability requirements are met. This money would only be based on the amount of work done on the property, not roads to the school or putting in sidewalks on Jones Avenue. Also, all waivers would be submitted together as a package for review. These waivers would need to be approved before construction could begin.

The Parrot Avenue site would not allow for future growth. The Jones Avenue would allow for expansion if Portsmouth or Newington student population increases.

The Peirce Property is owned by the City with a restriction that this property would be used for recreational and no other purpose. The restriction would have to be removed, the property purchased with the money put into the Charitable trust to be used for recreation. The change of the deed would be done as well as any other paperwork. The appeals could take many years.

The City Council could vote not to take the Peirce property which would not allow a new middle school be built at the Parrot Avenue site.

***Future Meetings:***

The next meeting which will include a public commentary session at the beginning of the meeting will be held on February 7, 2007 7:00 p.m. at the Portsmouth Middle School Library.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

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