

**Town of Watertown School  
Building Committee  
Three Elementary School Projects  
Wednesday, November 16, 2022  
via ZOOM 6:00p.m. – 7:00p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**Committee Members Present:** Mark Sideris (chair), John Portz (vice-chair), Vincent Piccirilli, Deanne Galdston, Kelly Kurlbaum, Heidi Perkins, Leo Patterson, James Kane, Steve Magoon, Paul Anastasi and Thomas Tracy

**Committee Members Absent:** Lindsay Mosca

**Others Present:** Daren Sawyer, Nate Williams, James Jordan, Andrew Cunneen and Alex Sieving (Ai3 Architects); Vivian Varbedian, Thomas Finnegan and Alana Forbes, (OPM, Hill International), Stacy Phelan; Christy Murphy and Chase Terrio (Compass Project Management)

**1. Call to Order:** Chairman Mark Sideris was unable to call the meeting to order due to technical difficulties. John Portz called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. John Portz took a roll call of School Building Committee members present.

**2. Approval of Meeting Minutes – November 16, 2022**

Chairman Sideris made a motion to approve the Elementary Meeting Minutes for October 19, 2022 and November 2, 2022. Vincent Piccirilli motions to approve the Elementary school meeting minutes and John Portz seconded. All were in favor on a roll call vote.

**3. Review / Approval of Elementary Schools Monthly Invoices**

Vivian Varbedian presented the Elementary schools October invoices.

**October 2022 invoices are as follows w/total at \$3,573,460.25:**

- Hill International – \$89,810.00
- Ai3 Architects (Basic Services) - \$37,883.27
- Ai3 Architects – (Extra Services) - \$87,389.35
- Ai3 Architects (Reimbursables Services) - \$2,833.29
- Brait Builders (Payment Req # 29) – \$807,752.50
- CTA Construction Managers (Payment Req #8) - \$2,518,392.43
- Ridgeline Energy Analytics - \$1,530.00
- UTS Invoices - \$10,522.00
- Colliers International - \$17,347.41

Chairman Mark Sideris made a motion to approve the Elementary School projects invoices. Vincent Piccirilli motions to approve the Elementary school project invoices totally \$3,573,460.25 with John Portz seconded. All were in favor on a roll call vote.

#### **4. Executive Summary**

Vivian Varbedian presented and reviewed the Executive Summary highlights for October 2022. Cunniff Elementary school is continuing to work on miscellaneous punch list items. Hosmer Elementary School is continuing to work through miscellaneous punch list items. Ballfield construction has begun as well as the PV foundations, support and panels are underway. Lowell Elementary school work is progressing with brick exterior work at Zone 1 addition, completing sheathing and AVB at Zone 2 addition, starting brick exterior at Zone 2 addition, continuing re-roofing at Zone 1 area (new asphalt shingles), roofing in both Zone 1 and Zone 2 addition areas, continuing with rough mechanical ductwork and piping, rough plumbing, rough electrical and fire protection in both Zone 1 and 2. A presentation of the revised cafeteria, kitchen and lobby areas will be presented during the December SBC meeting.

#### **5. Elementary School Projects Update – Lowell Elementary School**

##### ***Interior Finish / Color Selection Review & Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment Selection Review***

Daren Sawyer and Alex Sieving of (Ai3 Architects) reviewed and presented the updates for Lowell Elementary school. They discussed the interior finish /color selection as well as the Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment selection review. Daren Sawyer informed all that over the past (7) months submittals were gathered as well as samples from the contractor on all the architectural finishes. Alex Sieving of (Ai3 Architects) has been preparing all the architectural finish color pallet for the renovated Lowell Elementary school. A draft of the color pallet was shown to Dr. Galdston, Dr. McGuinness and Stacy Phelan (LES Principal) which they liked. They then met again to review a final presentation of all the colors throughout the building with the different finishes. Also, all the FF&E (Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment) color pallet was presented by Alex Sieving.

Alex Sieving (Ai3 Architects) discussed the goals for the finishes. She started with the beautiful school colors for Lowell Elementary School which is the blue and gold school colors representing the school's spirit and pride. Also, she used grade level identity to highlight the different academic neighborhoods throughout the school. Alex wanted to use color to celebrate the children's achievement as they advance from grade to grade to feel that progression. We used color to establish wayfinding and a sense of place. A lot of beautiful materials was used to create calm and timeless neutral colors. Colors were used to identify customize spaces, create a fun and positive atmosphere. A strategic placement of lighter colors and finishes to support daylighting and light level sensors which equals energy savings. This creates a vibrant new school.

Regarding the patterns and forms that the materials took, we looked for nature for inspiration which promotes a very positive attitude for learning and collaboration with the kids. The natural phenomenon and motifs are beautiful, inspiring, and reassuring. Some custom graphics will focus on school identity and branding, the school logo, mascot, and the school colors. The imagery from nature will also be incorporated into custom graphics in high visibility areas and used to inspire floor patterns throughout the school. Since J.R. Lowell was a poet and ambassador to Spain, we are celebrating his inspiration in some of the graphics for the school.

The Learning Commons which is the new flexible learning space can be configured in many ways. The blue and gold school colors are front and center on display in the presentation. It is a very fun and elegant space. Being in the corner of the building with all the windows is an arc of all the trees that is protected during construction. This embraces the space with all the wall of green, lots of natural light, nice carpet tone and pattern. The learning space has (2) collaborative spaces which shows the upper level and shows a corridor with flexible learning space overlooking the learning commons. There is also a resource room and a multi-purpose platform in the dark blue paint.

The Media Center also has its own pallet. The Media Center has (3) zones. The circulation desk / inquiry zone, the teaching wall / learning zone, and the quiet reading zones with the reading nooks on the walls. They look like little circles placed among the bookcases. The fabric for the cushions is nice and durable. The cushions are also removable and cleanable. There are nice accent colors on the walls. There is a beautiful window with the soft natural light and great view.

The Corridors show a broad area of neutral flooring of linoleum. There are pops of colors at the cubbies coordinated with the floor pattern. Different corridors in the school will have different accent colors. The new cubbies have a universal design with fun colors and nice features to make it accessible to all students. The corner shows a floor plan of the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classrooms which shows their accent colors which is greens and yellows. The corridors also have green and yellows to show you where you are. In the academic corridor collaboration space overlooking the Learning Commons shows a lot of light and color. The blue wall leading to the staircase will have custom vinyl graphics which is still in production.

The Corridor at Main Entry is part of the 1996 addition. The school spirit colors, blue and the gold, are front and center. This shows a high level of finish with lots of light, natural maple, custom display area, custom vinyl graphics, video display for announcements and showcasing student work. This is very bright and welcoming which is a high level of finish to celebrate the main entrance to the school. The Typical Classroom – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade has light finishes, great lighting, lots of windows in all the classrooms, calming neutrals with the natural motif. The neutral floors have a stone pattern which is beautiful and quiet. The accent colors are really fun.

The Typical Classroom – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade has different accent colors for the different grade levels. All the grade levels have its own theme. The accent colors are shown by grade levels. Kindergarten is shown as really fun which is called “Spectrum” to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade being more mature blue and rust colors called “Mountain”.

The Music Classroom shows the new color pallet such as the blue, green, and gold. The carpet pattern is designed to support the dance curriculum which is part of the music programming at Lowell Elementary school. There is the fun dance circle. The walls show how the school colors are incorporated into acoustical treatments.

The Art Classroom has all the colors but paired carefully brings out the beauty of the space. There is a lot of extra tackboards built in the classroom as well as in the corridor adjacent to art classroom to display work from the students. A neat feature which is part of the existing building, is the column that your able to put a paintbrush motif. In the corridor which bends into the 1996 addition is a beautiful-angled space with a perfect north facing light there is an art gallery. There will be custom angled gallery tracked lighting that can be angled for the art display.

Daren Sawyer of Ai3 Architects stated that all the woodwork throughout the school will be the natural maple which will provide some consistency like all the doors, casework, millwork and wainscoting in the corridors. It maybe hard to get a sense on a digital presentation but all are welcome to come to Hill trailer at Lowell Elementary school site to see the physical presentation boards with the actual samples of the materials.

## **6. Elementary School Project Update – Hosmer Elementary School**

### ***Revised Landscape Plan at PV Locations on Boylston Street***

Daren Sawyer of Ai3 Architects discussed concerns from a neighborhood meeting on October 13<sup>th</sup>, with the overall site and landscaping plan. A concern was the parking on the Boylston Street side of the site and the fact that when the cars pull into the parking spaces facing Boylston Street, their headlights will face their houses right across the street. They wanted to know if there is anything that Ai3 Architects can do to stop the light pollution into their homes. We proposed adding some additional landscaping along that buffer between that parking and the sidewalk that runs along Boylston Street. Initially, there was a series of trees that were the Japanese Lilacs which are the medium size circles on the presentation. A couple of the larger red maples up in the corner and down at the entrance of the parking lot. We tried to introduce in between the trees that we owned already. A variety of landscape plants that would grow to 4-5 ft tall so when a car does pull in, it will block the lights from getting through to the neighbors. They are a variety of plants and species that are listed. You will see the variety of plants that we are introducing. We have issued it to the contractor and waiting for pricing to add this additional landscaping in that area.

There was another concern with the neighbors on Hancock Street with the PV Canopy. It is outlined in green that has electrical conduits and electrical components that are coming up on the 1<sup>st</sup> structural support. The neighbors wanted us to take a look to possibly hiding with some type of landscaping. We have proposed (3) trees in that general location that will grow and block the visibility to that conduit and electrical box at the corner. This was issued to the contractor and asked for pricing as well.

## **7. Elementary School Questions / Comments**

**Question 1** – Leo Patterson asked if there will be a signage and graphics package throughout the school? Is that something that the Committee will see before implementation? What colors will the window treatments or sunshades will be and what they bring to the space especially the Media Center? Regarding the white felt acoustic paneling on the ceiling or the upper collaboration portion, are we confident that will perform long term. White is beautiful day one but how do you think it would be after a number of years?

**Response** – Daren Sawyer of Ai3 Architects stated that this is currently being worked on similar to what was done at both the Hosmer and Cunniff ES. Typically, a neutral color will be picked and those are somewhat transparent like mecoshades that lets some light in but not the glare. If you try to blend a neutral color with the wall color in the background without introducing any vibrant bright colors in the window shades or window treatments. Leo Patterson thought that would be good to get a physical sample especially if it had a certain percentage opening to understand what we are talking about there. Daren states that they are pretty confident with the material. Some research was done during design and selected it for its durability. It won't be touched due to ceiling level, so it won't be touched. It is a built-in acoustical treatment on the ceiling. Leo Patterson stated that with a revised finished package, any opportunity for the public to see it and get closer to it would be great. SBC Committee can go to the trailers, but I don't believe the public can so maybe the library or some other place and even if it is a reserved duplicate set should also be provided to the library which is a conscious choice for Ai3 to make.

**Question 2** – Steve Magoon stated that he shares the same sentiments as Leo Patterson with the acoustical treatments being white. This may get dirty. Will this be something that will be able to be clean?

**Response** – Daren Sawyer of Ai3 Architects suggested that they all should take another look to see what other colors that maybe available for that area and maybe due some testing in the office to see how dirty or cleanable it is before we finalize. This is a good suggestion.

**Question 3** – Leo Patterson asked about the Boylston Street side stating that it is a great idea to introduce lower plantings to block the headlight condition. If you can remind me of the snow removal strategy. The reason asked is because I have relatives living very close to this location and I never knew that this parking lot is packed whenever it snows. People move their cars off the street and utilize the space. Where is the snow going?

**Response** - Daren Sawyer of Ai3 Architects stated that he thinks it was discussed at the job meetings but think the intent is to have snow removed from this area or pushed to the far end of this parking lot. You will either have to push it to one side to another or actually remove it from that area.

**Question 4** – Steve Magoon asked about the fencing around the smaller playground? One area has a low picket fence which won't address balls?

**Response** - Daren Sawyer stated that they are still working on some viable options with the Landscape Architect. She will take a look on what is going on and come back to us with some ideas and how to address them.

**Question 5** – AnnMarie Cloonan stated that the fence at the Winthrop Street playground, fence by the gate was broken. New older children playground has a concerning decline around the playground surface down to the fence. It presents as an injury risk.

**Response** – Daren Sawyer stated that they are aware of some of those slopes, and it was talked about at our neighborhood meeting. This area still needs some work from the contractor which is also on the punch list. Chairman Sideris stated that the rain gardens need to be addressed which Daren is aware. He thanks Daren for addressing some of the neighbors concerns on the lighting and additional landscaping. It is work in progress and really like the idea of shielding those electrical conduits on the side of the solar arrays.

**Question 6** – Councilor Nicole Gardner states that there was a request to potentially use old trees for furniture. Do you know if this has potential?

**Response** - Daren Sawyer says "Yes" that this is being worked on as well. There has been a lot of ideas bounced around and the Landscape Architect is working with Brait Builders on what the best to do with the old trees that were taken down.

**Question 7** – Nicole Gardner stated that there was some discussion on whether we could use plantings or art installations to mask the post for the solar. Is this still under discussion?

**Response** – Daren Sawyer believes that it is as it was bought up at the community meeting. It is his understanding that maybe the school or community group would take on. We have not provided design ideas for that maybe a nice community project. Chairman Sideris stated that the arts committee may weigh in and possibly do something there. We will work through that but yes, it is still under discussion.

**Question 8** – Kendra Foley stated that there have been some concerns about the lack of swings in the playground. Is it possible to add swings?

**Response** - Chairman Sideris stated that at the School Committee last week, it appears that we fell a little short in designing this playground and Ai3 Architects has been already out there with Tom Finnegan and Vivian Varbedian of Hill International to see where we could add some swings. We will be having different conversations as we move forward as we finish the designs of the Lowell school. We are trying to address these issues and we will do whatever it takes to make it a good playground for everyone.

**Question 9** – Heather McManus stated that the SEPAC will also be touring the playground and please let us know we can give any input about general accessibility concerns.

**Response** – Chairman Sideris informed Heather that your more than happy to get in touch with him. I am even open to coming and walking with you. Daren Sawyer states that if you need him or the Landscape Architect, please let him know.

**Question 10** – Kelly Kurlbaum asked had concerns about the interior design at Hosmer ES? Also, want to make sure that these concerns are being addressed proactively. Maybe worthwhile taking another look at that so we don't have similar concerns once that project is done.

**Response** – Deanne Galdston stated that tomorrow's tour includes classroom spaces as well. We want to make sure that people are well aware of how those classrooms were designed and how they meet the needs of students and if there are areas of concern. We would like to discuss and see if anything needs to be done. In general, we need to walk the classrooms and make people know the intentionality behind the design. This is on the docket for the tour as well. Not sure if I need anyone but if I need anyone, I will let you know.

**Comment A** - Dr. Deanne Galdston expressed her appreciation for the hard work that has been done with the color pallet. Both her and Stacy Phelan walked thru with the Architects and really feel that you have honored the sense of the Lowell Elementary school and spent a lot of time and energy to get to that place. She also commented on the fact that it is like we are building siblings. They are not identical twins, the Cunniff, Hosmer and Lowell ES, and they have their own unique identities, but they certainly bring through a feeling that it is a family and a community. We are very excited of what is being provided for the kids and the community.

**Comment B** – Steve Magoon agreed with Dr. Galdston that they have done an excellent job of providing a good color pallet and it addresses concerns we had earlier on with some of the existing trim work, some concerns that we may have the look and feel of not really having been completely renovated in a new space.

**Comment C** – AnnMarie Cloonan commented on the Boylston Street and Hancock Street plantings which stated great response to the neighborhoods request.

### **End of Elementary School Project Business Meeting**

Chairman Sideris ended the Elementary School Project Business meeting at 6:46 pm.