

**Town of Watertown School  
Building Committee  
Three Elementary School Projects & High School Project  
Wednesday, June 16, 2021 via ZOOM  
6:00 – 7:55 p.m.**

**M I N U T E S**

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

**Committee Members Absent:** Lindsay Mosca and Kelly Kurlbaum

**Others Present:** Joel Giacobozzi, HS Principal; James Jordan, Daren Sawyer, Andrew Cunneen and Julie Rahilly (Architectural Team, Ai3 Architects); Vivian Varbedian, Tom Finnegan and Alana Forbes (OPM, Hill International); Christy Murphy, Tim Bonfatti and Allyson Mahar (Compass Project Management), Stacy Phelan and Mena Ciarlone

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Mark Sideris called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. Mr. Portz took a roll call of Committee Members present.

2. **Meeting Minutes Approval:**

Chairman Sideris stated that May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Elementary meeting minutes would be tabled for next School Building Committee meeting. Vincent Piccirilli mentioned due to the minutes having time discontinuity, it needs to be placed into one document for both Elementary and High School meeting minutes.

Vincent Piccirilli made a motion to approve the June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 School Building Committee meeting minutes as written. Tom Tracy seconded; all were in favor on a roll call vote.

3. **Review/Approval of Monthly Invoices:**

Vivian Varbedian presented the Elementary School projects invoices totaling \$5,069,210.12.

**The Elementary invoices read as follows:**

- *Hill International - \$93,910.00*
- *Ai3 Architects - \$101,476.94, and \$4,390.00 (Reimbursable Expenses)*
- *Brait Builders - \$4,866,406.93*
- *UTS (Testing Agency) – \$2,096.25*
- *A. Walecka & Son Mover - \$930.00*

Vincent Piccirilli made a motion to approve the Elementary School projects monthly invoices of \$5,069,210.12. Tom Tracy seconded; all were in favor on a roll call vote.

Vivian Varbedian presented the High School project invoices totaling \$24,931.48.

**The High School invoices read as follows:**

- Compass Project Management - \$19,940.50
- Ai3 Architects - \$2,185.98

Vincent Piccirilli made a motion to approve the High School projects monthly invoices of \$24,931.48 but withdrew motion due to vendor AM Fogarty & Associates invoice being part of Compass Project Management invoice. Vincent Piccirilli made a new motion to approve the High School project invoices of new total of \$22,126.48. Tom Tracy seconded; all were in favor on a roll call vote.

**4. Executive Summary**

Vivian Varbedian reviewed and presented June 2021 Executive Summary for both Cunniff and Hosmer Elementary school projects.

Regarding Cunniff Elementary school projected major task this month are continuing work with miscellaneous finish painting, ceilings, and floorings on all floors. Progress continues with miscellaneous finish mechanical, electrical, plumbing and fire protection on all floors. Also, installation of the play equipment on west side of the site as well as installation of PV Panels on roof and site.

Hosmer Elementary school projected major task this month is continuous work with miscellaneous metal trim at roof edge and miscellaneous Sarnafil roof detail work. Progress continues with exterior finishes, store fronts and curtain wall. Also, continued work with interior sheetrock/taping in Zone (1) and (3) and rough plumbing, electrical, HVAC and fire protection in Zone 2.

Vivian Varbedian mentioned that no change orders have been presented for the month of June but review and approval for change order #7 will be forthcoming for month of July 2021.

**5. O'Connell Softball Field – Proposed Added Scope**

Dr. Deanne Galdston presented the O'Connell Softball Field – Proposed Added Scope. Superintendent Galdston discussed the proposed scope of work needed for reconstruction of O'Connell Softball Fields as follows:

- Restroom facilities with storage for softball equipment such as bases, gear, softballs, etc.
- Portable bleachers, 3 or 4 seats high
- One scoreboard
- Water faucet
- Flagpole
- Reinstallation of the batting cage

The steps to proceed with the Proposed Added Scope is as follows:

- Superintendent Galdston to meet with the design team to answer questions related to proposed scope.
- Design team to provide proposals and cost estimates for added work
- Design team to develop site plan that includes added scope and present to SBC.

Chairman Mark Sideris explained that the School Building Committee should move forward with approval to get a design and cost of the fields.

Vincent Piccirilli made a motion that the School Building Committee authorizes proceeding with design for the added scope of the O'Connell Softball Field. Tom Tracy seconded; all were in favor on a roll call vote.

## **6. Lowell Elementary School – Contractor Prequalification Process**

Vivian Varbedian discussed the contractor Prequalification process for Lowell Elementary School. On June 23 (Wed), Request for Qualifications (RFQs) will be advertised in the Central Registry. The deadline for receiving the (RFQs) will be July 22<sup>nd</sup>. In August, the RFQs will be reviewed, evaluated then a recommendation to proceed will be done. In September, advertisement process will begin for bidding of the Sub-Contractor which will then be followed by the General Contractor. The release of Lowell Elementary School 100% bid documents will begin on October 7<sup>th</sup>.

Also, regarding the Solar Panels, Vivian Varbedian spoke about having the Architectural and Engineering team review adding additional scope to the flat roofs and adding to the bid documents prior to release of October 7<sup>th</sup>. If there is interest in the project to proceed with the solar panels, there is an option to review and add as an additional scope as a form of a change order. You will not get the same cost benefit as if it was included in the 100% construction documents, but other options can be pursued if needed.

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

- **Question 1** – John Portz asked what was in the original scope that was built into the project?  
**Response** – Superintendent Galdston stated that the reinstallation of the batting cage was part of the project and establishment of two varsity level softball fields. We are looking for amenities that one would expect for this level of play.
- **Question 2** – John Portz asked if the fields are seeded or sodded?  
**Response** – Julie Rahilly of Ai3 stated that the Construction Documents owned them to be sod fields. Chairman Mark Sideris said that it could change dependent on how extensive it becomes.
- **Question 3** – Paul Anastasia asked if there would be restrooms.  
**Response** – Vivian Varbedian confirmed that there would be restroom facilities approximately 20x30 with storage for softball equipment.
- **Question 4** – Attendee Eloida asked if you can indicate where the bathrooms supposed to be located.  
**Response** – Vivian Varbedian informed her that the bathrooms have not been designed as yet so the proposed scope is to have restroom facilities, storage for softball equipment, portable bleachers, scoreboard, water fountain, additional flagpole then relocation of the batting cages. Superintendent Galdston request is to get approval to proceed and move forward with looking at the proposed scope and getting a cost estimate prior to the work commencing.
- **Comment A** - Attendee Elodia noted that the school is encroaching on every public park space in town. It is beginning to irk the other 34,000 plus people in the community. The same clutter of the batting cages is in every single Elementary school, all over the parks and something must come back to the people of the community who wants to just enjoy a park. Money keeps mounting up whether it's for electricity and the school slides along on all of it then the taxpayers pay for it all. It is out of control across the town.

## **8. High School Project Update – Landscape Design**

Jim Jordan introduced the landscape architect working on the project. The landscape architects presented the proposed landscape design. The existing conditions have limited exterior site program for students and limited parking for needs of school. The new proposed 1-H building configuration gains exterior spaces on the site for exterior site program including space along Columbia Street as well as adjacent to the cemetery property, and terrace roof areas for outdoor flexible use and early childhood. The site plan accomplishes service and parking entry off Barnard Street and moved and expanded parking under the building set into the hillside with an exit off onto Common Street. Pedestrian circulation around the site and through the building was reviewed. Bike parking locations were identified to encourage alternative modes of transportation for students and faculty. Vehicle circulation was also reviewed including proposed drop off areas along Columbia Street and access into and out of the parking garage. Site program includes streetscape plaza, rooftop classroom and early child play, rooftop rec space, outdoor classroom, outdoor dining area, passive landscape area, and flexible open space. Next steps for the site plan are to get direction from the Committee on whether or not the location of the spaces on site seems to work and then the landscape architects can begin to work on the detail as we move through Schematic Design.

The meeting was opened up to the Committee for questions:

- **Comment:** Paul Anastasi noted snow removal accessibility is important. Also having no loose material and skateboard protection should be included.
- **Question 1:** John Portz asked about the rooftop spaces. How are they configured or accessed?  
**Response:** The rec court for PE use has direct access off of Columbia Street. The outdoor play area for early childhood classroom outdoor area is on the main level but only accessed from the within the building. Goal is to have universal access to the main entry.
- **Question 2:** Steve Magoon asked about the entrance from the garage on Common Street.  
**Response:** Jim Jordan replied a couple month ago the design team presented a question different circulation approaches to exiting out onto Common Street. The exit with the right turn only onto Common Street was preferred by the traffic consultant but they did add a caveat to that saying it would be ideal if the exit out of the parking garage aligned with the location of the exiting traffic light to provide the safest access. There is still some work to do to study the area for the safest exit onto Common Street. In addition, the service area and parking garage entrance is very important area that will continue to be studied.
- **Question 3:** Tom Tracy asked about the flex field, making sure there is enough access for ambulance if needed to get to the flex field.  
**Response:** Jim Jordan replied they are still studying this but there is possibly an opportunity to widen the walkway slightly for an emergency vehicle to get through.
- **Question 4:** Heidi Perkins asked what the fence height around the rec court will be to prevent balls from going out onto the roadway? What are the snow removal measures to know that there wouldn't be water dripping down on cars driving under or icicles?  
**Response:** Jim Jordan replied there are multiple ways this could be addressed and this will be looked at in more detail as we get into the design. Mr. Jordan also noted how this space is used is up to the Committee and the design team would be looking for feedback on how that space will be utilized.

- **Comment:** Dr. Galdston noted she sees a maximization of limited space and is thrilled of the possibility of having the flex field, rec court, and plaza area. We are seeing a need to get students outdoors so having the outdoor classrooms, dining area and garden area are beneficial and give students the opportunity to be outside as much as possible.
- **Comment:** Mark Sideris noted he has some concerns with basketballs bouncing in neighborhood late at night noting we need to be sensitive to the neighbors since it will be used after school hours.

## **9. High School Project Update – Detailed Floorplans**

Andrew Cunneen gave an update on the programming meetings that were held in April and May and all of the information that the design team was able to collect from the faculty and staff prior to summer break. Three rounds of programming were held with each department. A lot of positive feedback and excitement for the project was received from faculty and staff. Substantial improvements were made to each area based on the feedback received. The design team will be meeting with departments again during the Design Development phase of the project.

- **Comment:** Joel Giacobozzi thanked the design team for their efforts and that he appreciates the hard work to design the spaces that will work for Watertown.

Ai3 gave a detailed review of the building floorplans:

**Ground Floor** - It was important to give this building a presence on both Columbia Street and Common Street. There is a direct view corridor to the major element off Common Street which happens to be the Fine Arts program at the center of the building. This engages the student dining space on either side of the Fine Arts and pull it out into the landscape. There are two major entry points on either side of Fine Arts so programs can spill out onto outside plaza area. The service corridor will be an important design area and how that area will function. The design team is looking at activating the student commons zone off the parking garage. There is a large learning stair that is part of the student commons intended for various functional uses. The ground floor also includes the culinary program and fab lab/wood shop program, and custodial and maintenance zone.

- **Question 1:** Steve Magoon asked if art space will feel like a fish bowl separate from the rest of the building. **Response:** The design team looked at it as a celebration of the art program locating it in a prime location. There is also a vertical connection as well because right above it is graphic arts, and directly above that is the 2-story media center. The art department was excited about the adjacencies and the connection to the outdoor patio space. This location also offers display areas for student art work which was identified as important in the educational plan.

**First Floor Plan** – The main entry off Columbia Street will have a prominent feature to draw people in. The overhead walking track extends around the entire gymnasium and it will be an activated area for students and pedestrians. There are connections to the gymnasium and early childhood center and exterior spaces. Band and Chorus have direct access to an outdoor area so they can use the space for performances but also gives an opportunity to get instruments in and out of the building easily. The main entrance is controlled access directly connected to administration. Administration has views to Columbia Street. The

medical suite is located next to admin. The 480-seat auditorium abuts the large group space that will be set up as a black box theatre with an opportunity to open up as one space at the stage. The gymnasium has a full competition court and a practice court. Weight and fitness room is a 2-story and 2-level space and locker rooms are also on this level. Business and medical assisting are also located on the first floor. There are 2 academic neighborhoods located along the Common Street side of the building. There are large group break out “common” spaces that will become collaboration spaces for each academic neighborhood. Science rooms are located on the ends of the building with potential interior greenhouse space.

**Second Floor Plan** – Video production, SPED offices and Guidance offices are located along the Columbia Street side. The core academic classrooms are on the side along Common Street. The walking track is accessed on this level. A lot of spaces will have visual connections between programs throughout the building. The teacher collaboration space is located central to all teachers. The media center is located on this level with great view to the Common Street and the flex field. There are views open to below. There is access to the balcony section of the auditorium.

**Third Floor Plan** – This is an academic level. The academic commons are stacked with the floor below. The fab lab associated with the media center is on this level. There are openings in the floor to below allowing natural light. There is a balcony open to below in the media center. The final 7<sup>th</sup> large science lab is located in the center of this level.

Jim Jordan noted the next meeting we will provide an update on Zero Net Energy and path forward as well as exterior elevations and with feedback and comments the design team will continue to update the exterior perspective.

The meeting was opened up to the Committee for questions and comments:

- **Comment:** Paul Anastasi noted he is excited with the way this is beginning to be fine-tuned. Mr. Anastasi noted to be aware of security down in the parking level. In the gymnasium area one of the struggles is always securing the storage areas, in particular different ways to move and storage wrestling mats.  
**Response:** Jim Jordan replied Ai3’s security consultant will be working closely with this Committee as well as with Police and Fire.
- **Question 2:** John Portz asked about the opening on the first floor level between the auditorium and gymnasium.  
**Response:** Jim Jordan noted the design team is looking at locating an open stair at this location but it is still being designed.

The meeting was opened up to the public for questions and comments:

- **Question 3:** Mary Russo asked regarding the dining room, will students and faculty have separate serving areas?  
**Response:** Jim Jordan noted they will be discussing this with the high school administration.
- **Question 4:** Mary Russo asked how safe will the demo be for neighbors?  
**Response:** Jim Jordan replied, with any older building it is always important to take into consideration the

affect it could have on surrounding homes especially in close proximity. All the hazardous materials will be abated before any demolition occurs. When the building comes down it will be wetted down while it is being demolished so no dust escapes past the construction perimeter. There will be detailed requirements covered in the project specifications. Christy Murphy added the abatement happens under full containment and the building is cleared by a licensed hygienist before demolition can begin.

#### **10. High School – Next Steps:**

Chairman Sideris announced that the Committee is going to be creating an architecture subcommittee. Mr. Sideris will be advertising via social media for experts in the Community to join the subcommittee.

- June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – PSR Report Partial Submission - Christy Murphy noted the MSBA has asked that we do a partial submittal of the Preferred Schematic Report.
- July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 – PSR Report Full Submission – the remainder of the PSR submission will be sent to the MSBA.
- July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – Sustainability Subcommittee Meeting - John Portz added that there will be a meeting prior to the next SBC Meeting.
- July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – SBC Meeting – Exterior elevation studies, Net Zero Energy strategies and preliminary energy model
- July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021 – SBC Meeting – Site plan development, Exterior elevation development, plan development

#### **11. Adjournment**

Chairman Sideris asked for a motion to adjourn. Vinny Piccirilli made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Steve Magoon. All were in favor on a roll call vote. Meeting adjourned at 7:55PM.