

# Meeting Minutes

## Middle School Building Committee Meeting

December 9, 2013 – 8:15 a.m.

BOE Conference Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Annex Building  
5 Linsley Street, North Haven, CT

### Committee Members in Attendance:

Goldie Adele, Michael Brandt, Lou Coppola, Sr., Gary Johns (committee chairman), Bruce Morris, Walter Nester, Jr., Joseph Porto, Michelle Spader (committee secretary), Dyann Vissicchio (committee vice-chair)

Absent: Miriam Brody

### Others in Attendance:

Kristine Carling, Jeffrey Donofrio, Phil Diana, David Mikos, Edward Swinkoski, Diversified Technology Consultants (DTC); Shay Atluru, Rick Morse, and Jim Stenquist, Perkins Eastman; Joe Costa, Fritz Morris

Meeting called to order at: 8:17 am by chairman, Gary Johns.

Motion to approve the minutes of December 2, 2013 meeting: Motion by Bruce Morris and seconded by Lou Coppola. The motion passed unanimously.

DTC & Perkins Eastman were invited back today so that we could further discuss the remaining two middle school options – the ‘hybrid’ and the ‘new build’. In previous meetings Michelle Spader had asked that phase 1 testing be performed on the area proposed to be the build site of the ‘new’ middle school. Shay Atluru explained that DTC volunteered to have their environmental staff go out and do a preliminary investigation, even though they weren’t hired to do a phase 1.

A 5 page report was produced. On the area along Bailey Road near the athletic fields there was no indication of anything significant that would cause concern. No actual testing was done, but the historical records indicate that there was no underground storage tanks or contaminated fill. There was likely usage of pesticides and fertilizers to maintain the fields, which would require the removal of 1.5 to 2 feet of dirt, which isn’t a concern because when you excavate a site to add foundations, you remove that soil anyway. This should not be considered a deterrent in regards to utilizing the site.

Chairperson Johns explained that Michelle Spader had asked Kristine Carling for the environmental studies done on the high school build. Copies were provided to the committee.

Joe Costa said Perkins Eastman took a second look at the setback along Bailey Road for the 'new' school (option 3) and produced a sketch that showed the building further back from the road. Fritz Morris explained that this revised version is 180 feet from Bailey Road. They reconfigured the front portion of the building to maximize the setback as much as possible. This sketch still has a 3 story component included within it, but is pushing that 3 story portion as far away from the road as possible

A two story vs. three story academic wing was also discussed and a new sketch of a 2 story build was provided (option 4). Square footage would be the same whether it be a 2 or a 3 story building. This was deemed a viable option. It would expand the footprint by an additional 15,000 square feet. There would only be a marginal cost difference between a 2 story and a 3 story build, in this case. Michael Brandt questioned where displaced parking would be relocated. This option also reuses the existing bus loop.

Atluru added that with this 'hybrid' option we maintain 2 gyms, which is something the state would not normally pay for with a new build. There was also some discussion in regards to the stage in the auditorium. Dyann Vissicchio believes the stage area of the auditorium must also be increased. Adding seats or increasing the size of the stage would be considered when the Ed Spec is finalized. The Ed Spec is on the agenda for the Thursday, December 12, 2013 Board of Education meeting.

Atluru presented a comparison chart of the pros and cons of each of the two remaining options and Joe Costa walked the committee through the various issues associated with these options, such as occupancy schedules, athletic fields, and projected costs.

Several of the committee members as well as DTC and Perkins and Eastman representatives were asked what option they personally favored. There was valid reasoning for support of both options, however all agreed that the 'hybrid' would probably have higher acceptability amongst voters and less opposition from neighbors and those concerned with the loss of fields during the construction phase. Fritz Morris and Rick Morse reminded the committee that this hybrid option arose because the other options presented did not satisfy the requirements that were deemed crucial to this project. Morris believes this option has opportunities to save costs.

Costa informed the committee that we would have to apply to the state for 'like new' status. This approval process takes 2-3 months. Attorney Donofrio also reminded the committee that there are a number of steps involved with the decision to move forward with 'new' construction. The town has to go to the Planning and Zoning Commission with a site plan application, a traffic study will need to be performed, and there are appeal rights for anyone within 500 feet of the parcel. Aggrieved parties can appeal the site plan approval and that needs to be factored into our decision. Donofrio also voiced his opinion that he felt some of the line items in the budget were too low or didn't seem to be included in the cost breakdown of the remaining options. Donofrio expressed that he believed the 'hybrid' is \$1.5 million too low and the 'new' is \$3 million too low. He brought up specifics as to which line items he felt were "too light". Donofrio said it would be wise to go through all the line items on the option the committee approves to make sure the cost estimate is refined before we go to referendum.

Dyann Vissicchio asked where the boiler would be located if the 'hybrid' option was chosen. Phil Diana provided input in regards to this topic and DTC/Perkins Eastman said that stakeholders/ town facilities would be involved in the design process to determine the best placement. Diana added that you always try to put your mechanicals in the core of the building for ease of distribution.

Michelle Spader recalled previous discussions pertaining to the difficulties of upgrading mechanicals if we renovated the existing school. Spader wanted to know if the committee chose the 'hybrid' option, would we still have these issues. Costa explained that since we would be demolishing the academic wing, which contained the low ceilings, and we are generally talking about more open spaces such as the auditorium and the gymnasiums, that this would not be an issue if we selected the 'hybrid' option.

Spader also questioned if the committee chose the 'new' option, would it have to be a 3 story building. Fritz Morris said nothing was set in stone, but if a 2 story option was chosen he did not believe the 180 foot setback would be possible.

There was also discussion of the timing of renovations in the common spaces to minimize the disruption in the gymnasiums, cafeterias, etc. It is hoped that the 2 summers worth of construction can be utilized to minimize the disruption in these areas while school is in session.

After a great deal of discussion, Bruce Morris made a motion that the committee choose the 'hybrid' option. This was seconded by Joseph Porto and unanimously voted in favor of.

Michelle Spader asked that the committee cancel all future meetings where the North Haven public schools are either delayed or closed due to inclement weather. Today's school delay required Dyann Vissicchio and Spader to drive to the meeting with their children in less than favorable weather conditions. Chairman Johns agreed to cancel future meetings if there is either a school delay or cancellation.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, December 16, 2013 at 8:15 am.

Motion to adjourn at 9:25 am by Bruce Morris. Seconded by Walter Nester, Jr.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Spader, Committee Secretary