

CABOT SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE (CSBC) + DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE (DRC) + PUBLIC FORUM				MEETING MINUTES			
Cabot School, Newton							
April 16, 2015							
7:00PM							
ATTENDEES:							
NAME	ASSOC.	VOTING	PRESENT	NAME	ASSOC.	VOTING	PRESENT
Margaret Albright	SC	✓	Y	Peter Barrer	DRC	✓	N
Susan Albright	BOA	✓	Y	Arthur Cohen	DRC	⊗	N
Mary Lou DiBella	CSBC	✓	Y	William Eldredge	DRC	✓	N
Diana Fisher Gomberg	CSBC	✓	Y	Robert A. Franchi	DRC	✓	N
David Fleishman	CSBC	⊗	N	Tom Gloria	DRC	✓	N
Ruthanne Fuller	BOA	✓	Y	James Freas	DRC	⊗	N
Sandra Guryan	NPS	✓	Y	Jonathan Kantar	DRC	⊗	N
Matt Hills	CSBC	⊗	N	Andrea Kelley	DRC	✓	N
Maureen Lemieux	CSBC	⊗	N	Ellen S. Light	DRC	✓	N
Joshua Morse	NPB	✓	Y	Marc Resnic	DRC	⊗	N
Emily Norton	BOA	✓	Y	Scott Ross	DRC	✓	Y
Cynthia Paris Jeffries	CSBC	⊗	N	Steven Siegel	DRC	⊗	N
Angela Pitter-Wright	CSBC	✓	Y	Eve Tapper	DRC	✓	N
Nicholas Read	CSBC	⊗	N	Carol Chaftez	NPS	⊗	Y
Andrea Steenstrup	CSBC	✓	Y	Dennis Murphy	ACS	⊗	N
Alex Valcarce	NPB	⊗	Y	Jeffery Luxenberg	JLA	⊗	Y
Setti Warren	Mayor	⊗	N	Tom Murphy	JLA	⊗	Y
Karen Wasserman	CSBC	✓	Y	Kiersten Mailer	JLA	⊗	Y
Dori Zalenik	CSBC	✓	N	Ken DiNisco	DDP	⊗	N
Michael Cronin	NPS	⊗	Y	Donna DiNisco	DDP	⊗	N
Ouida Young	ACS	⊗	Y	Leno Filippi	DDP	⊗	Y
				Jeff Oxilida	DDP	⊗	Y
				Bob Derubeis	NPR	⊗	N
				Julie Kirrane	NPS	⊗	Y

The meeting began at 6:00PM with an open viewing of project boards by DiNisco Design. Community members and board members were invited to view and discuss several iterations of

1. Introductions

- a. The meeting began with brief introductions by Newton Public Schools and an introduction of the project team presenting information for the meeting. A. Valcarce gave an overview of the project and the design process, indicating that

either site plan that was to be shown could work for any building layout. There are 2 components to the discussion tonight: 1.) Discussion of a preference for Addition/renovation or New Construction and 2.) Discussion of access and site plan. Any iterations will undergo a site plan concept review under the schematic design phase before it is approved.

- b. T. Murphy from Joslin, Lesser + Associates gave a process overview including parties involved with decision-making, project phases, the desire for public input, and a reference to the project website:

http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/building/capital_projects/cabot_school/default.asp

2. Design Options

- a. L. Filippi of DiNisco Design Partnership (DDP) presented an overview of the challenges and special requirements of the Cabot site and DDP's desire to enhance the synergy between the school and the adjacent Cabot Park.
- b. L. Filippi presented building options of Addition/Renovation and New construction and site options A and B. The buildings and the site plans are interchangeable. Goals include: synergy between building and park, better space for staff parking, minimize congestion and maximize safety, capture and enhance the identity of an entrance.
- c. Site Option A: remove staff parking from street, create an independent bus lane, and integrate traffic-calming measures.
- d. Site Option B: Separate Park View Ave to create a single area for busses separate from the parking area. The park and building will no longer be separated by a road.
- e. Building Addition/Renovation: Building on existing conditions presents some challenges, such as floor to floor height. There will be two entrances with a renovation and the school will be zoned for security during after school use.
- f. New construction is also feasible. The classrooms would be organized vertically with a single story K and 1st grade area.

3. Public Comments

- a. Jason Jay spoke in favor of new construction and of Site Plan B. He liked the potential for an easy flow of pedestrian activity into the park and freedom from worry about traffic and cars. Liked option of extended day on first floor. New construction would allow flexibility in design and green building/efficiency would be better with new construction.
- b. Allie Dunn and Annette Nedeljkovic of the Safe Routes to Schools Task Force advocated strongly for Site Plan B from a safety perspective. Site B addresses many of the current problems for students who need to walk including unsafe crossing of the blue zone. The playground in site B would also be central so parents can wait there with young children while their children exit the school. The playground in site plan A is not ideal as it is not visible to entrance.
- c. Lindsey Pike voiced her opinion that this was a unique opportunity to take advantage of a site plan like Plan B and believes that safety issues are paramount in the final decision.
- d. Joanna Josephson noted that the plan should encourage walkers as much as possible and would welcome any input to reasons that Site Plan A would be a better alternative. Cars must be limited as much as possible or backup will occur. A

Renovation will be more expensive; the old school is beautiful but other than that there are not a lot of reasons to keep it.

1. A. Valcarce responded that MSBA process requires a review by Mass Historic Commission so a demolition would have to be thoroughly justified. Both options are viable with respect to goals, program and budget.
- e. Alan Schlessinger was curious about the floor-to-floor height in the New scheme and L. Filippi confirmed that there would be more volume in a new construction approach. Mr. Schlessinger expressed concern that the new building would be too large for the space, especially with increased traffic on Cabot Street. He asked if the goal of joining school and park should trump all other goals, and if a renovation given its classical proportions wouldn't be a better fit in the context of the neighborhood. He noted that it would be a tragic waste of material to eliminate the current building and a great loss to lose the building.
 1. A. Valcarce responded that Parks and Rec is on board with the possibility of parking and has been included in conversations on design up to this point.
- f. Susie Heyman expressed her excitement for the project and urged that Parks and Rec be included in the decision-making process.
- g. Rob LaForce voiced his liking for site Plan A and wondered how the neighborhood might change with new construction. Is there a way to quantify where parents go after drop off? How will traffic be affected by new plans? Will emergency management be negatively impacted? Mr. Lacourse would also like to hear about the potential negatives of Plan B.
 1. A. Valcarce responded that the school will still be accessible to emergency vehicles in either scheme and more detail will be provided when in time.
- h. John Martin spoke as an advocate to retain the 1928 building due to its historical merits, contextual affiliations and architectural quality. If it were renovated, it would become a "jewel." The bones and iconography are important to the community. Mr. Martin voiced his opinion that the scale was too big for that of an elementary school and that it should be made as compact as possible - a gym does not need to be so large for elementary school students. In terms of roadway changes, he advocates for through-ways and not cul-de-sacs. The roads are functional in their current condition.
- i. Alicia Bowman, a member of the Safe Routes To School Task Force, voiced her concern about safety under current conditions and noted that 90% of traffic control is engineering and therefore advocates for traffic calming measures within the design. Parents are displeased with current situation. It is nice to see pedestrian friendly options this early in the design development.
- j. Jen Abbot urges that pedestrian safety problems be fixed now. She advocates for new construction as it would be more flexible and efficient. Site B may open up more options to walkers and she liked the separation of busses and cars. She noted that closing off traffic on Parkview will allow for drop-off on East Side Parkway and direct pedestrian access to the school across the park.
- k. Marie Callahan was in favor of new construction and Site plan. She voiced her consideration for the old building and its feel within the community, but she believes that the needs of the users and students in the future should be an

overriding concern. Safety is also a huge issue and would like more options for an entryway.

- l. Kate Furnier was in favor of site B because of its opportunities for safety.
- m. Tamara Bliss urged for Site B because of its potential to reduce traffic and backup. She also strongly urged for more abutter information and community outreach. Her preference is to save the existing building but she acknowledges the challenges and urges that every possible effort be made before the decision to tear it down.
- n. Pete Scanlon urged for Site B due to its opportunity to join and solve the needs of both park and school. Young children and older children will be connected by the space and this is much safer. He liked the idea of an addition/renovation which would maintain some of the important elements of the existing building.
- o. Andrea Zaff believes that the scale of the renovation option is better for the community.
 - 1. L. Filippi noted that an add/reno would be shorter in height but with a larger footprint.
- p. Wendy Lowe expressed excitement for a New building. She pointed out that the current building will be altered so dramatically anyway that saving it for the purpose of the facade is almost futile. The in-school experience is more important; a functional and serviceable space trumps nostalgia. There is value in a new building and option B for site plan is a bonus. The shelf life of the building is the most important consideration, not a re-infused building with a shorter life span.
- q. Duncan Sanger noted that the size of the gym creates somewhat of a blemish; it pushes into the park and if site B is chosen, it pushes into the park and appears big and blockish. A scale back of the wing would give the option of being more dramatic and welcoming.
 - 1. A. Valcarce noted that the program is dictated by the MSBA and that all should consider that the architectural renderings are in block form now, but will not be in future renderings.
- r. Jonathan Yeo advocated for a new building and would like to focus to be on student and staff use. If there are roadblocks and a renovation is absolutely necessary, the architects can be trusted to make it work.

4. CSBC Member Comments

- a. L. DiBella, principal of Cabot School, urged for site Option B as a matter of safety. An increased effort to provide “child” experiences for children in a safe setting would be helped by a connection of park and school. Cabot school requires safe access to the park space and a better option for staff parking.
- b. S. Guryan expressed the board’s desire for a shared school-park space. She noted that the design process will continue and all of these criteria, along with meeting the state’s standards, will be evaluated.

5. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a. **MOTION:** Ruthanne Fuller motioned to approve minutes from April 17, 2014 The motion was seconded by Angela Pitter-Wright. The vote was **UNANIMOUS** in favor (11-0-0)

6. Other Business
 - a. No other business at this time.

7. Meeting Adjournment
9:00

Respectfully submitted,

Kiersten Mailler
Joslin, Lesser + Associates, Inc.

[End of 4/16/15 Meeting Minutes]