


CABOT SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE (CSBC) + DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE (DRC)				MEETING MINUTES	
Newton Education Center, Room 210			APPROVED 06/02/16		
May 5, 2016					
6:00PM					
ATTENDEES:					
NAME	ASSOC.	PRESENT	NAME	ASSOC.	PRESENT
Margaret Albright	CSBC	Y	Peter Barrer	DRC	Y
Susan Albright	CSBC	Y	Arthur Cohen	DRC	Y
Mary Lou DiBella	CSBC	Y	William Eldredge	DRC	---
Diana Fisher Gomberg	CSBC	Y	Robert A. Franchi	DRC	---
David Fleishman	CSBC	---	Tom Gloria	DRC	---
Ruthanne Fuller	CSBC	Y	James Freas	DRC	---
Sandra Guryan	CSBC	Y	Jonathan Kantar	DRC	Y
Matt Hills	CSBC	---	Andrea Kelley	DRC	---
Maureen Lemieux	CSBC	Y	Ellen S. Light	DRC	Y
Joshua Morse	CSBC	Y	Marc Resnick	DRC	Y
Emily Norton	CSBC	Y	Scott Ross	DRC	---
Cynthia Paris Jeffries	CSBC	---	Steven Siegel	DRC	---
Angela Pitter-Wright	CSBC	Y	Eve Tapper	DRC	Y
Nicholas Read	CSBC	---	Deb Crossley	DRC	Y
Andrea Steenstrup	CSBC	Y			
Setti Warren	CSBC	---	Jeffery Luxenberg	NV5	---
Karen Wasserman	CSBC	Y	Tom Murphy	NV5	---
Dori Zaleznik	CSBC	Y	Melissa Gagnon	NV5	---
			Donna DiNisco	DDP	---
Michael Cronin	NPS	---	Leno Filippi	DDP	---
Julie Kirrane	NPS	Y	Craig DiCarlo	DDP	---
Ouida Young	ACS	Y			
Alex Valcarce	NPB	Y	Katy Max Holmes	CITY PLANNING	---

Sandy Guryan called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the April 5, 2016 CSBC was not discussed.

2. Further Consideration of the Design

Introductions were made by the CSBC and DRC. S. Guryan noted that the process has had tremendous public input and it is the incorporation of that feedback that brings us to tonight. The SBC reached a point in April to have approved the site plan and approved the design for further development to submit to the MSBA. Considering ongoing feedback, the City believes that an assessment should be done to determine whether the gym can be relocated to the north, taking advantage of the changes that the acquisition of 23 Parkview Avenue brings. Sandy reviewed the priorities stated in the letter that are fully resolved by the CSBC and will not change. It was noted that the priorities will be incorporated into the motion that is made tonight. It was also noted that the request tonight is to allow for a relatively short delay of approximately four weeks to revisit one of the earlier designs to determine whether it may be a preferred option while keeping the project on a reasonable timeframe. The next step will be a meeting of the CSBC/DRC to discuss the latest preferred option and the alternative option to be developed by the designers. The goal is to achieve the best possible Cabot School for Newton.

DRC Question: What is the impact to the schedule of this four week delay: There was an option that puts the gym on the north side and appears to fit the program (was considered previously - was rejected because it was felt to be too close to 23 Parkview Avenue which has now been acquired.) We are prepared to have a preliminary conversation with MSBA after this group determines whether it votes authorization of an additional alternative SD. If the other option is preferred, what other delays might be anticipated?

J. Morse: We would not anticipate that the Cabot School would remain in the Carr School for more than two years. Also, it is possible that there may be cost efficiencies if the building is consolidated.

M. Lemieux: However, the SD of the building will be more expensive than it was originally intended to be. Keeping these projects on track and on budget is paramount.

D. Zaleznik: Full cost estimate follows is still ahead, but it is likely that there could be some information about the cost differences between the alternative design and the current preferred design.

DRC Question: What was major issue that is causing this second look? Early on there were questions about the placement of the gym on the south and west historic facades of the building. Historic preservation is one of the important design criteria. It does not trump all other considerations that were clearly laid out by S. Guryan.

S. Guryan: Believes it is the right thing to do to pause for four weeks to see if there is an alternative that better satisfies all of our design criteria.

M. Lemieux: Worked with the Mayor closely on passing the debt exclusion. We need the designers to build the best school for the Cabot community. The placement of the gymnasium has been a struggle, and as a non-resident she believes that her role is to listen. Regarding the closing of Parkview, Maureen is 125% committed to closing Parkview because of the safety issues brought forward.

M. Lemieux: Voted for the add/reno because the community felt strongly even though personally she felt a new build would be significantly more cost effective. It is incumbent upon us to feel 100% confident that the add/reno is the best building. The students will stay in Carr for two years. The original plan shows the students moving back to Cabot in Jan

2019 (a year and a half). This was highly ambitious timeline with either design, which might have slipped with either design.

J. Morse: Prides self on trying to determine what the majority of the citizens want. Residents want Cabot and they want it now. Josh noted that if we don't take the time now (the next four weeks), to put the one remaining issue to rest (the placement of the gymnasium), there could be worse delays ahead.

M. L. DiBella: Relieved to hear about the assurances that Parkview Ave will be closed. Pleased to hear about Carr timeline remains the same. Not surprised to hear that the project will take two years because the timeline was always so ambitious, especially since this is a renovation versus new construction. Mary Lou thinks the gym placement is fine and optimizes the program, separates a noisy space from the rest of the building, opens onto the park, is very flexible for programming including the summer. Mary Lou is less confident about the process and she is worried about future negative reactions that will impede the process.

D. Fisher Gomberg: Diana noted that this is not here first choice to delay, but it is clear that site plan approval will not be able to be passed by City Council (since the Ward 2 Councilors object to the current preferred SD) without having taking a thorough look at the alternative design.

A. Pitter-Wright: Time is money and delays can be very costly. It is critical that the project stays on schedule and budget. The process has been weak. Moving forward, the process must be improved. This is a priority. In four weeks, the process will need to be adhered to and the vote of the SBC will need to be accepted.

M. Albright: Has been disappointed in the process. Margaret understands the needs of 22 school buildings, many of which have been overcrowded. Abutters need to accept compromises.

E. Norton: Agrees with SG and ML, attended Cabot School. We are building a big school on a small site. We've resolved a lot of big issues and she is optimistic. She has more fidelity to the final result than the process. She does not like the placement of the gym and feels that the historic priorities are also important.

S. Albright: Recalls the addition of the modular, twenty years ago. Principal wanted to place the modular in the front yard on Cabot Street. Instead the solution of placing the modular on the north-west side was found. This worked for the school and the community. Susan feels that the gym must be in the north area, not built obscuring the historic facades. Newton Historic, Site Plan review and Mass Historic are approvals that could be at risk with the gym on the south west corner. These risks are for disastrous delays. Don't just design for the school, design for the community as a whole.

D. Zaleznik: Understands the historic appeal of the building. Sympathetic to the Cabot parent community. Dori believes that putting the gym north will allow the project to move forward much more easily.

D. Crossley: Chair of Public Facilities for the City Council, member of the ZSBC. Deb feels the current administration represents a sea change and she is proud of the work that is happening. There is a deep commitment on the part of the professionals involved. Time, money and quality are the key aspects of a project that need to be balanced and she has a high degree of confidence that this will be a stellar project.

K. Wasserman: Shocked that April fourth vote seems not to have counted. Karen prefers breaking up the mass on a small site. She has faith in the architects to have made a sensitive design once allowed to move forward on a preferred SD. She is against the delay.

A. Streenstrup: Happy with the approved design and does not support the need for an alternative design. Andrea is concerned that this sets a negative precedent opening up future projects to interruption by abutters and neighbors.

Question: The current preferred design optimizes the program, doesn't just meet the program.

D. Zaleznik: Noted that the City is committed to optimizing the program.

R. Fuller: (Angier, Zervas and Cabot SC member). On April 5, Ruthanne spoke passionately to vote "yes" on the design that so well meets the educational plan with highly well-developed adjacencies. Ruthanne noted that she was confident that this was the best they could do. Although she never thought the gym placement was optimal, it was favorable that it was adjacent to the park. Ruthanne stated that from the outset the Cabot site was going to be very difficult and that getting to April 5 was not an easy road (Add/Reno vs. New; Parkview open or closed; could any of the park land be used; traffic flow). This caused some divisions between the parent community and the residents. After April 5, new information and ideas were brought forward and it seemed like there could be a way to meet the educational program but move the gym to the north side. Ruthanne noted that none of us are proud of the process since April 5 as there was one poorly attended public meeting that was posted at the last minute. By pausing the four weeks, this does have the impact of missing an MSBA deadline. The four weeks is being used to get enough information to know whether the criteria can be satisfied and what the impact will be on schedule and cost. The timeline will be impacted. The cost also will be impacted. In four weeks we will know if the impact will be modest as people hope right now. Ruthanne noted that she will vote to wait the four weeks to get the information about whether the alternative works, what the timeline is and what an early sense of cost impact may be.

Question: Once the rotary was taken out, that space could be used for the building and that opens up options. The Potter property used for circulation, but the rotary space is what can now be used for the structure (into the street where Parkview was).

Public Comment (limited to 3 minutes) followed by discussion and vote.

3. Public Comment

Name: Alex Zirules

Comment: Cabot parent. Do not delay. The proposal supported by vote is good. Shame on you for delaying this project. Over 500 people signed the petition in 48 hours.

Name: Bill Hanson

Comment: Cabot parent. Dismayed at turn the process has taken. Process has been fantastic until recently. Why wasn't the building looked at like the site plan was looked at? Suspicious about what is going on with the process. Does not agree that the elevation of goal of facades preservation is valid.

- Name: Allison Dunn
Comment: Cabot parent, safe routes parent. Up until the past month, thrilled with the process. Other abutters on Bridges and Parkview will not like all the massing. Students will have a lesser outcome. We are in danger of letting the perfect be the enemy of the good.
- Name: Andrea Zaff
Comment: Cabot parent/architect - The massing in plan B is inappropriate. Preserving a panoramic view of the existing facade should not overrule the program.
- Name: Joanna Josephson
Comment: The vote has been de-legitimized and the process jeopardized. By pausing for a single plan, you are granting it legitimacy. Massing is too much on the north side.
- Name: Pete November
Comment: Cabot parent: Functional organizations need to make tough decisions and stick to them. Rescinding a vote sets a risky precedent, which invites future votes to be rescinded.
- Name: Jen Abbott
Comment: Presented petition with 500 signatures in 2 days. Community supports the current design. We support this design and we want to see this design move forward. This is not about staying on the timeline. Timeline is posted on the MSBA website. We will be missing the July meeting. Expectation after April four, was that every member of the SBC would fight for site plan approval – but that obviously is not the case.
- Name: Cheryl Stover
Comment: Abutter: Traffic concerns, gym in front of her house, traffic in front of her house. Wants the review.
- Name: Nicola Poser
Comment: Abutter: Lives on Parkview - former Cabot School parent - wants to look at the other alternative.
- Name: Kevin Stevens
Comment: Cabot Parent: Thrilled with the design. Came in tonight with an open mind. Everyone is super intelligent and thoughtful. Didn't like the comments on cost. The Potter property is tiny. The fastest way to move forward is to delay the four weeks? Doesn't think the gym will be ugly. Likes MLD's rationale for why the gym on the park is preferred.
- Name: Charles Engelle
Comment: Former Cabot parent: Gym should be on the north side, not right at the place where everyone comes to the school. Very interested in saving the old historic building. Why save the building if you were going to put the glass frame connector and a large mass.

Name: Lindsay Pike

Comment: Cabot parent: Most active parents are people whose children will not directly benefit from the new school. Only a fundamental flaw in the design would justify a reconsideration of a vote that was taken.

Name: Sue Bottino

Comment: Cabot parent: The April vote was unanimous with one abstention. It is amazing to her that this well vetted plan has been scuttled. This has been an open and transparent process. She is highly skeptical. Do not sell the work of your committee short. There is no reason to consider any alternative. Why won't you fight for this plan? You've got a lot of supporters.

Name: Linda Swain

Comment: Cabot parent: Continue the April 5th decision. You have the support behind you. Do not set the precedent of responding to an unhappy minority.

Name: Wendy Lowe

Comment: Newtonville resident, educator - 3 choke points pointed out by the very people who will have a role in the choking. The design is a community asset with the gym adjacent to the park. It is narrow-minded to assume the gym is an eyesore. This gym by the park will be a real asset and draw for many many residents of Newton. We are building a school, not a museum piece.

Name: Edgar Klugman (65 Kirkstall Rd.)

Comment: Senior citizen: Cabot gym will blossom in use by future senior citizens.

Name: Catherine Dun Rappaport

Comment: Cabot parent: Enthusiastic endorsement of the plan - change is hard and nothing will satisfy everything. The process was structured to engender genuine feedback. Receiving feedback outside of the process has a cost and they should be considered. She objects to the perception of parents as myopic.

Name: Miranda Siano

Comment: Cabot parent: Has not been involved with the process up to now, but agrees with everyone who has supported plan A tonight. Miranda does see the merits of preserving the facade. She is sad to see the lack of trust and the factions that have emerged. She is not taking a side. She is not convinced that the process is the most important thing, the outcome is the most important thing.

Name: Alan Schlesinger

Comment: Cabot parent from 1985: Opposed the modular units in 1989 which were supposed to be there for 7 years. This is a critical period for the Cabot School. The CSBC needs to have the courage to take the time to review the SD. There is significant doubt that getting the site plan approved without this second look would happen.

- Name: Ben Josephson
Comment: Cabot parent - Wants to associate himself with the comments in support of moving forward. Feels that if the Potter property was so important then would need more than four weeks to look at various options.
- Name: Gloria Lara
Comment: Would my first choice have been to have the gym and bus loop in front of her house? No. But still is in support of approved plan.
- Name: Marion Burk
Comment: Bridges resident: Vocally opposed to closing Parkview. Has changed her mind about Parkview and now thinks it should be closed. Plan B might meet the needs and the process is not a sacred cow. Favors the gym to the north.
- Name: Wayne Koch
Comment: Newtonville area council and former Cabot parent - Two year time frame and how this four week delay does not actually affect this two year time frame. When folks voted 11-0 the information was not as complete as it should have been.
- Name: Cabot School Parent
Comment: Not convinced that changing the gym location will solve it. She thinks Parkview closure will also be re-opened going forward. Pausing is a disaster.
- Name: Cabot School Parent
Comment: Supports the committee to move forward. Which is more important? Outcome and process are equally important. There has been a loss of faith. Minority voices had undue influence. Faith is lost. An alternative vetted for four weeks will not equal the current preferred alternative which was vetted for 8 months.
- Name: Blake Street Resident
Comment: Supports a second look and the willingness to avoid a stubborn digging in of the heels. Doesn't like the placement of the gym.
- Name: Cabot School Parent
Comment: Implores the committee to move forward.

4. **SBC/DRC Comment**

E. Light: DiNisco is a very long-term school design firm with a stellar reputation that provided more than 20 options. This was a very well vetted SD and the process was upturned by another designer.

P. Barrer: Why we think we can recover from this deadline is unclear to me.

J. Kantar: Has always had a problem with the location of the gym on the south east corner. It was placed there because no one could figure out a better place to put it until the Potter property was acquired. There was a lot of forward momentum and deadline pressure to move forward, but the due diligence was not taken to attempt to move the gym to the north side. Supports looking at the alternative.

M. Resnick: Concurs with the people who suggest that the four weeks will become four months or longer. Supports the 8 month vetted design.

A. Cohen, chair of DRC: One thing to point out factually is that on the Zervas project, the gym was taken out of the main portion of the building to allow the classrooms to relate better to each other. The notion that integrating a gym into an educational component is something that is easy to accomplish is not true. In the current SD, the gym as not been designed, it has been placed. He has faith that good design will improve the mass.

5. **CSBC Vote**

S. Albright makes a motion to take the four weeks to determine if there is a plan that will;

Amend the motion to state:

Delay for four weeks to let the architects determine if the gym can be placed using more of the north side of the site and that they bring information about cost and timeline for consideration of plan A and B. There were several friendly amendments to the language and advice from OY in City Legal, which were accepted.

MOTION: S. Albright moved, amended by D. Fisher Gomberg, to pause the further development of the preferred alternative approved on April 5, 2016 for four weeks in order to determine if an alternative configuration using more of the north side of the site can be developed, including time and cost information, and incorporating the continuing priorities written in the meeting announcement for the meeting tonight on May 5, 2016.

- The new Cabot School must meet the approved educational program.
- The portion of Parkview Avenue from the school to Cabot St. will be permanently closed.
- The students and staff of Cabot will move to the Carr School as planned in the fall of 2017 and will not spend longer in the old Cabot building than previously anticipated.
- School and City officials will make certain that we are not compromising our work with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) nor their commitment of funds to the Cabot project.
- The circulation plan advanced on April 5 would still be used.

What happens on June 2 (or next meeting)? When we come back in four weeks, the most important approval will be for the education program and Lou requests some review time prior to the next meeting.

What is next? Materials, fenestration, etc. is part of detailed design which cannot commence until schematic design is resolved.

Final question: What direction was given to the architects already? Has anyone picked up the phone and called MSBA? This engendered a lot of controversy.

M. Lemieux called for a roll call vote on the motion:

M. Albright	Abstain	J. Morse	Yes
S. Albright	Yes	E. Norton	Yes
M.L. DiBella	No	A. Pitter-Wright	Abstain
D. Fisher Gomberg	Yes	A. Streenstrup	No
R. Fuller	Yes	K. Wasserman	No
S. Guryan	Yes	D. Zaleznik	Absent
M. Lemieux	Yes		--

Vote: 7 in favor / 3 opposed / 2 abstentions (M. Albright, A. Pitter Wright)

Final Questions: How realistic will cost numbers be in four weeks? There was a request for assurances about Lou's departure and continuity. What is the state of official communication with MSBA and the status of their partnership?

J. Morse explained the type of cost estimation that will be forthcoming (orders of magnitude).

It was premature to have official communication prior to the vote tonight but the OPM representative did have discussion with MSBA.

6. Other Business

Next meeting: June 2, 2016 at 6:00PM

Suggestion made for a larger venue

7. Meeting Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00PM

Respectfully submitted,

Alex Valcarce

Newton Public Buildings

[End of 05/05/16 Meeting Minutes]