

Facilities and Enrollment Task Force
January 30, 2020
Simsbury Public Library – Tariffville Room
6:00 p.m.

Minutes

In attendance: Scott Baker, Maria Capriola, Matt Curtis, William Estell, Josh Falco, Wendy Mackstutis, Steve Matyczyk, Craig Meuser, Erin Murray, Andy O'Brien, Lisa O'Connor, Steve Patrino, Derek Peterson, Tom Roy, Susan Salina, Jeff Shea, William Sickinger, Neil Sullivan, Jeff Tindall, and Tara Willerup. Also in attendance were Jeff Wyszynski and Steve Melingonis from Tecton Architects.

Not in Attendance: Scott Aronowitz; Burke LaClair, Mike Luzietti, Maggie Seidel, Colleen Thompson, and Matt Wittmer.

Jeff Tindall called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Facilities Master Plan Update

Mr. Wyszynski reviewed the key takeaways from the recent public forum, including:

- a) Replicating the success of neighborhood schools;
- b) Review of Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) document;
- c) Specialized Education and Preschool locations and distribution;
- d) Capacity concerns;
- e) Differing views of where 5th and 6th grade should be located;
- f) More detail on options;
- g) More community interaction.

He reviewed a schedule of activities that will provide further opportunities for community feedback stating that the recent Public Forum did not provide specific feedback on the models presented as it was focused on the community support for Tariffville School. Two additional FETF meetings are scheduled for February 26 and March 30, an update to the Board of Education will take place on February 11 with corresponding updates to the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance. A neighborhood session was held at Tariffville School in December, which resulted in receiving good input. Sessions will be scheduled for all elementary schools in the coming weeks. Additional public forums are illustrated on the timeline for March and April, if necessary. A survey will be distributed electronically to the community to solicit feedback for our next meeting. Mr. Peterson asked about the method of distribution of the survey and shared the importance obtaining a wide scope of community feedback. Mrs. Salina and Mr. Wyszynski shared that the majority of the distribution would be in an electronic form through listserv, Facebook, and on our website. The intent was not to mail the actual surveys to households. There is also time for a second survey built into the schedule of activities if it is deemed necessary.

Mr. Wyszynski reviewed the Long Range Master Plan goals.

- a) Operating Efficiencies
- b) Data per school
- c) Detailed Data including average size compared to state standards
- d) Impact on educational environment of temporary modulars
- e) Identify the status quo ("do nothing") cost should a comprehensive plan not be implemented
- f) Sustainability
- g) Translating community interaction into support for the plan

Mr. Peterson asked whether there were state laws that stipulate the number of square feet required per student. Mr. Curtis stated that there are not state laws associated adding that the immediate challenge is with Latimer Lane as the majority of their class sizes are larger and the rooms are visibly uncomfortable. Mr. Meuser asked about the enrollment standards utilized and whether they would change after renovation. Mr. Wyszynski indicated that they could, but that the number utilized in the plan illustrates the maximum allowable and has been time tested by Tecton in former master plans.

Mr. Tindall commented that in considering the options this Master Plan is intended to be a 20-25 year plan, and that it should be looked at in phases. Jeff Wyszynski shared that in developing this plan, Tecton has utilized the recently revised Milone & McBroom projections and incorporated the highest enrollment per school throughout the presentation. He presented option #1, which proposes the building of a new 5-6 building on the HJMS site and the reconfiguration of the elementary schools. Mrs. Mackstutis asked why the presentation illustrates either Tootin' Hills or Tariffville as the potential schools to be at 0 enrollment. Mr. Wyszynski stated that he would revise that portion of the presentation as for the purposes of this presentation, there are no predetermined outcomes for that phase of the plan. Mr. Falco questioned whether it would be the decision of the FETF to determine which, if any, school would be affected. Mr. Wyszynski stated that building a 5-6 school would ease capacity concerns for several years and that any decisions about downsizing elementary schools would be 4-6 years out.

Mr. Meuser stated that the amount of data that the FETF is attempting to review is overwhelming and that it would be prudent to take it one step at a time and determine whether the recommendation should be for a 5-6 school, a 6th grade school, or status quo. Mr. Estell agreed that determining which configuration the town is comfortable with would provide the information the FETF needs to move forward adding that the cost information is important to share for the Board of Finance and community to consider the funding.

Mr. Wyszynski reviewed costs with the committee stating that the reimbursement rates utilized were last published in 2018: Renovate as New (RAN) = 34.64% and New Construction = 24.64%. He stated that with RAN it is important to consider where students will be educated during renovations. He shared that if a district chooses to RAN, the state requires keeping 55% of the footprint, which does allow for some additional classroom space for potential swing space and commented that modular use for swing space is not a good value. He reviewed the cost for a potential 5-6 building on the HJMS campus and shared the planning number as \$65,517,488. With a RAN for Latimer Lane (PK-4), the planning number is \$42,157,524. He qualified that these numbers are those that would appear on the referendum, and they do not include reimbursement estimates from the State.

Mr. Wyszynski then reviewed Option #2 that would include a 6th grade addition to HJMS and a reconfiguration at the elementary level – with either 4 or 5 elementary schools remaining. Mr. Curtis stated that the RAN costs would vary based on what school, and Mr. Wyszynski added that when the RAN project is completed in the Master Plan would also have an effect on the cost. Mr. Wyszynski stated that he would add information to the presentation regarding Option 2 without redistricting students (similar to Option 3).

Mr. Meuser asked if the public understands why Squadron Line is always listed as new instead of RAN. Mr. Wyszynski shared that while not impossible; Squadron is the most difficult school to consider RAN due to difficulty in creating swing space and the large student population. Mrs. Salina asked if Tecton had researched building a second floor on Tariffville to accommodate more students. Mr. Wyszynski stated that they had, and while it is possible, challenges include losing outdoor area, structural complications, and parking. Mr. Falco commented on the recent South Windsor Facilities Plan indicating that they are at the tail end of the budget and the costs are substantially more than projected, as a result of unexpected increased enrollment. His expressed the importance of building fluidity into the plan in Simsbury in the event we experience similar population growth.

Mr. Wyszynski reviewed Option 3, which proposes renewal all 5 elementary schools. He illustrated two options – one with no redistricting and a distribution of PK and RSG students, and the second with redistricting. Mr. Falco commented that there is logic on both options but that possibly finding a middle ground would provide similar results with lower impact on students and families.

Mr. Wyszynski illustrated a 4th Option that represents a phased/targeted renovation at each school, maintaining the current grade configuration. He shared that timing for completion of projects and appropriate swing space are challenges presented with this option. Mr. Roy commented that having the cost associated with this option is important for the community to understand that status quo still has a cost involved. Mr. Wyszynski indicated that he would make that available for future presentations.

The committee then reviewed the draft of a survey to be sent to community members and staff to obtain input on the plan. The committee agreed on the importance of getting the survey to as many residents as possible, including those that are not currently Simsbury parents/guardians. It was discussed that the survey should ask about school closure and grade configurations, and that it would be revised to include less overall questions but more direct questions to obtain the important feedback necessary for review at the next meeting. This information is vital for the committee to consider in determining what Phase 1 should be. Mr. Curtis added that the neighborhood meetings at each school will also help in obtaining this important feedback. Additionally, they discussed that there is time to do a second survey if it is felt that is an important step.

Approval of October 30, 2019 Minutes:

Mr. Peterson: MOVE that the minutes of October 30, 2019 be approved

Mr. Meuser: Seconded.

Abstain: Andy Estell; Lisa O'Connor; Tom Roy; Jeff Tindall

So Moved

Adjournment

Steve Patrina: Move to Adjourn

Susan Salina: Seconded. So moved at 7:50 p.m.