

School Building Committee (2020)
Special Meeting
Virtually via ZOOM
Tuesday January 25, 2022
6:30 PM

Committee Members Present: Chairman Mark Bettencourt, Alderwoman Stacy Gould, President Pro Tem Joe DeLucia, Mark Kulos, Peter Gauthier, Christine DiStasio, Cindy Beauregard, and Greg Carabine. Gregory Ballassi arrived at 6:36PM.

Committee Members Absent: William Hull and Mark Adams.

Ex-Officio Members Present: Robert Aldi and Bob Castronova, City of Norwich; and Jamie Bender, Matthew Brown and Bob Sierpinski, Norwich Board of Ed.

Citizens Present: Cheryl Turro, Eileen Eagle, Gregory Smolley and Jim Barrett.

Mark Bettencourt reviewed the rules of a virtual meeting and clearly notified participants that the meeting would be recorded.

- I. Call to Order and Quorum:** Mark Bettencourt called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM.
- II. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting:** President Pro Tem Joe DeLucia made a motion to approve the November 16, 2021 meeting minutes, with revisions. Peter Gauthier seconded. The chairman called the roll of members present and all were in favor, aside from Mark Kulos who abstained. The motion passed.
- III. Public Comment:** None.
- IV. Status update by DRA representative Jim Barrett and staff:** Gregory Smolley went through a sample presentation of the facility study and master plan for each school, including assessments by Consulting Engineer Services, which touched on plumbing systems, fire protection, mechanical systems, electrical systems and technology systems. Gregory Smolley reported that McKibbon was working to set up a meeting with the district's legal advisor to get sign off on information being requested for enrollment projects. Gregory Smolley stated that would like to get programming going including an online survey to garner feedback from parents, teachers, administrators and potentially students with feedback questions. Mark Kulos noted that aside

from students and staff, no one had been in the facilities for the past two years so feedback may be affected. Mark Kulos stated that student input should go at least to 5th grade in order to reach elementary schools and that the surveys should have a short number of questions in order to get desired feedback. Gregory Ballasi suggested the surveys could go down to the third or fourth grade level, which is often done within the schools, if they are formatted for the appropriate grade level. Greg Smolley stated he would like to discern how familiar parents and the community are with the facilities to help DRA shape the conversation moving forward. Peter Gauthier asked if enrollment projections would be available for discussion during the March meeting to which Gregory Smolley responded that was their hope. Gregory Smolley stated DRA may not get through all 10 school assessments in time for the February meeting but could at least plan to start the discussion. President Pro Tem DeLucia stated that city council gave the committee until June 30, 2022 to submit a full report in order to be properly voted on in the November 2022 ballot, considering that public forums need to be held. President Pro Tem DeLucia discussed input from other city agencies in regards to suggested potential uses for the schools such as satellite community centers and public safety. President Pro Tem DeLucia asked if DRA felt the June 30, 2022 deadline was reachable.

- V. Actionable items from report as/if necessary:** Gregory Smolley stated the deadline was not a concern depending on what other entities needed to be incorporated into the conversation, so the sooner those groups could be identified the better. President Pro Tem DeLucia suggested involving the recreation department, the Director of Human Services, and a member of public safety if the student resource office program is to return. President Pro Tem DeLucia discussed community concerns regarding the project in relation to community policing. Gregory Smolley stated that DRA would receive information regarding SRO's from the superintendent's office, if it is a board of education effort, whereas community policing would work with the police department itself to see how a program would be implemented and intersect with the school. Jim Barrett agreed and noted that if any there were additional items being brought to table, not originally indefinited in the RFP, they would need to be quickly identified. Jim Barrett added that meeting the agreed deadline was contingent on what items would be added into the project, such as the policing aspect. President Pro Tem DeLucia stated he understood and that if the committee could answer public concerns that in itself would be helpful. Christine DiStasio noted that the board of education was only seeking a SRO at the two middle schools and that discussions had occurred early in the process regarding incorporating the expansion of fields and recreation areas into the planning process.

VI. Meeting Schedule adjustments if needed: Chairman Mark Bettencourt stated that the committee would begin the review of building reports at the February meeting. Peter Gauthier asked if an additional special meeting should be held to which Chairman Bettencourt responded he would assess the city calendar to see if possible. Gregory Smolley stated that he hoped the March agenda would include completed enrollment projections, mostly completed programming, as well as outreach to the recreation and police departments. Gregory Smolley stated that if a majority of data was together in March then the April agenda should allow for the shaping of suggestions of where things may go within the district. Gregory Smolley continued that goal would be to refine the report at the May meeting so that it can be adopted and submitted in June. Gregory Smolley stated the submission of the report to council would include a presentation by DRA.

VII. Adjournment: Peter Gauthier made a motion to adjourn. President Pro Tem DeLucia seconded. The chairman called the roll of members present and all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously. The committee adjourned at 7:30PM.

Respectfully Submitted, Katherine Rose