

School Building Committee (2020)
Regular Meeting
City Hall Room 335
100 Broadway
And Virtually via ZOOM
Tuesday March 15, 2022
6:30 PM

Committee Members Present: Chairman Mark Bettencourt, Alderwoman Stacy Gould, President Pro Tem Joe DeLucia, William Hull, Gregory Ballassi, Peter Gauthier, Christine DiStasio, Cindy Beauregard (ZOOM), Mark Kulos (ZOOM) and Mark Adams (ZOOM)

Committee Members Absent: Gregory Carabine.

Ex-Officio Members Present: Bob Sierpinski.

Citizens Present: None.

I. Call to Order and Quorum: Chairman Mark Bettencourt called the meeting to order at 6:36 PM.

II. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meetings: William Hull made a motion to approve the February 15, 2022 meeting minutes, with some minor adjustments. Alderwoman Stacy Gould seconded. The chairman called the roll of members present and all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Update by DRA Representative Jim Barrett and Staff: Jim Barrett stated DRA would discuss the sampling of the facilities review update, enrollment and demographic projections, engagement surveys that were sent out, their conversation with the recreation department manager and educational planning discussions. Gregory Smolley showcased how the facilities reviews now include architectural and site information in addition to the electrical and plumbing information. Gregory Smolley discussed how the final layout of the facilities review would look. Gregory Smolley noted that the data regarding parcel size and other property information came from the city public records. Gregory Smolley stated the site plans would each come with a write-up that would detail the layout of the property, identifying things that influence that site that may not be a direct part of the school. Gregory Smolley discussed the review's rating system which valued items on their importance to running a school and relative physical condition. Gregory Smolley noted that DRA tried to include enough photos for the overall study to be self explanatory. Gregory Smolley stated the next step would be a discussion of the interior building used based on data collected and showed how the layout map

created by DRA could be annotated to show what rooms are being used as classrooms or otherwise, to then be compared with the original building designs. Gregory Smolley stated that DRA would begin working with cost estimators to provide cost projections in terms of renovations and repairs.

Jim Barrett stated the next aspect DRA was working on was enrollment project and demographic analysis which was being handled by their consultant, Cropper GIS. Jim Barrett explained their consultant would take the information provided by the district to understand trends and conditions within the city that are described by the baseline data. Jim Barrett continued that Cropper GIS was also studying student mobility and how students are situated within the community in relation to attendance area for schools. Jim Barrett stated that Cropper GIS would be creating elementary school attendance zone mapping and showed a current working district map developed for the elementary schools. Jim Barrett discussed the existing pocket attendance areas and noted the consultant would look into the causation of them, in case there is an opportunity to improve efficiency. Jim Barrett stated that DRA would be looking to the highest, most efficiency organization that could be taken into consideration for the study.

Discussion ensued regarding the inclusion of the 2018 School Building Committee Report in the new study by DRA. Chairman Mark Bettencourt discussed some items covered by the 2018 report. Jim Barrett stated that DRA would take the report, digest it and pass it along to their consultant for consideration and to be included within the new study. President Pro Tem DeLucia discussed concerns regarding work already done on the previous study in comparison to the work being done in the new study. Jim Barrett clarified that their study is currently at the stage of collecting all current base information in order to give the best recommendation for the sites and schools. Gregory Smolley stated previous surveys would be helpful to compare to the recent surveys released by DRA. Gregory Smolley noted that in the last 24 hours 88 parents, 113 faculty and 12 students had responded to the surveys. Discussion ensued regarding survey specifics.

Gregory Smolley stated he reached out to Chief Patrick Daley at the Norwich Police Department and Cheryl Hancin-Preston at the Norwich Recreation Department. Gregory Smolley detailed his conversation with Cheryl Hancin-Preston including details such as the fields not currently being adequate for recreation usage, lack of a regulation sized track, a lack of a community-dedicated gym and the cost of recreation programs. Gregory Smolley noted how the school buildings are utilized for summer recreation affects work and maintenance that could be done to the buildings and sites during that time. President Pro Tem DeLucia noted there needed to be room in the report for the two middle school Student Resource Officers which had been approved by the Board of Education for the foreseeable future.

Jim Barrett reported DRA was at the outset of education planning programming discussions and had scheduled two sessions through school administration that month to get an understanding of how education is acted on today, what are current constraints, where the schools want to be in 5 or 10 years in the future and how do those items affect facilities and physical planning.

IV. Meeting Schedule and Progress Review: Jim Barrett stated that DRA was still progressing in line with their set target dates and would deliver the report but noted the question of if there was adequate time for the information to be disseminated, digested and understood within the community. Gregory Smolley noted that the public surveys, education programming conversations with the schools and demographic information were all trending to be completed by the end of the month. Gregory Smolley stated the completion of the assessments as well as the cost estimate information should also be available by the end of the month and suggested meeting the second week of April for discussion and to formulate a direction in which to move forward. Gregory Smolley also suggested taking the report to the community for engagement and feedback towards the end of April. Discussion ensued. Gregory Smolley discussed how the layout of an in-person public information session would look, based on DRA's experience. Members discussed holding a special meeting on April 6, 2022 where members would review DRA's report prior to the April 19th regular meeting, following which a public information session would be held on April 26th. Discussion ensued regarding meeting locations and format.

V. Next Regular Meeting: April 6, 2022 Special Meeting. April 19, 2022 Regular Meeting. April 26, 2022 Public Information Session.

VI. Additional Agenda Items: None.

VII. Adjournment: William Hull made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:00 PM. Alderwoman Stacy Gould seconded. seconded. The chairman called the roll of members present and all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted, Katherine Rose