

QUINCY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

FACILITIES AND SECURITY SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, March 18, 2014

A meeting of the Facilities and Security Subcommittee was held on Tuesday, March 18, 2014 at 5:30 pm in the 2nd Floor Conference Room of the NAGE Building. Present were Mr. Paul Bregoli, Mr. Noel DiBona, Mrs. Kathryn Hubley, Ms. Barbara Isola, and Mr. Dave McCarthy, Chair. Also attending were Superintendent DeCristofaro, Mr. Michael Draicchio, Mr. Kevin Segalla, and Ms. Laura Owens, Clerk.

Mr. McCarthy opened the meeting by reviewing the meeting that he and Dr. DeCristofaro had earlier in the day with Attorneys Edward and Robert Fleming on the plans for the rebuilding of the Presidents City Inn. The attorneys will be sending a copy of the plans which will be shared with School Committee. The attorneys said that the original plan to renovate and add onto the existing motel structure was not feasible since there were structural issues. The all-new hotel building will have 60 rooms, ample parking, and updated security (card readers, limited access). Construction should begin shortly and continue through the fall; a detailed construction timetable will be shared when available. Planned work hours are from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm with parking onsite for construction workers. Concerns about traffic and school schedule will be coordinated with Central Middle School administrators and police details will be secured as necessary. Planned landscaping will add to barrier between school and hotel property and landscaping will not obscure Central Middle School message board. A partnership agreement with a hotel chain has not been finalized, and updates on this issue will be provided when available.

Mr. Bregoli asked if any information had been shared about which hotel partnerships were under consideration or a price point for the hotel rooms, but this information was not available yet. Mr. Bregoli was concerned about parking and Dr. DeCristofaro said that we will monitor as construction gets underway for any problems. Mr. Bregoli asked about the landscaping and sightlines to the school. The drawings will show that there are no balconies or windows in the direction of the school. Dr. DeCristofaro noted that there was an offer to coordinate the landscaping along the fence line between the hotel and the school.

Mr. DiBona asked about hotel amenities, for example, food service or a pool. Dr. DeCristofaro said there are plans for continental breakfast served in a community room. Mr. McCarthy said the size of the site is limited, so a pool is not part of the plan. Ms. Isola asked about the landscaping plan, in an earlier version, there was a gazebo for smoking and School Committee had asked for it to be removed. Mr. McCarthy agreed we should double-check. Ms. Isola said that the hotel owner and attorneys have been more than forthcoming and reminded the School Committee that the owner is a neighbor and that St. Ann's was next to the motel site for many years with no incidents.

Mrs. Hubley asked whether there were specific timeframes for construction and landscaping and would construction be completed by the time school opens in the fall. Mr. McCarthy said we would know more when the detailed construction schedule is shared. Mrs. Hubley said that at the neighborhood meeting, there was discussion of security cameras and lighting, and would like to see those added to the plan.

Dr. DeCristofaro then presented an overview of Quincy Public Schools enrollment and details on class size and building usage across all schools. The Full-Day Kindergarten program began in 2006 and enrollment has continued to rise each year since, with an incremental growth of 500 students across the system. Dr. DeCristofaro noted the growing elementary population across the city, especially at Lincoln Hancock and Clifford Marshall, each having six kindergartens this year. Most elementary schools are seeing significant growth and some are at the limits for capacity. 90% of Grades K-3 students and 87% of Grades 4-5 students are in classes of 22 or less. Details of each facilities space allocation were shared, along with information about open enrollment trends. In recent years, fewer requests are able to be granted as enrollment has increased. Under School Committee policy, siblings receive priority and in some cases, are the only requests granted. Academic Program and Academic Support offerings are an important part of each school's offerings in addition to a growing number of classrooms. Six of eleven schools have capacity issues: Beechwood, Lincoln Hancock, Clifford Marshall, Merrymount, Montclair, and Wollaston.

In the middle schools, the enrollment increases from the elementary level have not yet filtered up, with incremental growth over six years at around 100 students. Broad Meadows and Point Webster have capacity to handle the larger enrollments. At the middle school level, 92% of classes are at 25 students or below. Open Enrollment requests have continued to increase, and going forward, growing enrollments for elementary feeder schools must be considered, along with Citywide Special Education programs when decisions are made.

For the high schools, the population trends have reversed, with more Quincy High School students staying in their home school. 82% of all high school classes have 25 or fewer students. Special attention will be paid to the higher class size range during the scheduling process for next school year. Mr. McCarthy said that at the high school level, he would like to compare parallels at the two high schools. Dr. DeCristofaro noted that many of the Quincy High School Open Enrollment requests are for Chapter 74 programs.

Other enrollment considerations include special program enrollment (Special Education Out of District and Evening High School), new development projects under discussion, and the almost 1,300 students who attend private, parochial, charter, or other public schools.

Dr. DeCristofaro spoke of the deadlines for upcoming Massachusetts School Building Authority submissions for the Sterling Middle School project; the Initial Compliance Certification and Building Committee are completed. For the Enrollment Projection submission, Dr. DeCristofaro would like to discuss the possibility of adding Grade 4 to Sterling, with the plan that the design of the building would separate the elementary grades from the middle school grades. This plan would alleviate the space issues at Lincoln Hancock and is potentially transformative for the neighborhood. Dr. DeCristofaro suggested another Subcommittee meeting to discuss the idea. Following this meeting, public meetings would be scheduled where enrollment projections would be shared.

Mrs. Hubley asked about the Merrymount district and the split between Central and Broad Meadows for middle school. Mr. Bregoli asked whether the architecture of the new school would allow for separate 4-5 structure and if we could consider staggered start times. Mr. DiBona said that this will have a positive impact on home values. Mrs. Hubley asked if other school districts have this configuration. Dr. DeCristofaro has researched but not found any example locally.

Mr. McCarthy asked whether in the long run moving Grade 5 worked out at Sterling and Point Webster. Dr. DeCristofaro said the blend of elementary and middle school teaching has been an unexpected bonus for students. Mr. McCarthy said there was a lot of discussion and a number of community meetings prior to making that decision and expects to do the same. Ms. Isola thanked Dr. DeCristofaro for the data and is looking at this as the beginning of a conversation; there are plenty of K-8 models out there to look at, even if separate buildings are involved. Dr. DeCristofaro agreed that there is opportunity for that kind of coordination across elementary and middle schools. Mr. DiBona said that the proximity of the buildings will lend to sharing of facilities. Mrs. Hubley asked if would there be consideration of moving Montclair's Grade 5 to Atlantic. Dr. DeCristofaro said that was one of many issues to be discussed, along with Grade 4 from Clifford Marshall moving to Point Webster.

Mrs. Hubley made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 pm. Mr. Bregoli seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.