



Eileen Donoghue
City Manager

Kara Keefe Mullin
Assistant City Manager

School Building Committee - *Meeting Minutes*

Date: February 7, 2019
Time: 5:30 PM
Location: City Council Chamber

I. Attendance:

Present: Eileen Donoghue, William Samaras, Edward Kennedy, Rodney Elliott, Connie Martin, Conor Baldwin, Maryann Ballotta, Marianne Busteed, Christine Clancy, James Cook, Jeannine Durkin, Jay Mason, Ben Opara, Maria Sheehy, Ralph Snow, Diane Tradd, Billie Jo Turner, Michael Vaughn, Jeff Wilson

Also in attendance:

City: Michael Geary, Alex Magee
Skanska: Maryann Williams, Jim Dowd
Perkins Eastman: Joe Drown, Robert Bell

II. Accept Minutes of December 6, 2018 SBC Meeting

City Manager E. Donoghue called meeting to order at 5:34 PM. She entertained a motion to accept and place on file the minutes from the Dec. 6 School Building Committee, motion by J. Cook, 2nd by J. Mason, all voted in favor.

III. Presentation of Schematic Design Submittal

E. Donoghue spoke about the timeline of the submission of Schematic Design to the MSBA. E. Donoghue turned over to J. Drown of Perkins Eastman for presentation on Schematic Design. J. Drown introduced team including himself and R. Bell of Perkins Eastman, and M. Williams and J. Dowd of Skanska. J. Drown gave a recap of the schematic design process thus far, including site plan and building design. J. Drown spoke about working with the community over the last several months, including working groups, focus groups, and specialty items meetings. He noted they have met with many stakeholders throughout the community. He spoke about the process starting in 2016 and showed a timeline to date showcasing the process thus far. Preliminary design including relevant cost estimates; Preferred Schematic Report (PSR) which included cost estimates; and now very near to the end of schematic design process. He also noted we have



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begun the Construction Manager at Risk process and noted Skanska would speak to this shortly. J. Drown noted the April 10 vote at the MSBA to move the project into the Detailed Design phase. He noted cost estimates would be redone at 60% and 90% of “construction documents”, i.e. during the detailed design phase of the project. He noted they have been keeping the budget on target to date and noted the desire to design to the budget throughout the project. J. Drown spoke of cost estimating as a design tool, and how estimating will be done against the budget three more times during detailed design phase. He also noted this is a large project made up of smaller projects, which include phases – for example the gymnasium will be a 12-18 month project once construction starts and the Freshman Academy will be another 18 month project after that.

M. Williams spoke about CM at Risk. Noted we had already received the OK from the Inspector General’s office to utilize the construction method. M. Williams spoke to the process of sending out Requests for Qualifications to the building firms large enough to bond a project like this, and noted the potential of multiple companies joining to become a joint venture to bid on the project.

R. Bell began design portion of presentation, going through school at current schematic design. He noted some key documents previously presented to this SBC committee, including the space summary that had been reviewed and approved; he noted the need to submit Special Education plans to DESE; he discussed the ongoing challenge of figuring out what spaces are still non-reimbursable, which include very small parts of this project, and arguing for more reimbursements from the MSBA.

R. Bell then outlined education program. He spoke about the need to design the school to meet the education plan’s needs, including bringing freshman academy into the campus; creating a heart of the school at center of school; collaborative clusters including STEM and humanities clusters; house administrations positioning being easy to access and able to provide presence where needed in buildings. He noted the need to get daylight into all classrooms, using light wells. He spoke of floor plans, including total transformations of the existing space, turning basement into brand new space; re-clustering arts, studios, creating suites for similar academics; positioning Freshman Academy with North-South orientation for optimal daylight and efficiency.

R. Bell noted student arrival through a security check at heart of school; the design includes layers of block off capability as a security feature. Redesigned main lobby/heart of school is a chance to connect to outdoor quad and green space. He noted you can see the whole side of the campus from here including gym, freshman academy, etc.



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R. Bell then noted the design is essentially creating new building within the walls of 22 building. Freshman will be organized in clusters on all 4 floors. He noted the new media center and other technology centers within the design. R. Bell spoke about eliminating windowless classrooms in 1980s building by bringing light wells into space, allowing school to connect to STEM. He spoke of a green roof, clean energy lab, terrace with possible gardens or other renewable technology education spaces, about possibility to add outdoor learning spaces here. He noted the site plan hasn't changed much. R. Bell then showed diagrams of various spaces as designed, showcasing features such as light wells, security measures, welcome plaza and other highlights. He discussed a closer vision of the quad – free movement of students around the quad, some potential uses and the natural amphitheater. He noted the first level of the school will have lots of glass and solid security barrier from outside. Lots of natural light. He showcased space for athletic buses. He showcased the canal and extra bridge. R. Bell also spoke about the 1922 building, including adding new windows (which would be historically accurate); tearing out inside of wall to reinsulate, rebuild walls; and completely transforming the interior while restoring the exterior. Updating accessibility. Restoring façade on French St. to include disabled accessibility. He then showed the video of aerial flyover of building and spoke to design features of campus as video progresses. R. Bell asked the group for questions on design.

J. Mason – question on sustainability, pointing out when in schematic design, aspirations come out. He didn't see any solar, was hoping to have concept or placeholder for solar and bike racks. Wants to point out sustainable aspects of design and not lose track during design. R. Bell noted they were making sure new construction is solar ready. Said it was not in budget now but will be prepared for future. He also said regarding bike racks that there were lots of them throughout the site.

W. Samaras requested Mr. Bell to please speak to community uses of building. Also to speak about renovation, and to distinguish renovation. Are you talking just painting or an entire gut renovation. R. Bell noted in the industry they call this a “full gut reno”. Tearing down to the structure and rebuilding entire building from within. W. Samaras then asked R. Bell to speak about terrazzo floors. R. Bell noted the 1922 building has terrazzo floors, which he said are extremely expensive and last forever. He said they look really good and will attempt to hold this floor intact and maintain it for future use. W. Samaras then asked about community uses. R. Bell stated the ground floor level contains community spaces – school store, restaurant, cafeteria, student support services - controlled entry but communal use spaces. Community spaces close to entry, open to community without opening or compromising student-only areas of school. Doing



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similar design at auditorium and gymnasium – can be used independent of rest of school for same reasons. W. Samaras noted it is currently difficult for service trucks to access school now, and asked Mr. Bell to please address this issue in the design. R. Bell replied by stating they are creating enough maneuverability along backside of fieldhouse on a new access road. Tractor trailers can deliver and pass through. He said this will all be remedied in new plan.

J. Mason asked a follow up question regarding light wells, if they are they too small. R. Bell said they are doing studies on daylight, and the wells are bigger than they look in the design.

IV. Presentation of Total Project Budget Draft

E. Donoghue moved on to discuss the budget, inviting J. Drown to speak about the overall budget breakdown. J. Drown noted the 622,000 square foot project contained 388,000 square feet of renovation at an estimated \$358.55 per square foot and 234,000 of new construction at an estimated \$485.29 per square foot. He noted site and building takedown costs total approximately \$17 million. The total estimated construction budget of about \$273 million, and a combined per square foot price of about \$434.26 per square foot. He noted the overall project costs are down to about \$343 million, \$2 million lower than earlier projections due to the City's decision to remove a \$2 million carrying cost.

W. Samaras noted the costs are lower than estimates and people are concerned with escalating costs. He asked how do these costs stay under control. J. Drown noted many contingencies built into the budget for design, construction, labor, and pricing. He said the bottom line will remain but costs will move from contingency to actual cost. He noted contingencies for each portion of the budget. He noted he believes the budget has been built and will support the entire project going forward and will account for escalations. W. Samaras then asked about his record of meeting budget goals, to which J. Drown replied 100%.

E. Kennedy noted we are getting a \$343 million high school for a \$129 million cost to the city. He noted we are saving big money by keeping the shell of the 1922 building, saving a lot of money by keeping the shell versus all new construction. J. Drown noted that was correct, the design includes all new systems in the renovation, but are saving lots by not having to build an all new envelope.

R. Elliott noted contingency costs were not included in the breakdown and wondered why not, what percentages did they account for? M. Williams noted various contingencies and their confidence in these numbers. She discussed the two independent cost estimates, reconciled tougher, vetted together, and projected out based on other very large projects led to the final cost



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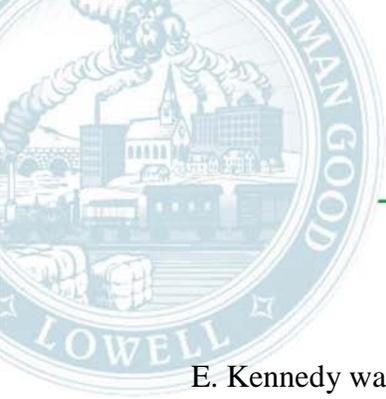
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estimate. She noted the MSBA will not allow going over budget once it is approved. She noted the total budget being a concern. She noted she has never gone over budget or missed a schedule, it is part of their reputation and how they continue to find work. R. Elliott noted his concerns given the national market, and asked M. Williams about square foot cost comfort, to which she replied she is comfortable with the estimates. She said there may be fluctuations within the total, but is comfortable with the bottom line \$270 million construction cost. She knows it is in the best interest of the city to spend all available money, as this increases the value received due to the state paying large reimbursement rate. She noted that because the state will be delivering somewhere around \$216 million, everyone is watching, and this is a very significant project. R. Elliott noted pricing differences with other current projects. He asked if Skanska is doing any other similar projects. M. Williams noted the very efficient building, that they projected the trends forward. She also noted a third, independent cost estimator shared the combined opinion of Skanska and Perkins Eastman's cost estimators. She noted that we purposely are reusing as much structure as possible in order to save. She noted that money is tight in many communities.

R. Elliott asked for summarized budget figures. E. Donoghue noted when the city submits to the MSBA and get numbers back, will present a more detailed budget to the SBC and City Council for approval. M. Williams detailed the budget submission and reconciliation procedure with the MSBA, who will return with their cost estimates. She noted this project has already been seriously vetted. J. Cook wanted to note that whatever the cost was, the city was only paying around 20% of it. He also wanted to make another point, that when this goes to the MSBA in April, that is Lowell's shot at getting 80% funding. If we miss that benchmark we could fall to the back of the line for a new school.

A. Descoteaux (audience member, School Committee member) questioned whether a roof project would be part of the new school build. M. Williams noted this project was bid and designed separately and is not part of this project. E. Donoghue noted the city will see if the roof can remain. At least part of it will be retained, but the city had no choice based on condition. A. Descoteaux then asked about studio space. J. Drown noted new dance studio space, and R. Bell noted retaining height of rooms and rebuilding them would occur.

R. Elliott wanted to follow up on reimbursement rate, whether we would see a full 80% or not. He stated we are closer to 63%. M. Williams noted this was due to ineligible costs. The MSBA reduces the ineligible spaces based on square foot. She noted the bank, store, Katie's closet, Lowell Community Health, etc. are all non-reimbursable. The state only reimburses certain costs and requires the community to carry the rest.



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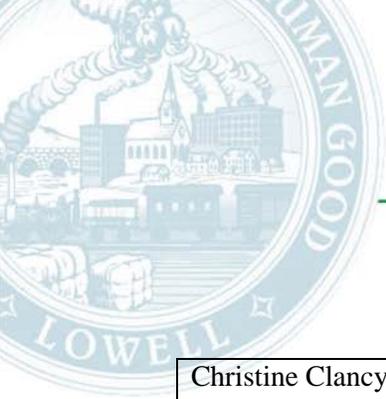
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E. Kennedy wanted to point out LHS accredited now. He cited problems with the facility. Everyone is aware that the facility has had major systems failures recently. We only have one high school, we need an accredited high school, without one property values would plummet. This is a tremendous opportunity, the city cannot afford to pass on it. He noted this project is an important economic driver, and if we balk now the MSBA at some point would lose patience. He noted if we had to start this process all over, he doesn't know what would happen and we may need to pick up 100% of the cost.

E. Donoghue noted the design is a state of the art school, an urban campus with many unique aspects, one of the most outstanding high schools in the state and beyond. It is quite a large project, with lots of interest from construction firms. She noted she is looking forward to entering the process. She noted, from her position as City Manager, she faced gas leak emergencies at LHS on her very first day on the job. She noted the huge costs to get those fixed, to keep heat on in the school. She noted it was unfortunate this wasn't done 10 or more years ago, and that the building systems will not last any longer. She noted that this was a very thoughtful process. She entertained a motion to approve the submission to the MSBA. ***E. Kennedy made motion to vote, second by W. Samaras.***

V. Vote to Approve Submission of Schematic Design Submittal to MSBA

Roll Call Vote – Approve of Submission of Schematic Design to MSBA		
	Yes	No
Eileen Donoghue	X	
William Samaras	X	
Edward Kennedy	X	
Rodney Elliott	X	
Connie Martin	X	
Conor Baldwin	X	
Maryann Ballotta	X	
Marianne Busted	X	



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Christine Clancy	X	
James Cook	X	
Jeannine Durkin	X	
Jay Mason	X	
Ben Oparas	X	
Maria Sheehy	X	
Ralph Snow	X	
Diane Tradd	X	
Billie Jo Turner	X	
Michael Vaughn	X	
Jeff Wilson	X	

Vote to submit Schematic Design to MSBA passed 19-0, all in favor.

VI. Next Steps

M. Williams spoke about next steps including hiring a construction manager and meeting with the MSBA regarding state participation and final budget numbers. E. Donoghue noted the city's intention to move this forward as quickly as possible, and that every week we lose is not just cost but also the inconvenience of being in a school that is not what it should be. She noted once sent to the MSBA by the SBC, the City Council should follow suit.

Motion to adjourn by E. Kennedy, seconded by W. Samaras. Meeting Adjourned at 6:40.