

FAIRFIELD WOODS BUILDING COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, January 7, 2010

7:00 pm

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FINAL MINUTES

Members Present: Bill Sapone, Doreen Battimelli, Dan McKnight, Rich Kornutik, Victor DeMaria, Jennifer Tierney, Neal Fink

Members Absent: Kim Marshall, Chad Stewart

Others Present: Perry Liu, Michelle Modugno, Sal Morabito, Ty Tregellas, Twig Holland, Randall Luther, Jack Boyle, Tom Flynn, Dick Saxl, Ken Flatto, Judy Ewing, Greg Hatzis, David Becker, Brian Kelahan, Phil Ryan, Russ Green, FWMS parents

I. Call to Order

Chairman Bill Sapone called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm.

II. Approval of Minutes

Dan McKnight made a motion to approve the minutes. Jennifer Tierney seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

III. Presentation on Zoning Matters by Town Attorney

Town Attorney Richard Saxl distributed several handouts and reviewed the zoning process as it related to the various proposals for additions to FWMS. He explained the "bulk and coverage" regulations for an R-3 zone which is a Town Plan and Zoning (TPZ) issue and setback issues that might need to go before the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). Mr. Saxl stressed that if the Committee goes before TPZ, it needs to focus on coverage, setback and sufficient parking. Jennifer Tierney added that an additional curb cut is another zoning issue the Committee has to focus on. Rich Kornutik asked Mr. Luther how close each proposal is to the setback. Mr. Luther said, each scenario comes close to the setback, but that could be changed.

Mr. Saxl presented several options available to the Committee, and urged them to hire a lawyer to represent them. He suggested Attys. John Fallon and Bill Fitzpatrick, both of whom have had considerable zoning experience. Mr. Saxl also said the Committee may need to hire a traffic consultant. First Selectman Flatto stressed the Committee should begin looking into zoning issues at this time and perform a code review process with the architect in the next month or so.

Neal Fink made a motion for the Committee to hire a land use attorney. Victor DeMaria seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Mr. DeMaria and Doreen Battimelli both suggested hiring John Fallon as the attorney. This was discussed and it was approved by the Committee to hire Mr. Fallon, provided he did not have a conflict. Mr. Saxl said he would contact Mr. Fallon and ask him to attend the next meeting.

IV. Review of Proposed Designs

Randall Luther reviewed two options presented at the previous meeting. Option A-1 would provide a one-story addition for the eighth grade and would make use of space over the auxiliary gym. The art space would need to be relocated. Option B-1 would put the sixth grade on the second floor, the seventh grade would expand into a new addition, and the eighth grade would receive a smaller addition and there would be no need to relocate the art space. This option would cost more than A-1.

Mr. Luther then introduced a new design, Option D. The seventh grade would be on the second floor and over the eighth grade. The sixth grade space would get two art rooms above the stage area. Science rooms would need to be demolished and relocated as would some special education areas. These rooms, which are part of the addition built in the 1990s, would need to be torn down and rebuilt in a very confined timeframe which will involve premium costs and could involve contingencies. The rebuilt addition would include new science rooms for the eighth grade program.

A new PE addition with a secondary access corridor was discussed as a separate option. This included a larger PE station for team activities. This option could be included in any of the options A-D, should an auditorium not be included in the recommended project.

In all options, if the auditorium is built there would be no need for added gym space, but there was still interest in providing the new corridor, together with reworked special education classrooms or to provide storage rooms. First Selectman Flatto asked if the slope in Option D affects the access road. Mr. Luther said yes so a retaining wall would be needed.

Ty Tregellas, the Turner Construction estimator, distributed cost information for all three options. He also included estimates for Option C which is no longer being considered. Mr. Tregellas reviewed the costs that were similar in the three remaining options: Cafe/Kitchen, Auditorium, Nurse/Media, and the PE addition. If the Auditorium were eliminated or deferred, the cost of the additional gym space would be \$1.8 million. If the Auditorium is added later, the school would have extra space. If the Auditorium were to be built initially, there would be no need for the new PE space, thus saving part of the \$1.8 million, depending on whether the corridor portion would be built. Mr. Tregellas also said that the cost of the site work in Option D was more than Option A-1, but less than Option B-1.

The second page of the report Mr. Tregellas handed out included cost breakdowns. He pointed out the phasing, logistics, and site work costs. Mr. Tregellas said that demolition and rebuild work could mean the temporary need for portables and the need for lead time for construction and for ordering materials and case work. Mr. Flatto expressed concern about demolishing recently added science rooms and the implications for loss of state reimbursement. Mr. Luther said that there might be a penalty. Mr. Hatzis stated that they might be able to adjust science schedule to free up the space in the spring for demolition.

Committee members asked questions about logistics and the unknowns. Some members thought that if an area was demolished that a modular unit could replace it and there was a discussion on the use of modular construction to avoid premium construction costs.

Principal Greg Hatzis said Option B-1 and D are both educationally sound, but he said he would need to study each option further to decide which is the best. Ms. Tierney said that more adjacent homes are affected in Option B-1.

The Committee also discussed site work involving relocating the bus loop and parent drop-off, the need for additional parking for added assembly space and students, and the need to relocate Project Adventure, the fire access road, and visual impact on the neighbors. Mr. Flatto advised reaching out to the neighbors with the final plan. He also suggested the Committee speak to the Town's zoning department on parking as that's a critical issue.

V. Public Comment

Michele Modugno asked the Committee not to make a decision on which option they want because that's the same date as the School's winter concert which many parents are attending. Chairman Bill Sapone stressed the tight schedule the Committee needs to follow, but in respect to parents, he suggested holding the next meeting at nearby Jennings School.

A parent expressed her concern on moving the parent drop-off area to a more congested location. She and two other parents voiced their support for an auditorium. Mr. Hatzis said it would be a tremendous asset to have the music connected to the seventh and eighth grade wings. Another parent asked about the availability of elevation drawings and the architect replied that those would come later.

VI. Adjourn

Chairman Sapone said the next meeting will be held in the Jennings Cafeteria. Mr. DeMaria made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 pm. Rich Kornutik seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer S. Carpenter
Recording Secretary