

MIDDLE SCHOOL SPACE FEASIBILITY COMMITTEE

Thursday, February 26, 2009

5:00 pm

First Floor Conference Room-Independence Hall

FINAL MINUTES

Members Present: William Sapone, Chair; John Convertito, Vice Chair; Robert Stone, Sheryl Santiago, John Vazquez, Paul Engemann, Ken Brachfeld (Alt.), and Ex-officio members Jack Boyle and Mary Hogue

Member Absent: Sue Brand

Others Present: FPS Director of Operations Tom Cullen, FWMS Principal Greg Hatzis, Judy Ewing, Pam Iacono, Charlotte Leslie, and Meg Learson Grosso (The Fairfield Minuteman, arrived at 6 PM)

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair William Sapone at 5:07 PM.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

The minutes of February 13, 2009 were approved with two changes. At the top of the second page before the paragraph which starts " The average class size...", the following sentence was added: "There was an open question about the capacity at East Ridge Middle school at the time the of the peak enrollment of 1300 because it had different space and portables." And in the second paragraph from the bottom, after the second sentence, the following sentence was inserted: "Sue Brand said that class size is a priority of the Board of Education and is one of the most single important factors in education." The spelling of "principle" was changed to "principal". The motion to approve the minutes was made by Bob Stone and seconded by Sheryl Santiago. The vote was 4 in favor, none opposed, and 3 abstentions.

III. Discussion Regarding Middle School Space Solutions

Ken Brachfeld said he wanted to update the Committee on the capacity question about East Ridge Middle school. With the annex and the portables the school built for 800 had a capacity of 950 when the enrollment reached 1300.

The Chair distributed copies of his draft report which outlined the Committee's work and recommendations. Members asked questions and commented on specific points Bob Stone was concerned that core space recommendations were not specific. Several members commented on redistricting and realignment which is the job of the Board of Education, not the Committee. Paul Engemann suggested that some zoning language be added, particularly about "coverage," in justifying the work at FWMS, and mentioning the limitations of the other two sites. In regard to Section VI. 1 - 4, John Convertito said that piecemeal renovation at other schools wouldn't work.

Jack Boyle offered to edit the report and make sure that it was consistently expressed in the "third person."

The issue of core space (cafeteria, bathrooms, lockers) and additional program space (science labs) was mentioned several times. Some thought it should be up to a building committee to make further recommendations. Bill said the report assumes planning for 175 students. John Vazquez suggested a statement indicating the capacity that those areas could serve, and adding the words "but beyond that we recommend..."

Mr. Engemann suggested providing an economic justification for recommending an annex over portables or bricks and mortar. Others cautioned against mentioning specific cost figures. The Committee favored the fabricated steel modular units because of the low cost, durability, and the ability to provide the necessary space quickly by Fall 2011.

Some members thought it was important to describe how capacity was determined using William DeJong's formula. Mr. Boyle expressed concern about planning for 110% capacity when 90% shows foresight for future needs.

The number of classrooms to recommend was discussed at great length. Some thought eight was enough but if special education rooms were needed, eleven seemed like a better number. Greg Hatzis spoke about the importance of keeping a team together. It was decided that there should be a minimum of 10 classrooms and two smaller rooms.

Ultimately, it would be up to a building committee architect to make further recommendations about existing space and building upgrades. Tom Cullen offered some thoughts and technical information.

Committee members did not feel that they should comment on the auditorium request. They didn't feel that it was an overcrowding issue.

IV. Public Comment

Pam Iacono (BOE member) thanked the Committee and said that the details should be left to a building committee. Charlotte Leslie (PTA Council) said that the building committee should decide how to provide the space. Judy Ewing said that the Committee should meet again to finalize its report.

The next meeting will be Thursday, March 5th at 5:00 PM.

V. Adjourn

The Chair asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was made by Bob Stone, and seconded by John Convertito. The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jack Boyle
Recording Secretary