

School Building Committee Meeting Minutes
Remote Online Meeting
August 20, 2020, 5:30PM

Present: Chair Sharon Gray; Vice Chair Thomas Ulfelder; Virginia Ferko; Marjorie Freiman, Steve Gagosian; Joubin Hassanein; Ryan Hutchins; Meghan Jop; Matt King; Melissa Martin; Patti Quigley; Heather Sawitsky; Jose Soliva; David Lussier; Grant Smith; FMD Project Manager Kevin Kennedy; FMD Project Manager Dick Elliott; Jeff D’Amico of Compass Project Management; and Alex Pitkin and Kristen Olsen of SMMA.

Absent: Jeff Dees, Cynthia Mahr, Ellen Quirk.

Ms. Gray opened the meeting at approximately 5:32PM. She announced the meeting was being broadcast live and recorded by Wellesley Media for later viewing. Participants joined via Zoom conferencing, with each vote to be recorded by roll call. She welcomed new Hardy Principal Grant Smith as a non-voting member of the School Building Committee, replacing Charlene Cook, who retired June 30.

Public Comment

Bob Richards of 37 Tanglewood Road, a direct abutter to Upham, said he opposes the use of Upham site. He is concerned with the adverse reaction caused by removal of trees and blasting ledge, as well as potential impact to public ground water. He objects to the Town spending millions more on the Upham site due to the need for blasting. He is concerned with the impact of construction traffic on the surrounding neighborhood.

Michael Tobin of 45 Cottage Street, speaking on behalf of the Wellesley Conservation Land Trust, read a letter aloud that was sent to the SBC earlier in the week. He states the WCLT has voted to support the Natural Resources Commission in its support of the preservation of the Upham Forest and, additionally, the mature trees at Hardy.

Krista Millard of 23 Norwich Road is in favor of the Upham build, citing support for the safety of all children affected. Her biggest concern is the the need for more children to cross Route 9. She also is concerned with environmental impacts imposed by idling cars.

Seth Moskowitz of 11 Norwich Road is in favor of the Upham build. If the Upham site is not selected because of environmental reasons, how could the site be used in the future? He is concerned about the emissions impacts of traffic going to Hardy, and is supportive of creative ways to to reuse and repurpose rocks and timber removed from the Upham site during construction.

Kate Sullivan of 22 Norwich Road spoke to the need to have fair comparisons of the two sites. The estimated cost should include the purchase of the three properties adjacent to Hardy. She also mentioned the importance of having additional fields in the town to benefit the social and emotional development of children, and noted that the Hardy site could provide an opportunity for significant field space.

Ms. Gray thanked the participants for their comments and noted the Committee has received many written letters which are being read and taken into consideration.

Hardy/Upham Project

Cost Estimating

Mr. D'Amico reviewed the updated project cost estimates, which have been revisited since the hiatus due to Covid-19. Cost drivers for the project include:

Site Premiums: Acreage for site work, topography, ledge removal at Upham, reforestation at Upham, roadway circulation, parking on site.

Net Zero Ready Premiums: Increased envelope insulation above stretch code, triple pane glazing to meet more stringent R-Values, added plug load controls above code, increased size of emergency generator to support the electric system.

Mr. Pitkin reviewed the site plan updates that have been used for the cost estimating: options at the center of the site at Upham (option 6A), an addition/renovation at Hardy using the oldest parts of the building (option 4), and Hardy at the center of the site (option 7B). Differentiators of the sites include size (Hardy 9 acres, Upham 12 acres) and geometry (Hardy has an hourglass shape; Upham is rectangular).

Ms. Quigley asked about the height of retaining walls in option 7B; Mr. Pitkin responded 10-15ft.

Ms. Jop noted setback requirements for parking lots and zoning requirements for height of retaining walls. Mr. Pitkin noted that the intent is to include as much landscaping buffer as possible for neighbors. Ms. Freiman asked about netting along Weston Road and Route 9 for playing fields; Mr. Pitkin said there are ways to minimize the visual impact of netting. In response to a question from Ms. Sawitsky, Mr. Pitkin said retaining walls would not be necessary if there were not a baseball diamond on the Route 9 side of the site.

Mr. D'Amico reviewed conceptual cost estimates, which included costs for each option for baseline construction, swing space, photovoltaics, soft cost multiplier, and total project budget in relation to all 4 proposed site plans.

- **Option 4 (Hardy add/reno):** \$57.0 million baseline construction, \$5.8 million swing space, \$79.7 million total project budget
- **Option 7B (Hardy new in center):** \$57.3 million baseline, \$600,000 swing space, \$73.4 million total project budget
- **Option 6A (Upham new in center):** \$60.4 million baseline, \$0 swing space, \$76.7 million total project budget
- **Option 6C (Upham new on footprint):** \$55.1 million baseline, \$5.8 million swing space, \$77.3 million total project cost

Mr. Ulfelder asked if it would be appropriate to add in the cost of the three properties acquired adjacent to the Hardy site. Mr. D'Amico said it would be best added as an asterisk at the bottom of the chart, as it is an important factor but not part of the cost estimates going forward.

Mr. Gagosian noted there is little differentiation between the options in the center of the site. In response to a question from Mr. Soliva, Mr. D'Amico confirmed that the reforestation of the baseball field would be included as part of Option 6A.

Ms. Sawitsky asked for a more detailed breakdown of the costs estimates. Mr. Hassanein asked how the sites compare in terms of reimbursement by the MSBA. Mr. D'Amico said the MSBA caps site reimbursement costs at 8 percent, and the construction costs are capped at the same amount. Mr. Hutchins suggested adding a column that includes estimated reimbursable costs for each project

Ms. Gray asked whether pushing the anticipated start date back by one year due to Covid-19 delays has an impact on cost. While an additional year of escalation costs is included, Mr. D'Amico anticipates a lower escalation of 3% annually for the next three years given the current market conditions. The assumption is that the project would break ground in summer of 2023, based on lengthy permitting process and the interfacing with the MSBA.

In response to a question from Ms. Quigley, Mr. D'Amico said fields shown are included in all site costs. Additional cost detail will be provided to the Committee. Ms. Quigley asked if there will be a conversation about air quality and enhanced filtration systems, given current significant needs for appropriate ventilation for all schools. Mr. Pitkin said the base system is robust and brings in a lot of fresh air, but does not include additional options like UV air cleaning systems. Ms. Gray noted that enhanced filtration is more expensive, but might be worth discussing within the SBC now or the Permanent Building Committee during schematic design. There would be interest in making sure systems are consistent with both Hunnewell and Hardy/Upham. Mr. Ulfelder noted the extensive support of the Facilities Management Department during the pandemic and expects this will be an ongoing conversation for all municipal buildings moving forward.

Mr. King asked whether the fixtures/furniture/equipment budget is for the maximum capacity of the building or anticipated population. Mr. D'Amico said it is for enrollment number of 365 students, with additional costs for FF&E for the the specialized program.

Mr. Hassanein asks if the cost comparisons is based on clean sites. Mr. D'Amico said there is no anticipated contamination at either site, and no costs for mitigation are included as a result.

Ms. Ferko asked if the enrollment estimates for 2023 justify the need to maintain costs for additional modular classrooms at the Hardy option 7B. Ms. Gray noted it would be more conservative to plan for them now even if they end up not being needed.

Selection Criteria Review

Ms. Gray said now that the SBC's requested analysis has been completed, it is time for the Committee to begin reviewing the selection criteria that it had set earlier in the study, and start weighing the options against each other. The Committee has a variety of perspectives and expertise and a robust discussion is anticipated.

Ms. Olsen reminded the committee that 26 line items were listed for criteria at the beginning of the study, and the list has been adjusted over time. The committee has expressed an interest in reviewing each item together, one by one. SMMA has sorted them into three categories: building-related criteria, on-site criteria and off-site criteria.

The committee will be able to reference back up material to support decisions as needed. Her proposed method includes using an objective evaluation tool of most favorable, less favorable, and least favorable

– only when there is consensus within the Committee. Committee members can use this evaluation as a tool while deciding how to vote.

Mr. King suggested that the SBC should also discuss items that have been brought to the attention of the Committee by residents, including blasting impacts, racial equity, and other consistent themes within the emails.

This meeting's discussion will focus on building-related criteria for options 4, 6A, and 7B, as option 6C has previously been eliminated for consideration. Ms. Olsen presented the following building-related criteria items:

Building Size: Both New Construction Option 6A at Upham and New Construction Option 7B are estimated at 81,400 GSF, while Option 4 Add/Reno at Hardy is estimated at 83,000 GSF. Additional space for the Skills program is included in both options.

Ms. Gray asked when the committee will know what square footage will be reimbursable by the MSBA and what will be excluded. Mr. Pitkin said final approval for those options come at the schematic design phase. Mr. Hassanein said the true impact won't be determined until the end of the job.

Some members consider this criteria to be neutral, though others agreed that the larger building is slightly less favorable given the need to maximize usable space.

Educational Plan (Strengths): The Committee members agree that all options achieve the goals of the educational plan, though the addition/renovation option is somewhat less flexible. Ms. Jop said building compliance related to size of the building and size of the lot should be considered. Ms. Olsen noted that Hardy is the lot struggling the most with the percentage of lot coverage. Committee members rated the addition/renovation as slightly less favorable.

Educational Plan (Weaknesses): Similar to the previous criteria, Committee members agree that all options achieve the goals of the educational plan, though the addition/renovation option is somewhat less flexible.

Construction phase impacts for Students: For the two new construction options (6A and 7B), the existing schools will continue to operate during adjacent construction. With 6A at Upham, ledge removal is expected to occur during the summer when school is not in session. For Option 4 (addition/renovation), the entire school would need to be relocated to temporary swing space, here anticipated to be modulars placed at the back of the Hardy site. The modulars would not include a gymnasium or cafeteria.

The determination suggests Option 4 is less favorable to 6A and 7B. With 7B, there may be relocation of modulars needed for the Hardy students. Mr. Soliva asked whether the School Committee or school department viewed either 6A or 7B as favorable over the other, given the potential for relocating modulars at Hardy. Dr. Lussier confirmed neither one is not favored over the other.

Ms. Olsen confirmed that there will be a discussion later related to potential construction impacts on neighbors.

Swing Space: The determination suggests 6A is most favorable and option 4 is least favorable due to the need for relocating the entire school into swing space. Option 7B would likely require the relocation of modulars, so there would be additional cost and operational impact.

Construction Cost: These costs do not include soft costs, photovoltaics, swing space, or need for additional modulars with Hardy 7B. The costs do include the cost for reforestation of the baseball field at Upham with option 6A, though committee members agreed the long-term maintenance costs for the reforestation might better be broken out separately.

The determination suggests Hardy new 7B option is most favorable, add/reno at Hardy 4 less favorable, and new Upham 6A least favorable. Several members did not believe that the differences were significant.

Project Cost: These costs include soft costs, photovoltaics, and swing space/modulars. There was disagreement among committee members about whether to include the cost of the three parcels at Hardy in the total project cost. Some viewed it as a project cost, due to the analysis that demonstrated that the options being considered at Hardy would not be possible without that purchase. Others consider the purchase of the parcels to be a long-term investment for the Town, and money that has already been spent with Town Meeting approval 2½ years ago.

There was agreement that the three parcels make the Hardy site viable for a new elementary school either now or in the future. With the Upham site, ledge removal, also an additional cost, will also be needed to make that site viable, now or in the future. But Committee members had varying viewpoints on how to consider those expenditures. Mr. King noted that with the Wellesley High School project, additional parcels needed to be purchased to complete those projects, and that purchase was included in the total project cost.

Sustainability (EUI): Related to energy use intensity of each option, the determination suggests both new construction options are most favorable and the addition/renovation is somewhat less favorable. Estimated Energy Use Intensity ratings for the new options are expected at 25-30, with the range slightly higher for Option 4 at 28-30 EUI. Both option can meet Town goals.

Sustainability (Building PV): These options show square footage available on the roof of each option, for the accommodation of photovoltaics. The determination suggests all options are considered equally favorable.

Approval of Invoices

Mr. Ulfelder moved to approve Compass invoice # CPM74-16 in the amount of \$6,996.75 and SMMA invoice #52442 in the amount of \$31029.31. Mr. King seconded.

Roll Call: Mr. Ulfelder – Yes, Ms. Ferko – Yes, Ms. Freiman – Yes, Ms. Quigley – Yes, Mr. Gagosian – Yes, Mr. Hassanein – Yes, Mr. Hutchins – Yes, Ms. Jop – Yes, Mr. King – Yes, Ms. Martin – Yes, Ms. Sawitsky – Yes, Mr. Soliva – Yes, Ms. Gray – Yes. **The motion carried unanimously 13-0.**

Mr. Ulfelder moved to approve Compass invoice #CPM 69-23.1 for \$120 for website services. Ms. Freiman seconded.

Roll Call: Mr. Ulfelder – Yes, Ms. Ferko – Yes, Ms. Freiman – Yes, Ms. Quigley – Yes., Mr. Gagosian – Yes, Mr. Hassanein – Yes, Mr. Hutchins – Yes, Ms. Jop – Yes, Mr. King – Yes, Ms. Martin – Yes, Ms. Sawitsky – Yes, Mr. Soliva – Yes, Ms. Gray – Yes. **The motion carried unanimously 13-0.**

Mr. D’Amico presented an SMMA additional service request for 12 additional meetings attended by Mr. Pitkin and Ms. Olsen for \$8,100. Committee members agreed this is a more than fair additional expense, and thanked the SMMA staff for their ongoing work. An amendment to the contract will be forthcoming at a future meeting.

Adjournment

At approximately 8:00PM, Ms. Gray adjourned the School Building Committee meeting.

Documents and Exhibits used

SMMA/Compass Presentation

Invoices for Compass & SMMA

Website Invoice for Compass

- SMMA Additional Services Proposal