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| <b>Wilmington High School – Wilmington, MA</b> | <b>Public Forum<br/>Summary</b> |
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| High School Building Committee Public Forum | April 12, 2011           |
| Location:                                   | Wilmington HS Auditorium |
| Time:                                       | 6:30 PM                  |

Presentation: See Dore & Whittier Presentation, April 12, 2011 (posted on the project website).

Public Comment/Response Summary:

Mr. Mark Nelson commented that the Activity and Use Limitation (AUL) associated with the 1984 oil leak appeared to be deficient.

Response: The Town Manager explained that the AUL is not new or a surprise. He explained that there was a fuel oil leak from an underground storage tank at the high school in 1984. The tanks were removed and contaminated soil and groundwater were remediated. Ralph Tella of Lord Associates (Dore & Whittier’s Environmental Consultant) responded that the most current AUL is not deficient.

Mr. Kevin MacDonald raised concerns about the proposed design enrollment of 960 students. He cited figures for 1156 students previously occupying the existing high school and projected 1199 students based on current 4, 5, 6, and 7<sup>th</sup> grade enrollments.

Response: The Superintendent of Schools indicated that the educational program was very different when there were 1156 students, and there is a need for more space to meet current educational program needs. In addition, she indicated that attrition rates (from students attending Shawsheen Tech and private school) reduces the projections to be in line with the proposed design enrollment.

Ms. Liz Harriman inquired if there would be disturbance of wetlands by the project.

Response: Dore & Whittier responded that the high school site was recently flagged for wetlands and they were working to minimize impacts on the wetlands, utilizing a 50’ minimum buffer.

Mr. Gerry O’Reilly commented that it is time for a new school, but built on pristine land. He described problems he perceived at the existing high school property, to which he is an abutter, including the 1984 oil leak, the filling of the frog pond, and discolored water in the wetlands. He suggested pursuing other sites.

Response: The Town Manager responded that the High School Building Committee had looked at other sites, including the Town Hall site, which was deemed too small. He mentioned the Yentile site, which also likely was too small, has significant wetlands, and is not currently owned by the Town. Similarly, he mentioned the Textron site, which also has wetlands and the owner is not interested in selling.

Ms. Lisa Johnson praised the presentation and asked about whether funds would be available if the Town does not vote to go forward with the project.

Response: Joslin Lesser responded that the project will be removed from the MSBA funding pipeline if it does not meet the MSBA deadlines. The Town Manager clarified that if a renovation option is selected that doesn’t meet the MSBA guidelines, then the Town would have to fund 100% of the project.

Mr. Manny Mulas asked about the benefits of a new school versus a renovated school and what those with no children should consider about the project.

Response: The Town Manager emphasized that Wilmington is a community and that the high school is one of the most visible and significant facilities in the community. It is a community resource and important to the public image of the Town. That image is important in selling the Town, obtaining good bond ratings, attracting new business, and improving property values. A new or renovated high school is relevant to everyone, not just those with children. The Town Manager also noted that other nearby towns with which Wilmington students compete have built new high schools, including Woburn, Reading and Tewksbury.

The Superintendent responded about the benefits of a new school vs. a renovated one. She indicated that a renovated school would cause more disruption, would take longer to construct, affect more students, and result in awkwardly shaped classrooms. The Superintendent mentioned the benefits of upgrading the special education programs, which would allow more students to be educated in-district. She emphasized that a new school would be better than a renovated one in meeting the educational needs of the community.

Mr. Michael Bodnar inquired how the present high school students compare to those in the past, and what was anticipated in the future with or without a new high school. He indicated that he thought the project was a great endeavor but questioned whether it was affordable.

Response: The Superintendent responded that 64% of seniors went on to college 7 years ago, now 92% go on to college. She indicated, however, that the State Department of Education standards have changed, there is a need for new technology, and space for project-based learning.

The Town Manager related how impressed he was in visiting the new Littleton High School to see the engineering classrooms, their technology program, and their college-style seminar room – resources that Wilmington High School doesn't have or have the space for currently. He responded to the affordability question by emphasizing the frugality of Town government and its success in maintaining appropriate reserves and the highest bond ratings. He suggested that there was no time like the present for the high school project because significant State funding is available.

Mr. Mario Marchese commented that he thought the last option, Option 2A (a new school) is the best option, though he questioned the finger-like extensions of the classroom areas.

Response: Dore & Whittier indicated that they will be developing more detailed building plans for the next public forum, which will focus on building layout options.

Ms. Kathleen Reynolds commented that the middle schoolers have benefitted from the "new" middle school. She said that the Town was clearly in need of a new high school. From her tennis coach perspective, Ms. Reynolds expressed a preference for quieter tennis courts set back from the street and lighted tennis courts.

Response: The Town Manager responded that the tennis courts would continue to be lit. He suggested that, although nothing is final, there was a preference to have the courts on the street for security and safety reasons.

An Unnamed Member of the Public commented that she has children in the Wilmington Public Schools currently and doesn't want to send them to the existing high school. She indicated that she would rather see a tax increase than retain the existing school. She expressed a preference for a new school. She inquired about how a new school might impact the school's operating budget.

Response: The Town Manager indicated that the high school would be a replacement building, so there would not be a need for additional staff. However, due to the increased size of the school, another

maintenance person likely would be added. The energy efficiency of a new school likely would decrease utility costs. A minimal impact on the operating budget is expected.

Ms. Judy Ciampa commented on heating issues at the existing high school this year, and a perceived downgrade in experience from the middle school to the high school. She highlighted the good visibility and central location of the existing school site, relative to the need for security patrols. She suggested that other sites might be more difficult and more costly to patrol.

Mr. David Travis questioned which options carried the lowest risk to schedule and cost. He also asked about cost overruns.

Response: Dore & Whittier responded that there were inherently more risks from a renovation to the schedule and that renovating an existing building carries the risk of unforeseen conditions. They also emphasized that a renovation would take one to two years longer to complete. There are fewer risks from a new building project.

Joslin Lesser indicated that contingencies would be built into the project budget to address unforeseen conditions, but if costs exceed the contingency then the Town would be responsible.

Mr. Dan Ferguson inquired if there is a cap on what the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) will fund.

Response: The Town Manager responded that there is an approved reimbursement rate of 48.47%, but that the Town may receive incentive points up to 52% reimbursement.

Ms. Tricia Lambert expressed her support for a new high school and emphasized that 50% off was a great deal for the Town.

Mr. Mark Nelson commented that he supports a new school on the Sciarappa Farm site.

Response: The Town Manager responded that, even if the owners were interested in selling, there was not enough time to accomplish the purchase.

Mr. Kevin MacDonald questioned the cost of a new school. He expressed the opinion that a renovation would be less expensive and more affordable. He also questioned the cost of the feasibility study (\$1,125,000), the amount of Dore & Whittier's contract, and the hazmat provisions of their contract.

Response: The Town Manager clarified that the MSBA would reimburse the Town for approximately half the cost of the feasibility study. Dore & Whittier clarified that they have hired a subconsultant to do a hazardous material investigation.

Prepared by: Lisa Matey Bergeron, Joslin, Lesser + Associates, April 30, 2011

End of Minutes