

Name of Committee: Brookline School Population and Capacity Exploration (B-SPACE)

Meeting Date: February 25, 2013      Time: 6:30 p.m.      Meeting Location: Town Hall,  
School Committee Room

Present:      Betsy DeWitt x                      Philip Kramer x  
                  Alan Morse    x  
                  George Cole   x                      Michael Sandman x  
                  Rebecca Stone x  
                  Lisa Crossley x                      Fred Wang x  
                  Ken Goldstein x                      Neil Wishinsky x  
                  Mel Kleckner x

Also present: Peter Rowe, Deputy Superintendent of Schools; School Committee Members Susan Wolf Ditkoff, and Abby Cox. Carla Benka, Sergio Modigliani.

1) Topic: Minutes

The Minutes of February 11, 2013 were approved as amended.

2) Topic: Discuss Alternate New School Sites

Discussion: Betsy DeWitt presented data from the Town/Schools Facilities Committee, which asked Town Counsel to look at possible school site options over a year ago. The two primary sites reviewed were the Lynch Center and the Baldwin School.

The review said the Lynch Center has multiple complications that make it hard to renovate or expand the building. Some of its lands are protected by Article 97 of the state Constitution (which protects public open space), the building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and there is potential contamination from use by prior owner Brookline Gas and Light Company in 1891.

The review of the Baldwin School showed some area available for school construction while other land is under Article 97. The abutting Soule Recreation Center is also under Article 97. The Baldwin building is also listed in the Chestnut Hill National Register Historic District.

For either to be enlarged, a home rule petition would have to be filed and approved by the legislature for a change of use to Art. 97 lands.

It was noted that the CIP has never reflected funds for an entirely new school building.

Members briefly discussed, but agreed there were multiple impediments to building or renovating a building at Larz Anderson Park, Pine Manor College, Putterham Golf Course, or Brookline Music School.

3) Topic: New School pro forma Budget

Peter Rowe provided a draft budget showing staffing and other costs for an additional school with an enrollment of 500. The set up (1-time) cost is approximately \$9 million, with the marginal annual cost of operating such a school \$1 million or more (because many of the teachers allocated to a new school would need to be hired anyway to meet enrollments).

Discussion: How would we draw students evenly from the other schools? The \$3 million in the CIP for the renovation to OLS probably does not reflect the total amount that would be needed. Some of the operational costs would be incurred in any event because of student growth. These figures are all benchmarks; they will be revisited once a concept is agreed upon.

The Committee requested an analysis separating capital costs, entirely new operating costs due to the new school, and those costs of student growth which would be incurred whether or not a new school emerged.

#### 4) Topic: Meeting Schedule

The next meeting was revised to move back to Monday March 11<sup>th</sup> instead of March 14<sup>th</sup>.

#### 5) Topic: Presentation of Other Ways to Accommodate Student Growth (besides the use of Old Lincoln School (OLS))

Discussion: Review of memorandum (attached) outlining possible steps that also lower overall enrollments or increase capacity at existing schools. Memo listed limiting the METCO program and/or the materials fee program. Important to look at the costs and benefits of these options, but many reasons to continue both programs, and dissolving them would not yield enough space because placements are spread throughout the system. Support for modulars or expansion at other buildings, and/or suspending neighborhood assignment for elementary schools, but former not enough because of lack of space, and latter would mean the end of the neighborhood school system. Memo should be redrafted for distribution to public with a more measured weighing of the pros and cons of options examined.

Conclusion: The OLS location option is the most favorable option at this time, so we need to move to considering concepts for what could go there. Lawrence School may be moving forward with modular classrooms for next year. Potential of leased space needs to be reviewed further.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 pm.