

4/8/13 B-SPACE PUBLIC HEARING NOTES

COMMENTS

1. Emilie England: 155 Bonad Rd., Baker parent. Important issues including k-8 schools and class size. Do not use Old Lincoln. 8th graders together poor idea. Time is short. Silly to put money in to an old building. Do a half-day kindergarten, which will enable classrooms to be used 2 x per day.
2. Merelice: Not a parent but interested. Town meeting member precinct 6. Boston is closing schools and its student population is dropping. Find a school facility in Boston not being used. Brookline might take charge of a Boston school similar to METCO. A joint effort. Consider a Pilot, Innovation or Charter school. Look at the South End technology center run by MIT. Lots of innovative education ideas coming out of this center.
3. Larry Koff, Precinct 3 TMM: 5 children who went through the Brookline School system. Questions the enrollment forecasts. Would like to see more data. Current data not sufficient to make a growth forecast.
4. Kate Silbaugh, Lawrence School and BHS: Supports METCO and emphasizes its history in Brookline, K+1+2 parents have a more limited voice. Oppose a K+1+2 school. School, concern that plans may be overly override dependent, will support an override regarding the idea of an 8/9 school, oppose to 8th grade only school which she is afraid is likely to happen, opposes entering high school in 10th grade. Too much pressure on grades begins in 10th grade.
5. Susan Silberberg: 468 Walnut St and Lincoln parent. Will be a Brookline school parent until 2023. Background a city planner. Asks to take a broader view. Town has a very small commercial tax base. Focus on economic development. Brookline residents generally fairly development opposed. But we will ultimately be forced to increase our commercial tax base. Question is whether folks would prefer a k-8 school or increased commercial development. Need to take your work out of a silo and enable folk to understand they will have to make a choice.
6. Ronah Smith: 57 Ackers Ave., one boy 5th grade Health School. PTO participant. Only solution is a new k-12 school. Needs to address both the k-8 and high school problem. Sees redistricting as the lesser of evils. Is the empty Cleveland Circle Theater a possible location? Parks located just behind it. Need a longer term solution, not just a fix here and there. Are there other locations in Boston or even Newton?
7. Emilie Lockhart, 52 Kent St., next to the Lawrence School, Parent, Lawrence School. Please slow down. Don't know why this growth is happening. Concerned that we will overbuild. Note Lawrence renovated not long ago and already too small. Like the idea expressed earlier of seeking space in Boston, or collaborating with a private school. Wait one more year. Slow down.
8. Mathew Rosenberg: senior at BHS and doing a senior paper on the issue. Mom works at BEEP who tells me about how BEEP is running out of space. Suggest that BEEP classrooms be organized in clusters around the Town (note administration is in fact moving in this direction), opposed to the remote grade concept- is important to be able to look up to the seniors as role models, fear of loss of a tight knit community at the high school, better make more space by looking at the pre k space needs and moving these students out as described earlier to make room this way for student growth.

4/8/13 B-SPACE PUBLIC HEARING NOTES

9. Lynda Roseman: Akers Ave., 4 children in Brookline schools since 1991, youngest now at BHS, oldest teaching kindergarten, agree with last speaker, BEEP is getting lost in the discussion and may be becoming second class citizen when it is a jewel in Brookline's crown, however disagree with last speaker in that son was with 9th grade class at OLS while BHS was being renovated. Parents, faculty and students all found it to be a very positive experience. 9th grade bonded, had access to BHS, were not isolated. Don't reject that idea!
10. Marc Foster: 122 Naples Rd., Junior at BHS and 8th grader at Devo. Participant in Facebook page with 700 followers, Did on line survey to broaden the conversation, sent to Facebook followers and PTOs with request for redistribution for responses, 700 respondents i.e. 10% of target (parent and past parent) audience, several flaws re extended day, parents only and therefore not designed for whole community, no information re costs of the various alternatives critical for folks to consider when expressing preferences, survey with results handed to committee and up on Facebook page as well, supports the k-8 alternative which was strongly supported by survey respondents with willingness to consider temporary measures such as modulars, taxes, redistricting in order to sustain k-8 alternative despite its limitations, acknowledge need for political support to execute k-8, and also the willingness of the community to embrace innovation.
11. Christina Suh: 33 Clinton Rd., BHS 10th grader and Runkle 8th grader, Impressed with Facebook page, encourage use of technology for communication and its ability to create interactive dialogue, tremendous power for disagreement, question asking and answers, and refutation of false statements. Old way of working by having a public meeting and allowing 3 minutes to comment may not be as effective as some of the new communication alternatives enabled by technology. Encourage Committee to utilize these new methods of communication.

QUESTIONS

1. Donna Humon: Devo SEAPAC representative from Devo, son 1st grader. SEAPAC community profoundly concerned about transition plans for special education students. Question-specifically what plans are being made or will be made to minimize transitions from school to school. Right now there is only one transition required (aside from BEEP). How will district create a system similar to this? Bill Lupini responds acknowledging the legitimacy of this issue, and draws attention to "Givens" which speak to this. Dr. Lupini states that the District must address this issue for all alternatives other than the k-8 model, and this information is included in the documents. Several principals in the district have experience with this issue and there have already been discussions about it.
2. Linda Cutting Whitehead, Driscoll Parent: 106 Westbourne Terrace, 2 children at Driscoll. What do the first two solutions do about the overcrowding at the high school? Dr. Lupini, the 8/9 solution does directly address the high school population. The k-8 and the other models assume that the high school issue is addressed separately.
3. Alex Barrett, BHS and Pierce Parent: Comment on developing a concept school for 7-12 that would be voluntary, would allow some relief at K-8, while still providing a K-8 model for those who want it. Dr. Lupini explains that the difficulty of a concept school is that it must draw students from all schools in order to create space in all schools. Creates a great deal of uncertainty. Is possible but difficult to execute.

4/8/13 B-SPACE PUBLIC HEARING NOTES

4. Rebecca Tolkoff, Pierce Parent: Graduate of Devo and BHS. Now have 4 children in Pierce School. Do you plan to have a city planning or consulting firm help formulate a more concrete plan to solve the district's problems with a more data driven approach? Chairman DeWitt indicates that because of the tight time line it is not practical to engage consultant.
5. Mark Pener, Lincoln Parent. In all these B-SPACE discussions what serious thought and analysis has been given to solving space needs temporarily at each existing school until a new school can be built? Why can't each school form a team to explore leasing options, additions, larger class sizes and/or temporary classrooms?
What are the space needs over the next four to five years at each existing school and can these space needs be solved at some of the schools instead of having this top-down approach imposed upon us? Have we been asked what sacrifices we are willing to make locally before a forced march to OLS? I've heard a proposed budget of \$8-10 million for renovations of OLS before a 2014 move-in date. Would this be better spent on the existing K-8 schools rather than wasting this money on a building that everyone detests and probably needs ten times this amount to adequately address its conditions? Dr. Lupini indicates Lincoln is not long term solution. The number you cite is not the one we have. We are taking a number of short term actions as you have described. Example, leasing outside space for a number of pre-k classrooms. In fact our short term solutions do vary from school to school and rely on input from each principal. Dr. Wang addresses the time constraint the use of modulars and Old Lincoln. Mr. Sandman points out that our children are sometimes more flexible than our parents.
6. Joe Ranft, Driscoll 4th grade Parent: Why did you wait so long? You need more than two public hearings. Is there a way to change the process so that there is more public comment? Is it possible to fix the problem for 2014 and then address the larger problem for 2015? Dr. Lupini points out that we have been talking about this space issue for a number of years, and we are implementing short term solutions. Dr. Wang suggests that we are most likely to have a larger student body even if the growth levels off. Praises the Facebook page and the survey, but points out we are only hearing from a small percentage of those interested and those being heard are not necessarily representative. Ms. Stone reminds folks that parents represent about 17% of Brookline households. So we need to hear from many non-parents. The question is how can we reach more people.
7. Bob Sperber, Former PSB Superintendent
 - K-8 system is the best system based on their research in 1994 (less transition is better for children, older kids help younger children, spread out the 8th graders slow down the maturation process, enables every student K-8 to walk to a neighborhood school).
 - Favor a new K-8 school in back of the Baldwin school, which would involve swapping land with Park and Recreation. Harry Bohrs suggested this plan.
 - Opposed to using OLS as a permanent K-8 school (difficult and unsafe site, is a 1930 building, we will still have need for temporary space).
 - Opposed to plan for an 8-9 school (adds an extra transition for students, not sound education idea, is a form of a middle school, which is not the preferred organization).
 - The last building program for the high school didn't assume population of 2,500. It serves a maximum of 2,100 kids, 400 short of what we need. Possible solutions: look at Larz Anderson or buy land from Pine Manor for a 2nd high school. This is an investment, not a cost, and impacts property values. Be bold, don't be safe. Make a big move not a little one.

4/8/13 B-SPACE PUBLIC HEARING NOTES

8. Paula Johnson, Lincoln Parent 6TH grade 132 High St. We haven't heard or seen the data that show us what is best for our children. Other communities have done this so there must be data that shows the risks and benefits of the options. Look at the best scientific data in experience and educational pedagogy that give us the best choices for our children and then back into decisions from there.
9. Lee Selwyn: 25 Reservoir Rd., formerly 3 children in the Brookline School system Precinct 13 TMM, Advisory Committee Member, Parent of 3 PSB Graduates. What decision needs to be made right now to accommodate the 2014 student body and why does that decision necessarily require that the long-term decision be made now? What is the linkage between the short-term and the long-term? Response-Dr. Lupini explains on has to work backward from 2017/18. High school capacity in trouble by then. Need solution for that year, or shortly thereafter. For k-8 one has to do the redistricting, and it takes time to plan and build for example a k-8 school. Need to place the students somewhere in 2014/15 in order to accommodate them while building the structure by then on a site selected with a building by then designed.
10. Dennis Doughty: Precinct 3 TMM, Lawrence Parent 7th grader. Did the B-SPACE Committee consider and/or reject the proposal floated on the Facebook site (overlay model in which students would gradually transition to the new school and not have to leave their existing school)? Dr. Lupini indicates he has implemented a plan of this kind, but not in a situation where there was a growth in the student body to contend with. Mr. Doughty asks that we study the Vitolo suggestion.
11. Nathan Shpritz: Baker Parent. What is the overcrowding problem? How do we quantify the overcrowding problem? What happens first? Which schools crowd out first? How do we prevent that from happening under the median consultant draft plan? How do we make sure that we don't go too small in case the influx of new children increases at a quickening rate? Fred Wang points out that we have a space problem even if our growth levels off because it is coming up through our school system with the students already here. Dr. Lupini cites Old Lincoln as our flexibility space by not planning to use it permanently.
12. Katherine Ingraham, Lawrence Parent 2 children and one more next year. To what extent are you keeping close tab with what is going on with the school districting in Boston? Could be a large part of the enrollment numbers? Dr. Lupini indicts we watch it but are not influenced by it. We pay attention to our capture rate.