

MINUTES
B-SPACE COMMITTEE MEETING WEDNESDAY
5/29/13

Committee Members - present marked with "x"			
Betsy DeWitt	X	Philip Kramer	x
Alan Morse	X	Bill Lupini	X
George Cole	X	Michael Sandman	No
Katherine Craven	No	Rebecca Stone	X
Lisa Crossley	X	Fred Wang	No
Ken Goldstein	X	Neil Wishinsky	x
Mel Kleckner	X		

Note: Dr. Wang regrets that his work load prevents him from continuing on the B-SPACE committee. He has offered to respond to questions from time to time.

Other attendees included those member of the public who signed up (list attached to final version of these minutes) and Cynthia Tsao who facilitated the meeting. Ms. Tsao is a Brookline school system parent, and a professional facilitator of groups engaged in complex decision-making and volunteered her services to the B-SPACE committee. She utilizes a decision-making system entitled The Choosing By Advantages Decision-making System originated by Jim Suhr (CBA).

The meeting commenced at 6:35 PM on Wednesday May 29, 2013.

Approval of Minutes: The Committee unanimously approved the minutes of its Monday, May 20 meeting.

Identifying the most important factors when comparing alternative space plans: Ms. Tsao had collated the results of the homework assigned to committee members requesting each member to submit a prioritized list of between 4 and 10 “factors” to be considered when comparing the various alternative plans which the Committee had identified. The factors deliberately omitted financial considerations, which would be considered at a later stage. The committee discussed and in many cases revised the ideas, ultimately arriving at a consensus as to the final list. The results were as follows:

1. Educational Excellence
2. Equity/Diversity
3. Sufficient Capacity
4. Site Location
5. Timeline
6. Community Approval
7. Flexibility
8. Education Model
9. MSBA Eligibility (\$)

A considerable amount of time during this part of the discussion was spent ensuring that the Committee was satisfied everyone understood the meaning of the above selections. Ms. Tsao pointed out that there is always a risk of apparent consensus only to discover later that members had very different ideas as to what the agreed upon factors actually meant.

Identifying the “Criteria” to be used in comparing the various alternatives: The second part of the homework assignment was to identify one or more criteria, in other words forms of measurement, which could be used to differentiate the relative advantages of each of the space plan alternatives being considered. Some examples: maintaining student/teacher ratios, minimize transitions and disruption, safety and accessibility for neighborhood schools. Ms. Tsao posted the suggestions offered via the homework, and for each factor another discussion ensued in order to arrive at an initial consensus as to how best to evaluate each factor when comparing the alternative school options.

Testing the System: The above discussions had taken up about 1 1/2 hours, a process, which Ms. Tsao indicated, frequently requires a group to devote one to two full days in order to complete. Ms. Tsao suggested that we select two alternatives and go through the comparison of one or two factors to understand more fully how the CBA system actually works. This exercise generated a number of committee questions resulting in a much greater understanding as to how the system can actually be put to good use.

Feedback for Ms. Tsao: Responding to Ms. Tsao, the committee comprised a list of the perceived advantages to using such a system, and also a very few challenges.

Next Steps: Mr. Morse listed the agenda items for the next meeting on Monday June 3. Several members observed that it would take the better part of a day to do the CBA analysis and volunteered to devote one entire weekend day to accomplish this.