

Name of Committee: Runkle School Building Committee

Meeting Date: 22 February 2010 Time: 8:30 p.m. Meeting Location: Town Hall Room 103

Runkle School Renovations Building Committee

Nancy Daly	x	Joseph Connelly	x
Helen Charlupski		Bob Vogel	
Glenn Cunha	x		
Kenneth Kaplan	x	Anthony Guigli	x
Richard Kelliher	x	Charles Simmons	
William Lupini	x	Raymond Masak	
Sean Cronin	x	Jennifer Fischer-Mueller	
Michael Shepard	x	Gregg Schroeder	x
Peter Rowe	x	Bob Bell	

Public Present: Scott Newman, parent, Michael Oates, abutter, Gill Fishman, neighbor, Mini Kollari, parent, Harvey and Ariella Finkel, abutters, Roger Tackeff, abutter, Pam Lodish, neighbor, Chad Ellis, abutter, Amy Hummel, PTO, Eli Dow, neighbor, Linda Carlisle, parent, Dru Krishnan, Abutter, Ann Lees, abutter, Mifrah Haq, neighbor, Melissa Foley, abutter, Sue Sturman, parent, Christina Suh, parent, Stephen Silverman, parent, Paula Friedman, neighbor.

Others Present: Ken Goldstein, Selectman, Dick Benka, Selectman, Carla Benka, Advisory Committee, Rebecca Stone, School Committee, Henry Warren, School Committee, Jennifer Dopazo Gilbert, Town Counsel.

Topic: Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Committee voted unanimously to approve the Meeting Minutes of 12 February 2010, with one (1) abstention (R. Kelliher).

Topic: H. Charlupski tuned in to meeting via telephone

H. Charlupski was out of town but listened to the proceedings via speaker telephone. It was acknowledged at the start of the meeting that she would not be able to vote.

Topic: Proposal for Alternative Design

G. Schroeder presented his firm's proposal dated 18 February 2010 for studying another design option. The proposal is crafted to study one other design option from feasibility through to schematic design far enough so as to be clear about the real cost and feasibility of it. The effort is expected to take three to four weeks from authorization to proceed. In the meantime, Design Partnership of Cambridge (DPC) is continuing to move forward developing the current design,

regardless of whether the Town elects to proceed with the additional design work. If the Town does elect to do the additional study work, he stated it would not be an ideal situation as his firm would be taking some staff off the development of the current design to conduct the added work. Design decisions that normally would happen now, would have to be put off until the early stages of Construction Documents. It would be a “fractured process” in his words. Schedule-wise, he feels the added work could be done without a delay to the overall schedule, but in the worst case it would delay bidding by one to two weeks.

In any event, the proposal is crafted to provide the Runkle Building Committee with enough information to decide on whether to make a change. DPC would start by gathering soils information, do a schematic design, cost it and bring the information back to the Committee.

In deciding whether to proceed with the study, he noted the following for the Runkle Building Committee to consider:

- In earlier stages of design, a number of options similar to what is proposed by certain abutters were studied to varying degrees including building some program space at the corner of Druce and Chesham. For various reasons all were deemed unworthy of further study.
- Lowering of the gym had also been discussed in some detail and the issues associated with that concept again made it unworthy of further pursuit.
- DCP believes any of the ideas for changing the design now will result in added project costs in the range of \$1 million to \$5 million.
- None of the ideas will be as good programmatically.
- The Town would need to accept compromises programmatically and the likely increased costs.
- Any concept under consideration would have a slightly larger FAR.
- Any decision subsequent to the study to actually proceed with a design change would likely add three to six months to the schedule, correspondingly pushing out all milestones such as bidding.

G. Schroeder stated the projected costs of \$1 million to \$5 million would be the result of added design fees, and potential larger building as well as increased likelihood of bid escalation that would result from bidding the project 3 to 6 months later than the summer and fall of 2010 as currently projected.

Topic: Comments on Proposal

N. Daly asked attendees for comments on the architect’s proposal. She began by stating she had serious concerns about moving forward with the proposal which will cost between \$48K and \$63K, especially in light of the projected increased project cost of \$1 million to \$5 million and the 3-6 month delay.

R. Kelliher stated the added costs of potentially implementing a design change are not programmed in the Town's CIP. Under that scenario, the project would need to be presented to Town Meeting for added funding. A more immediate problem is where in the project budget the \$63K for the study would be found. He noted a "Project Contingency" of \$100K. Typically the Town tries to leave this line item untouched as much as possible until late stages of the project, as there are inevitably things that come up at the end of a project that were not foreseen. There is some cause for concern in tapping this line item this early in the process.

H. Charlupski stated she was not in favor of studying moving the library; she would be more interested in a study to lower the gym.

L. Carlyle expressed her concern about the extensive value engineering that has happened to date and that any added monies should go to adding items back.

R. Tackeff expressed his frustration with the architect's proposal and stated all parties should find a solution to address Dean Road abutters concerns. He pressed the architect for more detail on how they arrive at their opinion of likely added costs should a design change happen. In response, G. Schroeder stated there would need to be 2K s.f. of circulation space on top of the kindergarten wing, likely added costs for ledge, there would likely be a premium on the contractors cost for new construction of the library to the front of the building, redesign costs to re-do the design development, issues related to dealing with the classrooms adjacent to the new library location in terms of it potentially blocking the window wall of the classrooms, structural changes to the kindergarten wing, costs related to relocating the "millennium wall", and likely increases owing to delayed bidding by 3 to 6 months in escalation costs.

G. Fishman stated his dissatisfaction and disbelief with the architect's stance. He stated he did not agree with the architect's assessment of costs and delay, and noted there may be a delay if the decision by the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) is appealed. He felt the premium for new construction would be offset by reduced costs related to leaving the cafeteria up at the front of the building. Overall, he felt the architect's numbers are over-inflated. He also lamented the "tearing apart of the neighborhood" and could not understand why a "neighborhood school should grow to 120K s.f."

C. Suh questioned the wisdom of considering a re-design at the "eleventh hour" noting the process that has gotten the project to this point. If a re-design is considered, she wondered how and when all the rest of the community would have an opportunity to be involved.

A. Finkel stated she felt the "wall" facing Dean Road is too high.

J. Connelly stated he shared with staff the idea and sketch of moving the library to the front of the building. Their response was both thoughtful and strongly

opposed to it. A lot of work on the part of all parties has gone into the current design and it is the best programmatically with the library/media center being the “cornerstone” of the design. Staff also expressed concern with potential delays.

B. Lupini stated that if a re-design is implemented, the schools would have to re-consider relocating to Old Lincoln School (OLS) this July. Moving in July under this scenario would mean three years at OLS, which is not desirable. The schools would have added transportation costs which are not reimbursable. On the other hand, owing to increased enrollments, another classroom will be needed for students in school year 2010/11, and there is no more room at Runkle. He also expressed concern that changing the design now would mean a whole new public process and other neighbors might not be happy with the proposals, which may put the project in much the same place it is now.

H. Warren stated that he is not in favor of the proposal to study re-design.

In response to a question, J. Dopazo Gilbert provided a scenario of what might happen in the event of an appeal of the ZBA decision. Once a written decision is provided, the appeal period is twenty days. In her opinion, the Town has a strong case. Even if remanded to the ZBA to address zoning questions such as “harmony”, the Dover Amendment would apply. A “de novo” trial would be held in which the court would take into consideration “reasonableness”. The plaintiffs would need to show how they could bring the project closer to the requirements of the Town By-Laws while still delivering the program needed by the School. She felt that in order to modify the “special permit” to accommodate a re-design all neighbors within 300 feet radius of the school would need to sign off so as to assure it could move forward.

K. Goldstein feels the process of involving the neighbors needs to continue, but it should happen within the framework of the existing design in terms of screening, plantings, fenestration and roof lines, for example. He is sufficiently convinced the re-design ideas will cost more money, result in delays, be worse programmatically and may result in other problems with a different set of neighbors.

A. Hummel stated she has serious concerns as to the utility of the proposed re-design regardless of cost and expressed confidence in the current design and the process that led up to it.

P. Friedman acknowledged the involvement of Town elected officials as evidence that this is being taken seriously. She expressed deep dissatisfaction with the architect and felt that they do not have a productive attitude. She feels there is still a window of opportunity to have discussions and has yet to see a compromise with the Dean Road abutters.

R. Tackeff stated the Dean Road neighbors have legal standing and noted they had no official involvement in the Runkle Building Committee. He asked for further information as how an appeal would play out.

In response, J. Dopazo Gilbert stated a trial would take 2-3 years and would happen either in Norfolk Superior Court or Land Court. There would be discovery, depositions, etc. During this time, the project could proceed at risk if the MSBA and Town wish to do so.

N. Daly reminded all attendees that the membership of the Runkle Building Committee is consistent with the MSBA requirements for same.

M. Shepard stated he felt the architect has done a good job on the project to date and that there is not likely to be found a design that would meet all of the needs of all of the stakeholders. Sound and fair compromises have been made, yielding the best design possible.

C. Ellis stated his satisfaction with the process to date and lamented the tone and implications of some that the process has been less than fair.

N. Daly polled all the voting members and found no support for recommending the architects proposal dated 18 February 2010 for studying one re-design option be forwarded to the Building Commission, School Committee and Board of Selectmen for approval.

Topic: Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Runkle School Building Committee is Friday 12 March 2010 at 8:30 a.m. in the Selectmen's Conference Room, 6th Floor, Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Tony Guigli
Project Director