

Town of Millis

Elementary School Building Committee

Meeting Minutes of Thursday July 14, 2016

Call to Order: ESBC Chairman, Wayne Klocko, called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

Meeting Attendees:

Elementary School Building Committee Voting Members

Wayne Klocko (Chairman), Denise Gibbons, Diane Jurmain

Elementary School Building Committee Non-Voting Members

Steven Catalano (School Committee)

BOS Representatives

Catherine C. MacInnes, James Neville

Compass Project Management Representatives

Jeff D'Amico, Tim Bonfatti

Millis Police Representative

Sgt. Christopher Soffayer

Tappe Architects Representative

Matt Barnhart

Traffic Engineer

Fayssal Hussein (VP- Nitsch Engineering)

The Elementary School Building Committee members introduced themselves and explained that the purpose of this meeting is to address the concerns of neighbors of the proposed new elementary school. These concerns were outlined in a petition and letter that was submitted to the selectmen and school committee.

A presentation of issues identified by the neighbors followed introductions.

The ESBC decision making process was reviewed. Public outreach meetings were held to gain input. Twelve different options on 4 different sites were considered. Staying in the Town Park area saves \$3-5 million, so those options moved to the top of the list. The options were further narrowed down by site constraints and the fact that an add/reno would not cost less and would require major compromises during construction and in the finished product. This left options B & C. At the June 15th ESBC Meeting after a presentation of the options and review of a color coded matrix of evaluation criteria, everyone in the room was polled for their opinion. Option C was selected unanimously by voting members, non-voting members and the audience. There was no mention of any concerns with Option C at that time. The voting members moved forward with a motion to select Option C as the preferred option.

Traffic Impacts were discussed by Fayssal Hussein, VP of Nitsch Engineering, who explained that he has 32 years of experience and has worked with many schools. He works independently from the project team and architect. The MSBA requires a two-step process in regards to traffic. One study during

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feasibility and a more in-depth study once the project gets going. The job of the traffic engineer in this situation is to look at the pros and cons of each site and provide a recommendation to the architect.

Option C was the preferred option based on traffic. Park Road would be the main entrance to the school in both options, B and C. The Main Street signal would convert from a crosswalk only signal to a full traffic light. Sidewalks and pedestrian safety would be improved at Park Road and Main Street. The possibility exists for restricted access to McCabe and Monroe during school hours.

Neighbors at the meeting expressed concern about the traffic study, thinking that the numbers sounded low and asked for the specific dates/times that the study was done.

The traffic impacts for McCabe, Monroe and Plain Street according to the engineer were discussed. Primary access would be through an improved Park Road and secondary access would be through MS/HS which should lessen the impact on McCabe and Monroe. Plain and Main Streets will see less than 100 cars added.

Additional concerns about parking lots and lighting were addressed. Parking lot lighting would be limited to the main parking lot, the ball field parking would not be lit. The main parking lot would only be lit on nights of school events. Low impact lighting would be used so that no light would migrate off-site. First base parking lot could be eliminated.

Cost Impacts are hard to determine 10% into the design phase. Option B looks to be 1 ½% more expensive than Option C at this point. That is a difference of approximately \$500,000.

Flooding was raised as an issue by neighbors. There is no evidence of flooding on the C site, the design would meet MADEP standards to control peak storms.

Question was raised about a potential vernal pool on site that would need a buffer if determined to be one.

Basketball and tennis courts would need to be relocated and neighbors expressed concerns about not having those available for the 2-3 year construction process. The ESBC will investigate a temporary basketball court during construction, but tennis matches would have to be scheduled off site somewhere until the project is complete.

The ESBC invited neighbors to come to the podium express their concerns. Concerns were again raised over the traffic study and current traffic situation. Suggestions were made to offer an incentive to parents to put their children on the bus as a way to lessen traffic. It was suggested that the fill from the knoll could be sold should the school be moved to that location in order to make up some of the cost of going with Option B.

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Neighbors have taken steps to try to have the wetland area certified as a vernal pool with the DEP and have spoken with David Linsky about their concerns on Option C as a whole.

Kathi Smith, representing the abutters, asked for the cost estimates of the various options and Wayne Klocko said that they would be made available.

Cathy MacInnes asked the ESBC if they would be willing to reconsider the preferred option that will be presented to the MSBA. Wayne Klocko stated that the committee would be amenable to reconsidering the option when the entire committee can be present.

Adjournment

Wayne Klocko made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 p.m. The motion was seconded by Denise Gibbons and passed unanimously.

Submitted by:

Kimberly Borst
Elementary School Building Committee Secretary
Town of Millis