Winthrop Sun Transcript

385 Broadway

Revere, MA 02151

April 2, 2013

Dear Editor,

Thanks for providing us the opportunity to provide an update to the citizens of Winthrop regarding the ongoing school building project process in which we are engaged with the Massachusetts School Building Authority. We have reached the end of the “feasibility phase” with our submission of the Preferred Schematic Report in February through the able assistance of our project manager, Skanska U.S.A. and our designers, HMFH. In this report the Winthrop School Building Assistance Committee, after holding numerous meetings engaged with the design team, conducting input sessions and conducting a survey of residents, reached a conclusion about which design type of project should be our “preferred option.”

 MSBA has taken the time to review our report and remarked positively about the thoroughness of the report and its adherence to MSBA guidelines as well as extending compliments to our project manager and designer for their economy of design, keeping the district’s educational plan closely in mind. MSBA has taken the time to review our report and invited the district and design team to present at their Facilities Assessment Subcommittee meeting on March 20th. And most recently, MSBA acknowledged its support of our preferred option to move on to the schematic design phase, “Option B,” a new combined middle school/high school for grades 6-12 on the site of the current high school.

 Winthrop is represented in this school project by a dedicated group of twenty-one citizens and employees of the town (appointed under the rules of the Winthrop Town Charter) who meet twice monthly, usually the first and third Thursdays of the month at 6 p.m. Our usual meeting location is the Arthur T. Cummings School Multi-purpose Room. Our agendas are posted in advance of our meeting at Winthrop Town Hall and on the town’s online calendar. The public is always welcome to sit in on our meetings. Many who are unable to attend meetings have asked how to catch up with our process. We are fortunate to have most of our meetings videotaped and aired on channel 15 by our video students under the direction of WHS’s video teacher. Furthermore, our submissions to MSBA contain the crux of the work done by the district, the town, the School Building Assistance Committee, the design team and our elected officials whose attention to certain items is required. Two lengthy submissions have been made thus far in furtherance of the project: the *Preliminary Design Program* (PDP) in October of 2012 and the *Preferred Schematic Report* (PSR) in February of 2013. Access to these reports may be made by checking the School Dept Website: [www.winthrop.k12.ma.us](http://www.winthrop.k12.ma.us) and clicking on the documents section of the School Building Assistance Page. For those desiring to read a hard-copy of these submissions, reference copies are available at the Winthrop Public Library as well as at the SBAC secretary’s office in Winthrop Town Hall, Room B-2 (school registration office), during office hours. Our meeting minutes, now posted within a week of approval, will give interested citizens insight into the reasons for decisions made during the work of the committee.

 Winthrop has been embarking on this project since filing a *Statement of Interest* in 2006, adhering to the process outlined by the MSBA and taking advantage of any and all opportunities for our town’s educational buildings. It’s a very exciting opportunity for our community to move forward with a 21st Century learning environment for our middle and high school students. The process is not an easy one; in fact it is very time consuming and complicated. But the School Building Assistance Committee feels that the time commitment is well worth it to further Winthrop’s educational goals for the future. We urge you to read our submissions to MSBA which contain much of the process completed to date. The SBAC is in the process of developing additional materials to assist the townspeople in understanding the project in more concise form, including the benefits for our public school district and the impact to taxpayers and citizens. Before some of these materials can be finalized, the process as mandated by MSBA must be followed as we enter the Schematic Design Phase. At completion of this phase, MSBA will determine whether Winthrop will be granted additional, discretionary reimbursement points (in addition to the 54.16% base reimbursement points for eligible costs), and which costs it deems ineligible for reimbursement.

 We expect to have our next submission, Schematic Design Submittal, delivered to MSBA by June 13th in anticipation that MSBA will vote on our design at their scheduled board meeting on July 31, 2013. As soon as approval for the project is obtained, a date will be determined for a Fall election to include a ballot question to ascertain Winthrop citizens’ financial support of the project through at Debt Exclusion vote.

 As the School Building Assistance Committee proceeds at an determined pace to meet our mandatory deadlines in the process, we invite the public to tune into the process, whether it’s by attending meetings of the School Building Assistance Committee, watching video broadcasts of our meetings or reading up on our decisions and progress with our partner, the Massachusetts School Building Authority, whose mission, according to its website is “to partner with Massachusetts communities to support the design and construction of educationally-appropriate, flexible, sustainable, and cost-effective public school facilities.” Join in as our community makes decisions for the future of education.

John Macero, Winthrop Superintendent of Schools

David Dockendorf, Co-Chair Winthrop School Building Assistance Committee

Mary Lou Osborne, Co-Chair Winthrop School Building Assistance Committee