

Presentation Regarding the Renovation of the Salem School, 8 May 2009

Note: This was not a formal meeting of the Building Committee. Also, there was not a quorum of Committee members present for the presentation and discussion. These minutes are posted for informational purposes only.

Present: State Sen. Andrea Stillman, State Rep. Ed Jutila, First Selectman Bob Ross, Bob Appleby, Dick Asafaylo, Chuck Boos, Steve Buck, Maryann Casciano, Scott Gordon, Donna Leake, Jay Maziarz, Denise Orsini, Dinis Pimentel, Jim Sperry, Bill Weinschenker.

Dinis Pimentel stated that the purpose of this meeting was to describe for Bob Ross, Senator Stillman and Representative Jutila the concepts for renovations at the school. This is necessary, as the Town will be requesting three waivers from the State in order to make this project financially viable.

The Building Committee has three initiatives: to come up with the design concepts; to get support from the legislature for the waivers; and if that passed, to get the information out to the Town to reach a successful referendum.

Chuck Boos of Kaestle Boos began the power point presentation. The first slide showed the current building configuration, defining when additions had been made.

The second slide showed the proposed upper level floor plan, with the areas for light renovation, and areas for major/new renovation. To take into account security concerns, all administrative offices are moved to the front end of the building. The only entrance during the school day is via the front door, which accesses only the administrative area; doors leading to the elementary and middle school wings are kept locked to the outside. The doors remain available for emergency exit. The 1940 portion will need to be demolished completely as it cannot be economically renovated to code.

The third slide showed the proposed lower level floor plan, with a music room where the stage currently exists and a new lobby between the two sections. There would not be a stage in the renovated plan.

There is a need to improve fire safety exiting and ADA accessibility. For this, three new stairwells have been included. Sen. Stillman asked: is there outside access to the stairways? Yes; with locked doors, with fire safety bolts. She then asked if there would be security cameras. Yes; and the Board of Education plans to “ramp up” security.

Jim Sperry discussed the next slide, the Conceptual Site Plan. He noted the separated drop-off area and independent bus loop, and the parking lot extended into the current gravel area. This prevents students from having to cross the bus line to reach the current parking lot. This would also allow a large play area on the north side of the building.

Rep. Jutila asked about this saying that the bus drop-off was “dimensionally” good. This means: that they have tested the area graphically and there is enough room for the buses to turn around.

Chuck Boos said they will work out the final details on how to make the renovations while students are still in the building. Initial concept plans have already been developed with the administration and eliminate the need for portables and nearly \$1M from the budget – while still maintaining use of the gym and multi-purpose room/café.

He then showed the elevation slide. They will need to place a ½” pitch roof where possible in order to meet state code; and proper fenestration will be required to assure adequate light and air from outside into the classrooms.

The building area waiver is needed because the building, as it has been constructed over the years, can no longer conform to current rules and regulations and renovation is far less expensive than complete demolition and rebuilding.

The second waiver is for weighted age of the building. In order to qualify for the funding, the weighted age of the building must be at least 30 years. If the 1994 addition is considered, the age is less than this; but since no renovations are taking part in that area, they are requesting that it not be included in the weighted age, making that figure just over 36 years, by excluding the 1994 from the renovate as new building scope.

The third waiver requested is to allow Salem to apply under the ‘08-‘09 fiscal year instead of ‘09-‘10, due to reimbursement rates and when the bonding would take place. There exists a precedent for this. Sen. Stillman said she will check on this.

Chuck Boos noted that Salem does not often ask for State money.

Comments:

Maryann Casciano: this presentation will give them something to tell the people in town and the parents.

The group then took a tour of the building.

On return, Sen. Stillman asked about energy savings. Dinis Pimentel said there would be some green technology. The renovation would utilize natural light and heat recovery units to transfer heat from stale air to incoming fresh air. The Town has also applied for stimulus dollars to provide a Solar PV system to offset the electrical usage. The project opted to not provide cooling, in most of the building, instead of using a geothermal system. Spot cooling where required is provided instead.

Post-meeting in Conference Room

Present: First Selectman Bob Ross, Dick Asafaylo, Chuck Boos, Steve Buck, Donna Leake, Dinis Pimentel, Bill Weinschenker.

Dinis P. said he has been in touch with Webster Bank, which can assist with municipal funding at no cost, and work with the Selectman's office. (There may be other sources to go to as well.)

A bond attorney is important to get the language right, and for working on the referendum, as it would have to go to the State Board of Education.

Bob R. would like to put together a team of three people from the Board of Finance to work on this. There was discussion about reviewing past referendums; but the problem is, regulations have changed. They will not know the details of the funding until after the referendum. A short-term "bonded anticipation note" can be put in place until final costs are determined. Dinis P. will give Bob R. information on his contact at Webster Bank.

Bob R. noted that Senator Stillman seems to be well on our side, so we may be solid on getting the waivers.

There will be an issue with the security of the kids while the construction is going on. Chuck B. stated that background checks can be done on the workers, at a cost of \$40,000; and he said he has started to sketch out how the classrooms/construction problem will be worked out, so that the construction and the active school space are separated.

Dinis P. said the current "PAC" also includes Steve B., Denise Orsini, Maryann Casciano, and Bob Appleby. They hope to get about two more on board.

There is a need to disseminate information to the people of the Town. Any information contained in flyers published with taxpayer monies or place on the town website must be informational only; they must in no way be promotional, thus the need to isolate the informational group from the tax payers dollars. Bob R. will discuss with John Butts the various rules regarding this effort.

There will have to be informational meetings with the various groups in town: Lions, Moms, Seniors, political parties, etc. Steve B. noted they need to find out what kind of equipment they will need for these presentations – overheads, etc.

The Seniors have a luncheon at the school on Tuesday, so Chuck B. will give them a brief presentation. A caveat: the Seniors are fond of the oldest part of the building and its stonework, calling it the "Big School" from when they moved over from their one-room schoolhouse; and that is the part that will need to be demolished. Chuck B. said he'll promote re-using the stone in some other fashion.