

School Building Committee Meeting and Community Forum
Ipswich Town Hall Room A, 25 Green Street
January 11, 2018 – 7:00 p.m.

Acronyms used within:

OPM: Owner's Project Manager
SBC: School Building Committee
SC: School Committee

MSBA: Massachusetts School Building Authority
SPED: Special Education
DESE: Dept. of Elem. & Secondary Education

Note:

The School Committee (SC) met concurrently with the School Building Committee (SBC); however, these minutes only address the SBC meeting.

1. Call to Order

7:10 p.m.

Attendees: Jeff Anderson, Dr. Brian Blake, Joanne Cuff, Sheila Halloran, Barry Hopping, Sarah Player, and Chub Whitten.

Also Attending: Robert Bell, Daniel Colli, and Dawn Guarriello of Perkins Eastman, Architect. Paul Queeney of PMA Consultants, Owner's Project Manager.

Not Attending: Robin Crosbie and Bill Hodge.

2. Opening Remarks

The Chairman noted that the SBC's review of the special education (SPED) plan will take place at the next building committee meeting to be held on 1/24/18. The SBC will authorize submittal of the SPED plan to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) who will review and approve the SPED plan and the building spaces that are developed to carry out the plan.

3. Citizens' Queries

At the start of the meeting, a citizen inquired about the cost of the building and if the design would be affordable. The citizen was told that from the start of design efforts are made to maintain reasonable costs and that if estimated costs exceed the targeted cost, a process called value engineering would identify reductions necessary to bring the estimate back to within the budget. A value engineering review would consider the costs of building materials, systems, and finishes but would not include any cuts to the education plan.

Another citizen acknowledged the ongoing design consultation with the committees, school staff, and the public and advised that administrators of the school be consulted about the operation of the school. The citizen also expressed concern over pods, such as those at the Middle/High School, and suggested that pods could create tripping hazards and that activities at the pods could disturb nearby classes.

Throughout the meeting, and particularly during the design update portion of the meeting, citizens were encouraged to ask questions and make comments about the developing design; the following matters were addressed:

- Interest in screening the rooftop units from view and how the lowering of the roof lines in the front of the building influences the screening.
- Interest in outside areas for students to congregate and providing these areas with areas with appropriate furnishings.
- Recommendation for exterior façade materials that are durable and have a history of successful use. The discussion included a review and comparison of masonry and composite building panels. Also reviewed were Hardie planks, phenolic materials, and siding that imitates the look of shingles and clapboards.

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- A citizen expressed interest in renovating the existing Winthrop and Doyon Schools rather than building a single new school to replace the two existing schools and suggested that abandoning the existing Winthrop School would tear at the urban fabric of the community. A second citizen recommended proceeding with the current plan for a single new town-wide school and warned that abandoning the current single-school plan could leave the town with two old buildings for a long time.
- The architect noted how the educational program and the building being developed to implement the program reflect ground breaking design.
- A citizen, with a perspective of an outsider, expressed his opinion that the two-school model promotes a toxic division and the single-school model, in a new building with a modern design and feel, is the appropriate way to proceed.
- A citizen appreciated the context of the coastal waterway, tidal pools, and beach that are ever-changing like waves and encouraged emulating this through curved lines in the exterior of the building. A committee member suggested that curves can be implemented into the façade of the building rather than through the roofline and the architect agreed.
- A citizen with experience at a school in a nearby community expressed concern that accumulating snow and ice on the canopy could fall and require areas below the canopy to be cordoned off.
- A citizen recommended that the materials selected for the tactile façade be cleanable.
- The use of exterior louvers were discussed the louvers at Essex Tech were noted as an example.

4. Design Update

Dawn Guariello, Robert Bell, and Daniel Colli of Perkins Eastman, the project architect, reviewed the developing design and emphasized recent adjustments to the exterior of the building made in response to citizens' and committee concerns and comments about elevation views, the scale and volume of the building elements, how the children will experience the building, and compatibility with the context and character of Ipswich. The design team's presentation included illustrative slides that will be made available on the Building Committee's web site. The following is a summary of the design update:

Scale of building too large: This was addressed through lowering the roof plane of the cafeteria by four feet, lowering the roof plane of the central administrative area by six feet, and lowering the roof plane of the media center by six feet. A covered canopy in front of the building was added to break down the scale in the front of the building.

Building is too rectilinear, doesn't feel soft yet: These concerns are being addressed through landscaping and the design of spaces in front of the building, including the curved shape of the canopy, bio retention basins, plantings, a parent pavilion, and play areas.

Building is too vertical: These are primarily addressed through adjustments to the arrangements of the windows, the rear entry overhang, and the placement and orientation of siding materials.

Concern over how students feel and experience the building: This is addressed through the canopy in front of the building, a solar oculus in the canopy, canopy shading patterns and connections to the sky, a learning wall, and interactive facades at lobby area. The eight foot high canopy is considered appropriate for elementary aged children.

Doesn't feel like Ipswich: The context and character of Ipswich are addressed through the outdoor learning concept and the experiential pathway through the building that consider the following attributes of Ipswich: the coastal area and tidal estuary; the midland meadows, agriculture, and

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wetlands; the urban fabric of the town center; the upland woodlands and outer residential area; and the Ipswich River that flows through the town.

The Superintendent of Schools thanked Perkins Eastman for their receptiveness to comments from the public, the SBC, and the SC, he noted how prior work is being built upon, and he expressed interest in seeing the next developments in the design. The Chair of the School Committee complimented Perkins Eastman's focus on the children, with building spaces that flow from the education plan at a scale suitable to elementary school children. The Chairman confirmed with the architect that the design is sufficiently developed for the estimators to price and he expressed appreciation for all of the work that has been done.

5. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the SBC will be held on January 24, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in Room A of the Town Hall. The meeting will include a review SPED plan and approval to submit the plan to the DESE. The architect's design update will emphasize a review of the developing interior design of the school.

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Paul Queeney
PMA Consultants LLC
Owner's Project Manager