

28 October 2015

## MEETING NOTES

**RE: BUILDING LEVEL PLANNING COMMITTEE #13**  
**STRATFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA**  
**31406600**



2121 WARD PLACE, NW, 4TH FLOOR  
WASHINGTON, DC 20037  
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**Meeting Date & Time:** 26 October, 7:00-9:00 PM  
**Location:** H-B Woodlawn Library

### Attendees:

#### BLPC

Graham McBride – Asst. Principal H-B (Not Present) – Doug Taylor Proxy  
Karen Gerry – Principal, Stratford program (Not Present)  
Renee Harber – Asst. Principal Swanson (Not Present) – Doug Taylor Proxy  
Carol Burger – H-B Staff  
Kathleen Meagher – Director, Secondary Education – Doug Taylor Proxy  
Eve Reed – Cherrydale Representative (Not Present) – Ray Sendejas Proxy  
Ray Sendejas – Cherrydale Representative (Not Present)  
Dot Green – Donaldson Run Representative  
Susan Cunningham – Donaldson Run Representative – BLPC Chair  
Amanda Davis – Maywood Representative (Not Present)  
David Barish – Waverly Hills Representative  
Doug Taylor – Woodmont Civic Association  
Caroline Holt – Lyon Village Representative  
Deb Pearson – PTA Taylor  
Jen Thompson – PTA Glebe  
Rohini Chopra – PTA ASF  
Whytni Kernodle – PTA Key (Not Present)  
Joseph Delogu – PTA WMS (Not Present)  
Michael Henry – PTA SMS  
Laura Saul Edwards – PTA H-B Woodlawn  
Jeff Turner – FAC Representative  
Robert Dudka – HALRB Representative  
Charles Craig – HALRB Representative  
Rebecca Ballo – CPHD staff – Historic Preservation

#### APS Staff

John Chadwick – Assistant Superintendent  
Ben Burgin – Asst. Director, Design and Construction  
Bill Herring – Project Manager, Design & Construction (Project Point of Contact)

#### County Staff

Diane Probus - DPR  
Jane Kim – DES  
Michele Stahlhut - CPHD

#### Other Attendees

Richard Giza, neighbor  
Dana Milburn, neighbor

#### Design Team

Dan Curry – Quinn Evans Architects  
Julia Siple – Quinn Evans Architects  
Jim Elliott – Toole Design Group  
Alia Anderson – Toole Design Group

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This was the thirteenth meeting of the Stratford Middle School Building Level Planning Committee (BLPC). The BLPC is appointed by the Arlington School Board to assist the Facilities and Operations staff and advise the School Board on each major capital / renewal project.

Discussion points are summarized below. This summary presents Quinn Evans Architects' understanding of discussions, decisions, and recommended actions. We request that all attendees review these Meeting Notes and notify APS with recommended revisions or questions.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- a. John Chadwick opens the meeting by summarizing the School Board schedule and budget directive.
  - i. The School Board has directed the project team and BLPC to consider the project budget to be 31.3 M
  - ii. The Concept Design will be presented to the School Board on November 5 for information and November 16 for action.
  - iii. The Historic Designation will also be on this schedule assuming a few final items can be coordinated in the Design Guidelines including:
    1. Reference to the high road, expanded lower parking lot, and aligning the schedule of the anticipated certificate of appropriateness with this project's timeline.
  - iv. It is important to recognize Conceptual versus Schematic level design considerations. It used to be that the design was not presented to the School Board until Schematic Design.
- b. Caroline Holt voiced concern at the perceived lack of communication and input over the last month. Later in the meeting it was realized that Caroline Holt had been accidentally dropped from the communication thread. Bill Herring & Susan Cunningham will confirm all BLPC members are included on future communication.
- c. Susan Cunningham: Staff was directed by school board to craft solutions that met the budget. BLPC has indicated displeasure with this process and removing the BLPC input from this step.
  - i. Given this scenario the BLPC is doing it's best to stay on schedule and provide a preferred option with recommendation of what else should be brought back into project in addition to what is budgeted.
  - ii. Both the Stratford and Wilson projects were given the directive to cut costs following the estimates in August.
- d. Public Comment
  - i. Richard Giza, neighbor: Spoke representing neighbors along N. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street. Opposes the high road for the following reasons: impact to tree canopy, enlargement to lower parking lot and its impact to tree canopy, movement of the field, parents should not be encouraged to drive, contrary to Arlington policies of "car-free diet", and cost.

## 2. RECENT MEETINGS

- a. Dan Curry (QEA) summarized the BLPC 12 meeting on 10/13.
  - i. Straw poll indicated preference for the West option and High Road. Terrace and East are off the table.
  - ii. Several BLPC members no longer prefer the Link scheme now that the program has reduced and the atrium removed.
  - iii. Members of the BLPC involved in student instruction largely feel the program reductions are manageable; however all would like to see some of the program recaptured if possible.
  - iv. The interpretive exhibit/approach is a priority that should be highlighted in any scheme.



- v. BLPC conducted an online poll and survey following BLPC 12.
- b. Dan Curry summarized the PFRC 6 meeting on 10/15.
  - i. Straw poll indicated preference of West Road and High Road.
  - ii. Discussion focused on whether the high road is needed; close majority vote decided it was important due to the nature of this particular site.
  - iii. Additional issues PFRC continues to be concerned about include: Vacation Lane improvements, tree impact of scheme, impact to the RPA/increase of impervious area, impact to the park and fields, and historic preservation.
- c. Dan Curry summarized a meeting with APS instructional supervisors on 10/21:
  - i. QEA and APS design staff met with APS instructional staff to review project status, program goals, and options for program consolidation.
  - ii. Discussed opportunities for expanding the Media Center to include flexible and shared use spaces for other department use. These could include: Reading, Health, World Language, and Testing Rooms.
  - iii. Gym spaces would benefit from additional storage and consolidating office spaces.
  - iv. The current field drains poorly; this should be addressed in the project.
  - v. Further conversations with APS instructional staff will continue through Schematic Design.

### 3. PROGRAM

- a. Dan Curry (QEA) reviewed the program recommendations for reducing the proposed program of the addition from 45k gsf to 35k gsf – area reductions to meet the budget.
  - i. There will be further opportunity to recapture and adjust program in Schematic Design.
  - ii. BLPC feedback on program priorities is important.

### 4. COST

- a. A cost slide was presented but was unclear on how the site costs were being split between the APS budget, joint fund, and community improvements.
  - i. UPDATE: APS revised the figures and shared with BLPC chair on 10/27.
- b. Base cost assumptions:
  - i. Current renovation costs represent only what is needed to meet the program and make the scheme work.
  - ii. Reduced new addition to 35,000 gsf from 45,000 gsf; program
  - iii. All cost numbers are total project costs including APS design staff, escalation, market factors and soft cost markup
- c. Doug Taylor asked why the sf cost seems to be lower now than earlier in the project.
  - i. Julia Siple responded that over the course of the Concept development costs have continued to be refined. One reason for the lower sf cost is the reduced estimate of the renovation scope.

### 5. TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

- a. Jim Elliott (Toole) presented key takeaways, comparison of the High Road and Vacation Lane Only options, review of Vacation Lane recommendations, and other site safety and traffic improvements.
- b. Toole Design Group has no significant reservations about either the High Road or the Vacation Lane Only options from a transportation perspective.
- c. Recommendations for both options include design changes aimed at improving Ped/bike access and safety and bus and car access.



- d. Alia Anderson (Toole): almost all schools have less than optimal conditions. But there are measures we can design to mitigate these issues.
- e. Vacation Lane Recommendations:
  - i. Continuous sidewalks on both sides of Vacation Lane.
  - ii. Curb extensions to shorten the pedestrian crossing distance and improve driver yielding.
  - iii. Rapid flashing beacon and crossing guard.
  - iv. Raised intersection and curb radius reductions to improve visibility and slow down traffic.
  - v. Indicate pedestrian priority at driveway intersections.
    - 1. Jane Kim (APS) indicated this is the County standard.
  - vi. Parking on alternate sides of street to allow for better movement of two-way vehicle traffic and traffic calming because of the non-linear path.
  - vii. Curb lane that can be used by cars for drop-off in the morning and buses in the afternoon.
- f. Beyond Vacation Lane
  - i. Provide a new sidewalk on south side of Old Dominion and a traffic or hawk signal to allow for safe pedestrian crossing.
- g. Susan Cunningham: There are 7 driveways at the east end of Vacation Lane, how do we make movement in and out of these driveways safe?
  - i. Alia Anderson: Analysis shows there will not be queue backup at Military. The improved two-way traffic helps the traffic flow from getting backed up. There is a more concentrated arrival and departure period.
- h. Alia Anderson: Safety is a paramount concern and will be improved in all options. The next steps of the project will refine the curb cut locations and curb radii, conduct a transportation study and Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA).
- i. Drop-off and pick-up at Discovery is going really well. Students and community are monitoring themselves to reduce number of car trips. Discovery has a two lane traffic loop similar to our proposed high road drop-off.

## 6. GROUP DISCUSSION

- a. John Chadwick states that there are a number of constraints on this project between the neighborhood concerns, resource protections, HALRB, and tree impact. With these constraints it is likely everyone will leave feeling a little dissatisfied.
- b. Caroline Holt indicated that the preservation of the space and view in the south courtyard is likely going to get relocatables again. Feels like it is disappointing to avoid building there now and then see relocatables go back in.
- c. Discussion on whether or not a final vote should be conducted this evening.
  - i. Susan Cunningham indicates the timeline is tight
  - ii. Carol Burger comments that the BLPC does not need to be unanimous.
- d. Michael Henry comments that the West option is a more efficient building because the reduced Link footprint requires more circulation space to connect it with the existing building.
- e. Deb Pearson indicates support for the West option with the Library relocated to the new heart of school space.
- f. Carol Burger feels like trying to locate the heart of school at one end of a linear building does not work nearly as well as the heart of school arrangement in the Link scheme where it can be at the center of the building.
- g. Voting on preferred scheme. Susan Cunningham and Dot Green tallied the votes for each member. Some members voted by proxy. 4 inactive BLPC members did not participate in the vote.
- h. Results for West versus Link vote: 15 in favor of West, 4 in favor of Link.
- i. High road versus Vacation Lane only access.
  - i. Susan Cunningham expressed the opinion that the Vacation Lane only option does not adequately address safety.



1. Caroline Holt asked if this was what Toole concluded. Alia confirmed that Toole's position is that both options will be able to adequately address safety.
- ii. John Chadwick indicated schedule concern for a Vacation Lane only solution because it seems likely from what he has heard that members of the community would hold up the process.
- iii. No BLPC members want the Low Road option.
- iv. Results for High Road versus Vacation Lane only vote: 13 in favor of High Road, 6 in favor of Vacation Lane only (no-road).
- j. Additional items to recommend to the School Board:
  - i. Susan Cunningham suggests "build once, build right" and that 35,000 sf may not be adequate.
  - ii. Online poll administered by Susan Cunningham tallied the BLPC's preference for items that could be recommended for additional funding.
    1. Historic Interpretation the highest priority
    2. Expanding the media center was the most common top priority.
    3. Expanding the gym was the second most common top priority.
  - iii. Jen Thompson indicated preference for a large media center and a second elevator.
  - iv. QEA will provide a budget for historic interpretive features.
    1. Design efforts for this will have a separate advisory group that includes members from HALRB, BLPC, and other relevant and interested groups.
    2. The budget will be separate from our base project. Opportunities for funding sources will be worked out further into the design.
  - v. Deb Pearson indicated her community has been advocating for increased gym capacity and spectator seating. Worried about seeing the Auditorium scheduled as a classroom and how this may conflict with stage setup for productions.
  - vi. Susan Cunningham: Expanding the cafeteria and media center should be further studied.
  - vii. David Barish: The size of the existing media center is inadequate, would like to see this enlarged. Also feels that a classroom for drama should be included.

**7. PUBLIC COMMENT**

- a. Dana Milburn: Community member with two boys that went through this school. Make sure the project is providing adequate common spaces to meet the needs of the whole child and allow for school celebrations.

**8. NEXT STEPS**

- a. BLPC to share letter for School Board
- b. The Concept Design will be presented to the School Board for information on Nov. 5 and for action on Nov. 16.

END OF MEETING NOTES