Facilities Optimization Committee

DRAFT special meeting minutes

April 27, 2022 7:00 PM

Via Zoom

Attendance: Gayle Weinstein, Rick Bertasi, Richard Wolf, David Felton, Tony Pesco, Rone Baldwin, Denise Harvey, Steve Ezzes, Ken Edgar, Tecton staff (Jeff Wyszynski, Antonia Chiaverella), Phillip Cross, Superintendent Wolak, members of the public.

Chairman Bertasi called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM

Approval of minutes: After clarification of wording, Mr. Edgar made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 16th and April 5th meetings. The motion was moved by Dr. Pesco and seconded by Ms. Harvey. The motion carried.[eliminate either Ken or Tony as the motion maker]

Discussion/Decision regarding the proposed options:

Mr. Bertasi opened the discussion regarding the preK-5 new building option on Revson field. Mr. Wyszynski created a “test fit” diagram showing what a pre-K to 5 would look like on Revson field. The topography is problematic. It would need to be primarily a 2 story structure with a loop road. Due to the tightness of the site, separate parent drop off and bus area could not be accommodated. There is also limited space for appropriate play areas directly behind the building. This option would also require modifications to the existing leaching fields. Mr. Wolf does not believe this is a suitable site for a new school. Mr. Edgar and Ms. Harvey agreed that the site would be too crowded. Ms. Wolak concurred.

Mr. Baldwin asked about a test fit analysis for pre-K-4 at WIS. Mr. Bertasi said that we have looked at a test fit for 4 grades at WIS and discussed various issues with adding space to accommodate 5 grades, but a test fit and analysis were not completed. Mr. Baldwin feels it is a gap in our analysis.

Ms. Weinstein said that the BoE discounted the 5-8 option. Mr. Baldwin said that they said it was “not preferable”, they did not rule it out. Redding and New Canaan have that grade configuration.

Mr. Wyszynski showed a “test fit” of a renovate as new Middle School. 45% of the space can be new for State reimbursement. When you are renovating a building as new, you try to maximize swing space. 593 students=about 100,000 sq ft. The conceptual plan shows a 2 story addition to create grade neighborhoods, and a new gym and cafeteria that is right sized for the population and flexible in use. It would also aim to fix site circulation and ADA access. The old gym could become a large multi purpose space. Administration offices could be relocated for better oversight and safety.

Renovate as New (RNV) means building a structure that lasts 30 years, addresses all capacity and educational needs today and in the future, and fixes all building systems such as water lines and code issues. It also gives you the ability to create more flexible and multiple use spaces and bring in natural daylight.

Mr. Felton asked why you can’t add a floor to WIS, but can add a floor to the Middle School? Mr. Wyszinski responded that the location where a 2nd floor would be added is new construction. Because of building load requirements, it is difficult to add an additional floor to an existing building.

Mr. Wyszinski presented a conceptual site plan for prek-2 at Hurlbutt. It included building a new 2 story 62,000 sq ft space for students, keeping the Senior Center in place and relocating annex employees to the building. It is a tight fit and the building would be close to the road. Ms. Weinstein asked if you could fit preK-2, annex employees and Senior Center in the existing Hurlbutt building. Mr Wyszinski said that nobody liked the idea of combining those uses in one building, nor does it fit all the requested program elements. Mr. Felton asked if Hurlbutt could be physically split so that the Senior Center and Town employees’ space are in a separate building from a preK-1 building. Mr. Bertasi said that if we separate a building, North House is the most logical. Mr. Wyszinski said that the space in not big enough, you would need an addition. Additionally, those classrooms are not sized for pre-K and Kindergarten, nor do they contain bathrooms, so 3 typical classrooms would turn into 2 Kindergarten classrooms.

Mr. Bertasi said the committee essentially eliminated options 1 and 3, and has been focusing on Options 2 and 2+ (renovate or renovate as new). Mr. Baldwin disagreed, and said that he thinks we should still consider Option 1. The question regarding grade configuration still remains. We also still need to resolve the North House deed restriction.

Ms. Weinstein asked Mr. Baldwin if he did any financial scenarios. He responded that he is waiting to get costs for the High School and the town buildings.

Mr. Bertasi said that the next step is for our committee to come to a consensus on a recommended solution(s) to the 3 major Boards. Ms. Weinstein feels the issue of grade configuration does not preclude this committee deciding on renovate or renovate like new options. Mr. Felton feels that we are missing the financial appetite from the community. He feels we should poll the community to get feedback now. Mr. Bertasi feels we need to get BoE feedback and budget implications from the BoF before having a conversation with the community.

Adjournment: At 8:30, Mr. Edgar made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Dr. Pesco and the meeting was adjourned.