

City Of Worcester
DOHERTY MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT

PUBLIC MEETING / SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

August 19, 2019 - 6:30-8:00 PM

The following Agenda items were presented and discussed;

- **Introduction:** Russ Adams (CoW) welcomed all attendees and gave a brief overview of the project. He introduced Katie Crockett (LPA) and she introduced all project team members, the Mayor, City Manager, School Superintendent and the Public Works Commissioner. She thanked those who attended. She noted that the School Building Committee would be meeting on September 9, 2019 to vote on the Preliminary Design Proposal (PDP) being presented today. The PDP includes three tasks; Alternate Site evaluation, Existing Site Evaluation and Educational Program development. Katie noted that this meeting will focus on the alternate sites. She stated that LPA has reviewed the existing building, addition/renovations, new construction on the current site and options for construction of a new school on other sites. She spoke about the diverse experience of LPA and their expertise in the City and around the State designing and building new schools on tight sites without interruption to student learning while construction is underway. She cited both the Nelson Place Elementary School and the South High School as examples where students occupied the existing school while new construction took place on the same site.

The Mayor then spoke thanking all for coming and that there would be no vote taken during the meeting and this was an informational session. He reiterated that this is the most important project being developed in the City and the school would be “State of the Art” quality no matter where it was built. He noted we are here to listen to the project team findings and to do the project right.

The City Manager thanked all for coming and noted the efforts of the State and City representatives and School Committee for making this project a reality. He also noted the unprecedented significance of two new high schools being built in the City. He acknowledged the hard work and expertise of LPA as the finest design team, along with Tishman as OPM, the School Superintendent and Doherty Memorial High School staff contributions to this project.

The School Superintendent spoke and thanked everyone for the collaborative efforts and noted the hard work by School Principal in moving the project along. She noted the excellent educational programming for the new school including four Chapter 74 programs and a future Advance Academy.

- **Feasibility Schedule:** Katie outlined the MSBA submission dates the project is working to achieve. The Preliminary Design Proposal (PDP) is the first phase and is due to be submitted to the MSBA on September 10, 2019. As the project moves along the Preferred Schematic Report (PSR) is due in December 2019. Then a Schematic Design phase of the project is scheduled to be submitted to the MSBA in July 2020 and she noted the occupancy for the new school is planned for the fall of 2024. She said the new school would be approximately 420,000 SF and enrollment of 1,670 students. She then introduced Rob Para (LPA) to present the site options.
- **Site Program:** Rob noted that the existing Doherty building is approximately 170,000 SF and the new building will be 4 stories and approximately 420,000 SF. The new building footprint is somewhere around 150-180,000 SF. Existing parking is 250 spaces and the new program will require about 400 parking spaces. In addition to parking, buses and parent drop off need to be included and the ideal area for this would be about 13 acres. The other program requirement for sport fields would ideally be another 13 acre parcel. Rob noted that none of the sites actually provide this area for the program and each site is being evaluated for best options.

Rob gave a brief overview of the process to identify possible building sites in the District. LPA looked at 10 acre sites or larger and categorized each and evaluated various factors for each and boiled down 6-8 sites to be considered. Further analysis of those sites narrowed down the possible options to three; the existing Doherty site, Chandler Magnet and Foley Stadium.

Doherty Memorial High School site: Rob explained that the site was approximately 20 acres yet only 12 acres was developed and there was no area to expand the site due to steep terrain. He noted the school was designed in the 60's and students use Foley Stadium for some of their sports programs. He also mentioned the idea of providing a shorter pathway for students to get to Foley Stadium. If the new building was on the Doherty site it would be placed on the existing playing fields while the students remain in the existing school during construction.

Foley Stadium site: Rob explained that the site was approximately 12 acres and flat. He noted that the existing stadium is heavily used by the City. He also noted there is an 84" diameter underground water culvert that runs through the site. The area is filled with 8ft to 14ft of coal ash that was placed on top of the swamp in that area. Beaver Brook Park is in the flood plain. To put the building at Foley stadium would require relocating the water culvert and placing the building on pile type foundations.

Chandler Magnet site: Rob explained that the site is approximately 22 acres, there are two streets to access the site (May and Chandler Streets) and there are some steep grade changes as well. Option 1 would design the new building on the existing site boundaries creating an elongated campus type plan and somewhat compromises the program. Option 2 would include adding land from the back yards of houses along May Street and taking a piece of land from the WSU Presidents house site. This option provides the parking and good drop off areas and several options for sport fields. Rob noted the existing Chandler Magnet school was a 1950's building and out of date.

Site Matrix: Rob presented the site evaluation rating matrix and Katie also elaborated on the scoring process. She noted that a perfect site would score 185 points the two best site options (Existing Doherty and Chandler Magnet with added land) score 130's. The presentation concluded and questions were asked.

Questions:

- When would construction start? Early 2022.
- Is there a Project Labor Agreement required? This is a Public project.
- Would you develop Beaver Brook Park along with Foley Stadium? Would need special permits.
- How is traffic impacted? All sites have similar traffic conditions, aim to get school traffic off the street and further study will be done in the next phase during the PSR.
- What will be done with the existing Doherty site if build elsewhere? Further study is required and review of Doherty deed restrictions.
- What would happen to students at Chandler Magnet? Students would be relocated back to their neighborhood school.
- How many students at Chandler Magnet? Approximately 500 students.
- What would happen to Chandler students in dual language programs? Students and programs would be moved together to the other schools.
- Will the existing parkland be touched? The Doherty property is hilly with approximately a 3:1 slope
- Can you build on the Doherty site? Yes, it is possible and the school will remain occupied for classes during construction if that is where the new school goes. All options are being reviewed as each site has limitations.
- What is the cost for underground parking and retaining walls? Will need to be further reviewed.
- Did you consider sites outside the Doherty district? Mandate to project team was to stay within the district.
- Will this presentation be online? Yes on both the school and city web sites.
- Looks like the Beaver Brook Park and Foley could meet all needs? These areas are used City wide and could not be dedicated to just Doherty use without extensive efforts to acquire park land.
- How would houses at Foley Stadium area be impacted? No land would be taken from the house lots. They would abutt the new school if built there.
- What about future student population growth? Design is trying to anticipate how spaces in the building would be used. Plan is for 1,670 students, for example 3-4 lunch sessions could be scheduled in the cafe for future growth.
- What are the Site exemptions? The MSBA has criteria for this.
- Who votes for this project? Officials are present at this meeting. The City Council authorizes funding, School Committee and School Building Committee vote on educational program.
- How did the rating on the matrix put Foley at 1 pt for item 3 (Staff and Student impact)? The rating is due to the extreme disruption to the use of City sports at the site.
- Could you use the WSU fields? This will need further review.

- What retaining walls are needed at Doherty? Not yet determined.
- On September 9th what is being reviewed? Presentation of sites shown tonight, no new added sites. Meeting will be held at the Doherty Memorial High School café at 6:30PM.
- One attendee noted that it would be good to consider the Chandler Magnet site to provide collaboration with WSU and the new school.
- Do any sites allow for future expansion? Will need further review and consideration.
- One attendee noted the Foley site was actually approximately 14.086 acres.
- Friends of Newton Hill will hold a site walk on Monday Aug. 26 at 6:30PM to review the location of the Doherty property line.
- LPA noted that any further concerns or questions can be via their web site or office.
- What about special programs? Building is designed to meet educational program as the first priority.

CLOSING:

Katie thanked everyone for coming and the meeting ended at 8:00PM.