

City Of Worcester
DOHERTY MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT

PUBLIC MEETING / SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
December 9, 2019 - 6:30-8:00 PM

The following Agenda items were presented and discussed;

- **Introduction:** Russ Adams (CoW) welcomed all attendees and thanked everyone for coming. He introduced the Steering Committee and noted that the School Building Committee would be meeting again on December 18, 2019 to vote on the Preferred Schematic Report (PSR). He introduced Katie Crockett (LPA) to start the presentation.
- **PSR Presentation:** Katie said this presentation is a review of the progress thus far on the PSR portion of the project. The PSR is scheduled to be submitted to the MSBA in December. The project team would then continue work on the Schematic Design which is anticipated to be completed in the summer of 2020. Early construction is scheduled to start in the summer of 2021. She said the team reviewed five options required by the MSBA which include Code Upgrade, Add/Reno, New Construction at Doherty site, Foley Stadium site and Chandler Magnet site plus added land. Work included gathering information on each site, traffic patterns, surveys and budgets that were all used in the analysis for the PSR. The Steering committee has recommended construction on the existing Doherty site for the Preferred solution.
- The project team was tasked to look at various concerns such as construction impact on students, Athletic fields, use of Park lands, existing school use and land acquisition to name a few. The enrollment for the new school is going to be 1,670 students and will include an Advanced Academy and four Chapter 74 programs. We anticipate a 420,000 SF school which is more than double in size of the existing building.
- A perfect 26-acre flat site would be ideal, unfortunately there are none available in the City. We will continue to review parking requirements during the Schematic Design process. In addition to the three sites under consideration, we also reviewed adjacent city property and parks to possibly help augment the athletic program.
- The three options at the existing Doherty site on Highland Street include new construction which will not cause any disruption of the existing Park, puts the playing field on the surface, proposed parking under a portion of the building, designed to step into the site and is considerably lower than the summit of Newton Hill. Katie also stated that none of the existing paths or disc golf at the Park are impacted. The Code upgrade process is a benchmark requirement from the MSBA and would be very expensive, would not meet the program and requires temporary classrooms. The Add/Reno is an inefficient plan, similar in cost to new construction and requires parking under the playing field. Katie introduced Rob Para of LPA to discuss phasing.

- **Phasing Complexities:** Rob stated the construction on the existing Doherty site would be a phased process while the students remain in session throughout construction. Early site work is anticipated to start in the summer of 2021. The construction fencing of the new site area would be first and then the added paving around the existing school to generate temporary parking during construction. The introduction of a CM at Risk Contractor early in the project of this type is beneficial to help with logistics, black out delivery schedules to avoid impact on the students while in school. The first phase would be the completion of the new school, demolition of the existing school building and construct partial parking for a fall 2024 occupancy. The second phase would be completion of all parking, landscaping and athletic fields. The use of vegetated retaining walls is proposed and trees along Highland Street that come down could be replicated during the landscaping phase.
- Foley Stadium site is located on an old swamp site and the stadium was built in the 1920's. The soils are very poor and not advantageous for building construction requiring piles to support the new school. The area is a dense neighborhood setting and the fields are highly utilized by the whole district. Beaver Brook Park across the street is also in a flood plain. Those fields were reorganized in 2006 to help avoid flooding impacts and the area is best used for fields only.
- Chandler Magnet is located on a 22-acre site, the school was built in the 1950's for 900 students and needs approximately \$7million in repairs. Located across the street from WSU and a new school on the site would be a 4-story building. In order to use this site, land would be required from WSU and the abutting residents. There was also no other facility in the city to relocate the entire school population which is approximately 500 students.
- **Site Rankings:** Katie explained that the Foley Stadium and Chandler Magnet were functioning facilities and there are no current capital plans in the City to replace them. A scoring system was generated to help rank the sites and a perfect score would be 185. The least favorable option was the Code Upgrade with a score of 85 and the Doherty site ranked best at 143 which is the site chosen for the PSR. The cost estimates prepared by both Tishman and LPA confirm a total project budget of approximately \$300 million. Katie also mentioned that other off-site options of school lands or city owned land and parks (subject to Article 97) were considered and Rob will present those options.

- **Doherty Off Site Options:** Rob stated that none of the sites provide all the fields desired for the project. The Duffy Field is an existing field and upgrades to make the area a replacement practice field before construction starts would be ideal. The improvements to trails at the Newton Hill were budgeted, the proposed new trail from the school down to the trail to Pleasant Street was not looked on favorably, but other possible improvements to pathways and upgrade to existing tennis courts could be considered. Foley Stadium improvements are to provide better access and possible upgrades to playing fields. Beaver Brook Park is in a flood plain and possible installation of new underdrains to make the fields more usable would help. Park Ave site could possibly accommodate a new Stadium. This would require raised fields, water retention system and a 1,500-seat stadium with restrooms and lockers. Estimated budget \$30-40 million plus land. Chandler site is under utilized and excavating into the existing hill could provide area for a baseball field and two flat grass practice fields. Estimated budget of \$6 million.

Questions/ Answers: Katie said that all the off-site options would not be reimbursable by MSBA and funded as City improvements. She noted that these off-site upgrades are to enhance the options for the new school non-reimbursable and at this point very difficult to establish the MSBA reimbursement rate which is possibly 50/50 for on-site projects. Temporary off-site parking is also being reviewed and she opened the presentation for questions.

Questions from School Building Committee members:

- How much of the existing park land at Doherty will be used? Zero, no park land lost.
- Is there any legal way to ensure students remain at the existing school during construction? - No student relocation is planned. Contract documents will be clear.
- How is demolition and abatement handled? There is partial reimbursement by the MSBA for these.
- Is it possible to ask the Athletic Director questions regarding field usage?
- Can we consider a swimming pool? The MSBA does not allow this for their projects.
- Any options to widen Highland Street? We are looking at traffic impacts. Possible drop off area in front, but we cannot encroach on Park land at each end of the site.

Questions from General Public:

- Park was to be a Park and now is a school.
- 400 cars, what about the buses? Anticipate 8-10 buses for off street drop off.
- District athletics disrupted by Colleges. Schedules overlap and current arrangement is insufficient.
- Residents should make decisions not those living out of the City. School Building Committee has affiliation with the school and MSBA provides input on member requirements.
- Boys and Girls club in the City has a swimming pool.

Questions from General Public (continued):

- Foley stadium is a shared facility and would need to be replaced. Project team was tasked to investigate the areas in the Doherty quadrant.
- How much parking is there at Doherty? Approximately 250 marked spaces, though there is much more actual cars on the site.
- The Doherty site is small and does not provide adequate fields. Is there a firm commitment from the City to move on some of the off-site schemes?
- No student parking on site during construction, they will need to walk to the off-site athletic fields.
- Where will the construction workers park? That is coordinated by the contractor.
- What is the cost to upgrade the fields behind Foley stadium? Will need to develop those costs.
- What is the visual impact on Park Street with the new school? Park Street is a lower elevation which will minimize the view.
- If new fields are at Chandler how will the schedule work for using them? Need to look closely at this issue if pursued.
- Is the building LEED? Yes it will be Silver at a minimum, also additional wall and roof insulation plus high efficient windows.
- What is happening on Dec 18th? The School Building Committee will vote on the Preferred solution. Then work will start on the Schematic design.
- How can we comment on the project? LPA has a website www.lpaa.com/get-in-touch where you can put comments.
- Is it possible to complete improvements to the Elm Park.

CLOSING:

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