

**Town of Stonington  
K-12 Building Sub-Committee  
Special Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, March 8, 2016  
5:15pm  
Stonington High School, Pawcatuck, CT  
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**Members Present:** Rob Marseglia, Chairman; Julie Holland, Secretary; June Strunk, Kathy Sanford and Rob Sundman

**Members Absent:** Bill Sternberg, Assistant Chairman; Deborah Downie, George Crouse, Mike Fauerbach and Kate Rotella

**Recording Secretary:** Sandy Tissiere

**Guests and Citizens:** Van Riley, Superintendent, Stonington Public Schools; Allison Van Etten, Director of Special Services, Stonington Public Schools; Alicia Dawe, Principal, West Vine and West Broad Street Schools; Kathy Irvine, Assistant Principal, West Vine and West Broad Street Schools; Jennifer McCurdy, Principal, Deans Mill School; Tom Bousquet, Assistant Principal, Deans Mill School; Mark Freise, Principal, Stonington High School; Jim Barrett, DRA; Marc Sklenka, Colliers; Peter Manning, Gilbane; interested citizens and press

**1. Call to Order**

Chairman Marseglia called the meeting to order at 5:35pm

**2. Community Meeting Preparations**

Went right to Item #3

**3. Community Meeting**

Chairman Marseglia thanked the community for attending for an update on the progress of the Elementary Schools Modernization Project. He recognized Jim Barrett and the team at Drummey, Rosane, Anderson who are the contracted architectural firm designing the project. He thanked Dr. Riley, the administrators and the school based teams who are actively involved in developing programming with DRA. He introduced, Marc Sklenka with Colliers International who will be the Owner's Representative who will manage the project. Mr. Marseglia also told the audience about Gilbane, Inc., who have been hired as the Construction Manager to build both schools. The Building Committee was introduced and he thanked everyone for their time and their importance as a member of the committee.

The presentation started with Marc Sklenka sharing the project schedule explaining how it details the timeline from referendum to the finished project. He showed the detailed milestones and told the audience that both schools would be following the schedule at the same time. Mr. Sklenka explained the stages of the schedule and what had been completed and the current project stage. Mr. Barrett presented next sharing with the audience the responsibilities of the architectural team and where they were in the development of the design. He thanked everyone for attending and voiced he was happy to be back in the district. For both West Vine Street School and Deans Mill School, his presentation demonstrated different conceptual designs with an explanation of how the decision was determined for either going forward with the design or not. He shared the Educational Program Statements that details the square footage of the new buildings and how the space will be utilized. This document can change as the administrative and school based teams meet and determine how the space would best be utilized.

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**Questions/Concerns**

The following are questions from the audience:

1. Will there be a head start program at West Vine Street School?  
Dr. Riley answered there will be an early childhood wing that he anticipates will house the head start program, however, there will be other available space in the district where it could be located as well.
2. Would it be a consideration of not bringing the 5<sup>th</sup> grade into the elementary the first year to lessen transition issues?  
Dr. Riley said that would be a possibility. It would be determined on enrollment and depends on the capacities in the schools in 2 years.
3. Will the West Vine Street School Sensory Garden be kept and where?  
Yes, the Sensory Garden would be kept. Jim Barrett showed on the design concept the possible location.
4. What type of playscapes are planned as different age groups have different needs?  
Principal McCurdy acknowledged different age groups required different playscapes. There will be separate playscapes for PreK/Kindergarten and Grades 1-5.
5. At the May community meeting, will designs of the interior of the building be presented?  
Mr. Barrett explained there was design development to be done. Rob Marseglia said there would be information on how the buildings would be laid out.
6. Has there been consideration of using renewable energy, solar energy or geothermal and is there money available?  
Jim Barrett shared that all Connecticut projects must meet the State's high performance energy code. The State of Connecticut took the components of the LEED standards and made them part of the building code. All energy efficient ideas are being considered and will be examined to which are most suited for the project. Rob Marseglia will reach out the town hall to see if there is grant money available to feed these ideas.
7. Will there be a science classroom in both West Vine Street School and Deans Mill School?  
There will be a science classroom at each school. The goal of the project is to create parity at both schools.
8. Has there been conversation around sidewalks? What about walking and bike paths behind West Vine Street School?  
Rob Marseglia said wherever there was foot traffic around the school, there would be sidewalks. It would be great to open the property to the community, however, money for that project was not included in the grant. There might be other grants available for that purpose. As Deans Mill School, although it doesn't have the same acreage, there might be some opportunity for hiking trails as well.
9. How do you plan to isolate the building when there are night functions going on in the school?  
Jim Barrett explained the location of the gym provides entry and exit points where the public wouldn't have access to the main part of the building.
10. Please clarify what was meant about one way to enter the building during the school day? What about PreK?  
Jim Barrett said once the building was loaded during the morning, the main entrance would be the only one available to the public. However, the Pre-K area, parents would be allowed to enter at a separate entrance point in the designated Pre-K/Kindergarten wing.

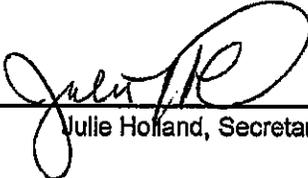
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11. The concern was voiced about the open space located in the front of the school instead of back.  
Rob Marseglia explained with the field and parking being behind the school, it would encourage activity there in the evenings. In the beginning, there could be more police presence in the evening, perhaps some dedicated town space in the back of the building.
12. Are there Homeland Security grants for schools for developing school safety?  
Jim Barrett spoke of how safety is a large part of the design of the schools. There is the realization that parents will want to enter the schools and policies are in place for this.
13. What will the student body placement going to look like?  
Marc Sklenka addressed this question by explaining the construction will be done in phases to enable transition of the students. It is planned to do work over the summer. Rob Marseglia also noted there is money in the grant budget for portables if necessary.
14. Concerns were expressed about the play equipment being in the back of the building and it being damaged at night.  
Jim Barrett stated they are working through concepts of designs.
15. Is design H the one you are moving forward with? Is the cost a factor, all design options the same cost?  
Yes, cost is a factor that is in the decision of the design concepts. The first designs presented were set aside after evaluation by administration and school based team and the building committee. After all considerations, Option H, was the concept that is going forward.
  - a. Is the square footage the same at both schools?  
Yes, both schools have the same square footage.
16. As after school events sometimes use both the cafeteria and gym, could they be closer together?  
Jim Barrett explained the gym will be regulation size for community use and the way the schools are currently laid out and with the property restrictions, it couldn't be built near the cafeteria. Compromises had to be made in design.
17. Is it possible to revisit the playground being in the front of the building?  
Due to the ledge behind the building, it would be costly to remove it to accommodate parking. It has been discussed that security cameras could be installed that are linked directly to the police station.

Chairman Marseglia thanked everyone for attending. He reminded everyone there would be another community meeting May 3.

**4. Adjourn**

The community meeting adjourned at 6:50pm

  
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Julie Holland, Secretary