

**School Building Committee Coordination Meeting**  
**Monday, March 11, 2024, from 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.**  
**Remote Meeting**

School Building Committee Members: Andrew Baker (absent); Mark Barrett; Michael Cronin, Vice-Chair; Charles Favazzo Jr. (absent); Julie Hackett; Jonathan A. Himmel; Carolyn Kosnoff; Charles W. Lamb (absent); Kathleen M. Lenihan, Chair; Alan Mayer Levine; James Malloy; Hsing Min Sha (absent); Joseph N. Pato; Kseniya Slavsky; Dan Voss

Members from Dore & Whittier: Jason Boone (absent); Steve Brown (absent); Mike Burton; Mike Cox (absent); Chrsitina Dell Angelo; Erica Downs (absent), Brad Dore (absent); Elias Grijalva (absent); Rachel Rincon; Chris Schaffner (absent)

Members from SMMA: Brian Black (absent); Martine Dion (absent); Michael Dowhan; Lorraine Finnegan; Anthony Jimenez (absent); Anoush Krafian (absent); Rosemary Park; Phil Poinelli; Erin Prestileo; and Matt Rice (absent)

The minutes were taken by Sara Jorge, Office Manager, to the Lexington Superintendent.

The School Building Committee Chair, Kathleen Lenihan, began the meeting at 12:01 p.m.

Mike Burton explained that we are currently in the preliminary design program (PDP) phase, which will be submitted to the MSBA at the end of May 2024/ early June 2024. The next phase is the preferred schematic report, which goes through December. After that, the schematic design goes until September 2025.

Caroly Kosnoff spoke to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) regarding Alan Levine's question last week. The MSBA will reimburse for the 10 million for the schematic report, even if we do not move forward. They also confirmed that if the 10 million dollar appropriation is approved, they will update the existing contract that we currently have.

Michael Dowhan reviewed the [Focus Groups Site Recommendations](#) that need further discussion or review.

Kseniya Slavsky would love to see more discussion on the issues of disincentivizing single occupancy cars at some point and how that balances with the number of staff in the building and the number of visitors the school gets. What is the spillover effect going to look like?

Jim Malloy asked how the green roof would interact with the solar panels and HVAC systems in the building. We have a green roof at our Public Works building, and it causes a lot of problems because it sucks so much pollen in during certain times of the year that it shuts down the AC system. Green roofs are nice, but they will also have some other problems that come with them.

Lorraine Finnegan: That is the reason this item is still in the yellow because again, it is going to be a balancing act. Clean air and ventilation are priorities, so we need to start stacking up the priorities to know what priority is first and then see what is left.

Alan Levine: There seem to be two categories of wetlands; the ones near Park Drive are clearly not going to be built on. Then, there are thin extended areas between the football field and the practice field, and I've seen on some of the diagrams that they appear in different colors. What is the status of those smaller ones on the practice field? Can those be moved and replicated somewhere else? What's the difficulty of doing something like that?

Erin Prestileo: We've identified two types of wetlands: bordering and isolated. There are two types, and really, what it comes down to is who has jurisdiction over those. So the bordering, vegetated wetlands are the ones that you talked about near Park Drive; they're colored in a different way. The other wetlands are isolated wetlands; they are the ones located in and around the field areas. So those are local jurisdictional wetlands. Generally speaking, you could replicate either type, but then you need a permit for those activities. So, depending on the type of wetland that we're looking to disturb potentially, that might mean that we're dealing with the Wetlands Protection Act versus the local bylaws.

Alan Levine: The isolated wetlands are the ones I am concerned with, the ones between the football field and the practice field. Is it a big deal to have to build on those?

Erin Prestileo: I think it will come down to a replication strategy. However, we look to get approval for both wetland restoration and wetland work with the local conservation commission. The big difference is we are subject to state requirements, whereas the isolated wetlands were just subject to the Town regulations. We are looking at options that preserve and would need to replicate those wetland areas.

Kseniya Slavsky is interested in a holistic conversation about the security of the site. Has a professional security assessment been done? I don't mean an electrical engineer who knows how to specify security cameras and intrusion detection electronic systems, but whether that's on the Town side, on the side of the first responders in Town, or as a consultant who someone understands how intrusion happens, how attacks happen, how responses are strategized, such that we do not design the building that makes one more likely and the other more difficult. It's a big topic, so I want to understand if there's a plan to have someone look at this and make recommendations who's quite qualified.

Julie Hackett: Yes, in the general topic of school safety and the ALICE recommendation that was on the list, so we've taken this issue up in a multitude of ways. We have taken a different approach from ALICE for specific reasons. Internally, we work very closely with the police department. We have crisis response teams that know how to get to rally sites; children practice where they go to the rally sites. There is a lot that happens in the schools, and part of what is very helpful is to have that relationship with the police department, who visit our schools regularly. They know exits and entrances, and you often can see them walk through, which hasn't been done in the past. I'll send that memo that was sent after the Nashville tragedy just to show you some background that answers the ALICE question.

Jon Himmel: The consultant did a nice job of addressing site security, but he cordoned off any sort of conversation related to building security. During the Virginia school tours trip, it was interesting to see how the buildings were laid out and how subtle the electronic cameras were, and to reflect on the fact that it didn't seem like security had an actual main thread through the plan of those buildings. It may be that I just couldn't recognize it, but I think I need to recognize it, as do the rest of the non-staff people on the School Building Committee. For that reason, I believe that it would be helpful if the consultant or the design team could help us understand before the end of the PDP what configurations lend themselves to a porous but highly secure building. It would just be helpful for us to get educated as we are asked down the road to evaluate designs and know what we're looking at from a security standpoint.

Joe Pato: I'm concerned that the presentation we received last week on designs didn't have very many options that were going to be compact. It didn't give us a view of how you might enclose spaces to provide what some of us perceive as a necessary element of security moving forward. In the absence of that, I am concerned that we will get lots of designs that are fundamentally not going to satisfy my primary concerns. I want to ensure we address that because that feels like we could go down this path to a dead end.

Kathleen Lenihan: I went to the site focus group last week, and I believe the School Building Committee needs to get a handle on what we mean by open campus and what we mean by safety because it can drive so much

else of what we're doing. For example, in this handbook, there is an open campus policy on open campus policy. It does not have anything to do with the physical layout of a building. It means that juniors and seniors are able to leave school and go off of school grounds to go somewhere during their free period. So when I think about open campus, I think about the policy, but then there is open campus, what does the school look like? At this moment, any adult carrying anything they want to carry can march right into the middle of the quad at LHS. I envision a new school in which when students are going between history class and biology class, the only people they can encounter in a new LHS are LHS students, LHS staff or LPS staff members. Visitors will then be checked in at the office, and it is important to me from a safety standpoint that an LHS student should not be able to physically encounter outside people who have not gone through the main office. At the next meeting, I hope we can set down those terms.

Lorraine Finnegan: At the next building committee meeting, you will see more compact massing studies. You will also see the use of the site that takes away some of the isolated wetlands that we've talked about earlier on. So, in between what you've already seen, you will start to see more options that will address the more compact nature of a site.

Lorraine Finnegan explained that after the last meeting, a small group (Julie Hackett, Mike Cronin, Mark Barret, Mike Burton, and herself) met to discuss the feedback on the yellow items. I will caution us on how much we discuss security here, as this will be dealt with through the School Superintendent, police, and first responders. Lorraine recommends that this small group reconvene to examine the items in yellow on the Focus Group Site Recommendations as well.

Erin Prestileo reviewed the [site development requirements](#). The site development requirements section was sent out as a draft last week. It's intended to hit all aspects of what we will be considering when we start to imagine the site portion of the project. It touches upon regulatory requirements like zoning and wetlands floodplain. There's no floodplain in this case; it talks about security and fencing.

Kseniya Slavsky: This document states that there is a strong desire to maintain an open campus that currently exists, and as a district, this goes beyond allowing students to circulate off campus. Not to put words in your mouth, Kathleen Lenihan, but I am not sure that this fits with what you just expressed, and I agree with you. Changing the wording to "there is a strong desire to maintain an open campus among some people."

Alan Levine: Erin just mentioned a diagram with protected parkland, meaning protected under Article 97. I believe there is one area of the site that has a deed restriction from the way it was given to the Town. I do not know if it disallows any building on that part of the site. Jim Malloy or Mike Cronin can speak on this.

Jim Malloy explained that he would need to go back and look at it. When we first looked at this, there was a group in town that provided some input to the Article 97 Working Group. One of the things that they suggested is that part of Hastings Park should also be considered in the overall grand scheme of things. Hastings Park and the way it was granted to the Town indicates in the deed that if we use it for anything other than open space and Parkland, it would revert back to the Library Board of Trustees. I would have to look at the other parcels to see what other restrictions were placed on some of those properties.

Lorraine Finnegan explained that the purpose of the site development is so that everyone understands what the proposed project will include. At some point, we will be looking to the building committee to give us a parking count to adhere to, and we will share that data we have as well.

Kseniya Slavsky: I'm slightly shocked by the conversation about deed restriction. I assumed that the fact that we were showing proposed massing on specific sites meant that that part of the research was complete and it sounds like there's still more research to be done. Can you speak to whether any proposed designs sit on any parcel that hasn't been fully researched yet?

Jim Malloy: I want to make something clear: we had a title search done on the entire property, so it is not that the information isn't available; I just do not have an answer off the top of my head. We will have our Town Council pull that information out. We could certainly have him attend one of our School Building Committee meetings to update us as well.

Julie Hackett: Many community members are wondering how bills are paid. Is there a way to link communication to agendas to make them public and transparent? Also, many community members have approached some of us about bigger ideas that they have done their own research on. I've been reflecting on how we get this additional information so that we can give community members a chance to share what they've learned or know, but not necessarily any guarantee about direction. I suggest having informal workshops where they can come and talk about their ideas. An example would be the people who advocated for the field house. They've reached out with formal proposals. Another example could be around the pool. I do think we need a forum to be able to do this, and perhaps it's a dedicated School Building Committee Coordination meeting or something of that nature. I'm happy to do whatever is helpful so that it could be an agenda item. I think if we don't do this, and we don't create space, there'll be disappointment down the road.

Mike Cronin: I am a little concerned about the volume of special interest groups that might be out there. I'm worried that we could get the dishwasher advocates out there. I'm worried that we could get the I like green grass over field turf advocates, and we could have 100 groups that want to make special presentations to the School Building Committee. We created the focus groups as the vehicle that we really want everybody to go through to advocate for their particular interests in what this new building will look like. I still encourage the focus groups is really that vehicle to do that. If we start to take people here, we're never going to get the work done that we really need to get done. So, for me, I'm all about focus groups and not necessarily have any special interests come to this group to present.

Julie Hackett: I will figure out how to work with the people who are reaching out then in that case so that I won't take up the time of the School Building Committee. If people want to join me in those conversations, you can. I feel like people have to be heard, and I understand what kind of can of worms we could be opening, but at the same time, if people have done a lot of research and investigated things, I want to create a little bit of space for that.

Kathleen Lenihan recommended that people make video presentations so that we can share them with the entire School Building Committee.

Kseniya Slavsky: I would like to understand the rules of engagement around a separate project from the MSBA perspective, like the athletics stuff, which I fully support.

Lorraine Finnegan reminded everybody that at the next meeting, we are looking for the School Building Committee to accept the space summary. Again, it is not set in stone until schematic design, but at least for the purposes of moving towards a cost estimate and accepting the site development requirements. Please send any comments you have on the site development before the next meeting so we can address them.

### **Public Comment:**

Dawn McKenna - 9 Hancock Street - I have four things, and I'll try to be quick. The first is that I noticed in the existing conditions report on page 254, at the very bottom section 4.4 point two in looking at it, I was surprised to see that my father's laboratory was listed there. I just want to find out if there's any way to remove it from there. What I can tell you about it is that there are offices if you go to 76 Bedford Street, it's a customs place. There were no chemicals ever stored there. I can attest to that as a former officer of the corporation, so check in with me and it's been out of there since the early 2000s. The second thing I just want to mention is the parking

number. I think it's very unrealistic to think about reducing the parking in that area because you have to remember the High School serves as parking not only for the high school but it serves for the recreation areas it serves for Hayden overflow. You've got Worthen Road there, which also gets filled up. In particular, I want to share the lessons of Lincoln Park. We originally had a parking plan to put enough spaces in Lincoln Park to hold the flow that would be there, but people wanted to cut it back for obvious reasons. However, what we have now is people parking all over the place, and Lincoln Park is not a good option for the high school because that's used all the time, both by the temple that's across the street. Students use it now anyway, as do all the athletics. Recreation as well as outside groups who use it so I wanted to point that out. Number three, I want to reiterate about the Article 97 and deed restriction as a former Selectman. I know that we discussed this back in my day, and there was something along Park Drive, which I can't remember now, that was, in fact, deed-restricted. So I know Jim was going to take a peek at that, but there is definitely some land along Park Drive that is deed-restricted. The last thing I wasn't going to say, but since the conversation came up about other groups presenting, I want to share again the lessons of the first high school renovation project that failed on an override because it's the kind of anger where people feel like they're not being heard. That drives down a conversation and I am concerned that you need to do cost estimating or send something to the cost estimator by the end of March, and you haven't heard from groups that want to hear in Lexington. You must hear from people and there's been no conversation or no opportunity other than at the public forum the other day that has really allowed for people to express their ideas. I think 10 minutes is going to give the same sort of insult to people that's going to make them feel like they're not heard. So if I were you, I would either schedule a meeting specifically to hear from anybody who has whatever proposal or do one at each of the next couple of meetings and give them a significant amount of time because 10 minutes isn't going to do it for people who put the kind of work into it that they have. I know that there are multiple groups that are looking to do that. But Mike, I have very good faith in Lexington, and there aren't that many multiple groups that do that and put the kind of effort needed to ensure you get the right information. So that's my recommendation to you because you got to remember, at the end of the day, this is going to be probably a half-a-billion-dollar project, and people will take out their anger. They may not say it to you, but they'll take it out by voting no on the debt exclusion. These incredible ideas should be fully vetted that have come forward. You should have good reasons if you choose them and good reasons if you don't, and you will only get that by including the citizen advocates who have always done the best for this community.

Julie Hackett made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:21 p.m. Joe Pato seconded the meeting. Ms. Lenihan took a roll call vote, passed 9-0.