

School Building Committee Coordination Meeting
Monday, January 8, 2024, from 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.
Remote Meeting

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

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

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

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

The School Building Committee Chair, Kathleen Lenihan, began the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

The Committee reviewed the minutes from the School Building Committee meeting on [December 21, 2023](#). These will be voted on during the next full School Building Committee meeting on January 22, 2024.

Dr. Hackett announced that we are in module #3, which is the feasibility study phase. The lookback is just bringing us all up to speed with a record of what has happened. These are not intended to be discussed in great detail. We have had a fair number of educational programming meetings, and from what I am told, these are going very well. These are SMMA meetings with staff, and usually, when architects do these types of meetings, a representative body will meet, but in Lexington, all of our staff are a part of these meetings, which is fantastic.

Lorraine Finnegan: The educational programming meetings are for reviewing your current curriculum offerings, looking at the master schedule, and understanding how the building works daily. This is the time for staff to discuss what works for them, what doesn't work well, and what types of spaces you need to promote educational delivery. Basically, it is gathering information about what is done now and what you want to do in the future. It is also for SMMA to look at existing conditions and understand how spaces are utilized. It is very important for us to know every space is used. We meet with everybody, from students to every department, facility, custodian, kitchen staff, and administration. We have to meet with every single person. It is how you use the space, how they could use it better, and what you need to do that. There is another full-day programming event tomorrow and Wednesday. We will have some additional meetings that have not been scheduled yet, for instance, one focused on the Central Office and their programming needs.

Jon Himmel: As we are putting the educational plan together, please keep in mind remote learning in the future.

Mike Burton asked Christina Dell Angelo to put the master schedule on the screen to view the meetings that have taken place so far as we are looking back and the meetings that are coming up related to this project.

Kathleen Lenihan appreciated seeing the list of meetings and how it is all captured in one place. It is valuable to the community and the School Building Committee, as we can see what is also coming up.

Kseniya Slavsky: It would go a long way to attach the meeting list to the minutes so that the community can see what has been happening behind the scenes and convince them that a significant amount of coordination and outreach is happening.

Alan Levine: I am confused about the difference between the education plan and the educational programming. I read the draft education plan, but it was not a plan; it was just many thoughts. I would like to learn how you get input on these documents. I just don't understand the process.

Dr. Hackett: That is a good question, Alan, and it is probably a question that more people than just you will have. There is an interaction among the ed programming meetings, the visioning team meetings, and the focus group meetings. We are trying to take what exists, as Lorraine explained, what are some nascent ideas that people have about what a building should look like, and then land where we think we should go. It will come together nicely, as I have seen before, but I can see how it could be confusing initially.

Lorraine Finnegan: The educational plan is produced by the district, and when I use the word produced, I mean the background of it will be written by the district and educators. SMMA will then reformat this document into categories in which the MSBA will want to receive it. It is the document by which Lexington is telling its community, the MSBA, and us that this is what we see for education in Lexington. The educational programming meetings dive deep into the space needed to accommodate how the learning will take place in these types of spaces. The frequency and the number of those spaces will be a derivative of the master schedule of the curriculum with a formula that we have to produce based on how many times a day or how many times a week certain classes meet, and that will produce a count for space. For instance, if we talk about the auditorium, there will need to be language around what it is used for daily, theatrical purposes, and who else shares it. In addition to that, we want to come to terms with what the auditorium seat count will be. Our design will provide a narrative that will be written under each portion of the plan that says the design responds to this educational goal by providing an auditorium that seats X. This will go as far as parking, drop off, pick up, etc. I can provide you with an example if that helps you understand the relationship of the 2.

Dr. Hackett: Each department weighed in on areas, and we had a shaded box for their preferences. I can see where that might feel like a random list, but capturing what they think and feel is essential as we sort out the larger plan. I think it might be beneficial to take a look at some other Ed Plans because they are generally not entirely as developed, I think we have got a decent start, and now we just need to finalize things.

Alan Levine: When I read the Ed Plan, significant questions were raised, and I don't know how they will get answered. I don't know who is going to work on editing that document. I volunteered to help with that, but I could not possibly do that myself because I am not knowledgeable enough about the schools.

Dr. Hackett: We can work together on it, Alan. The question is, is the expectation that the educational programming will become a highly finished product right?

Lorraine Finnegan: Yes, in essence, but on route to that, it will be messy, but in the end, it needs to be a highly finished product. The School Committee typically would vote to accept it because it is an educational document, not a building document. On route to that, SMMA will take over the editing through track changes because we need to ensure we understand the comments and how they relate to the overall plan moving forward. Our goal is to get through the educational programming meetings and then decipher that information to start editing the Ed Plan by saying, we heard this in our meetings, but we do not see this noted anywhere in this Ed Plan, or vice versa; we read this in the Ed Plan and it never came up in the programming meetings. We would then have a conversation about that.

Hsing Min Sha explained that it is not so much understanding that there is a series of meetings but understanding what each meeting is about and who you met with. People are not satisfied that experts are taking care of us, things are being done, and decisions are being made. We really need the details to trust the process.

Dr. Hackett: I agree with what Hsing Min Sha says about having a very transparent process in the design response. You are seeing a pretty granular level by the department and what they think the ideas and plans should look like, but those will change through the ed programming and visioning process. We must think more about better communicating the intersection between those meetings, but all are good questions.

Hsing Min Sha is concerned about the public not having an easily accessible way to access this information. They should be able to see this is how we got here, or I hadn't thought of that; that is a good point.

Kathleen Lenihan: I am really interested in the educational programming meetings to have a digest for people who really want to know what these are about and what our educators are thinking for needs and wants. We cannot replicate the hours present in those ed programming meetings, but we can make what comes out of those meetings available to people.

Lorraine Finnegan: We will issue a set of minutes for every meeting. We live by these minutes because it is our commitment between us and the school to show that we are listening.

Kseniya Slavsky: I am very interested in understanding the educational planning and visioning processes. However, I would like to know if this discussion is more appropriate for the School Committee than the School Building Committee. This is not the body tasked with ensuring what the school will be teaching. I am all for transparency and cross-communication. Still, this team is tasked with providing adequate and appropriate space for the school departments' needs.

Kathleen Lenihan: I do believe you are right, but just as School Committee members watch the School Building Committee meetings that are all recorded, I absolutely encourage all of the School Building Committee members to watch the School Committee meeting when we talk about the education plan for a new or renovated building that we will hopefully provide for our students.

Lorraine Finnegan explained that we had a kickoff meeting on December 15, 2023. It was a very energetic and fantastic meeting. The following Ed Planning Focus Groups will be to discuss ed planning, design, MEP sustainability, and site safety and security. The next meeting will be on January 24, 2024, at possibly Cary Hall, but there will be a remote option as we need to be able to accommodate student schedules. The last meeting will be coming together to coalesce and make recommendations to this Committee.

Jon Himmel: I am particularly interested in the focus group process. This committee needs to understand what you have formulated as the focus group process. The intriguing thing to me is that there are a lot of meetings, but they all have to have a purpose. Others may know what it is, but I do not. Understanding it better and what the initial group is doing would be handy as some of us are going through this process for the first time.

Dr. Hackett pointed out that the focus group kick-off meeting agenda, presentation, and recording are attached to the School Building Committee Coordination meeting agenda so people can review it. The effort is all about transparency and ensuring people understand what they missed. If you need more detail, you can spend time on these documents.

Mike Burton: Lorraine and I spent Friday going through the schedule. This will probably be going out tonight to the scheduling working group. The final piece of the puzzle is what John touched on right there: it is not

good enough to say SBC meeting number 10; we need to say what you are talking about at that meeting. You will see how this progression is working, and Lorraine is working on it as we speak.

Lorraine Finnegan gave an update on the visioning committee meetings. David Stephen is the individual from New Vista Design. He is a great facilitator; we have had two workshops thus far. The third workshop is this Wednesday, and we have the fourth workshop on the 24th. To John's point, there are a lot of meetings, and there is going on, but this is data gathering we have to do early on, so we are used to the overlapping. I think all these meetings bring together many different people with different opinions, attitudes, and outlooks.

Dr. Hackett: For me, the visioning team meetings are also an opportunity to learn about things we do not know about buildings. For example, we learned about different ways that dining facilities could be designed. We also have a great student representation on the visioning teams. All School Building Committee members are welcome to come and listen to these meetings, so please do.

Dr. Hackett reviewed where the S-SBC is at today. The current group has expanded to about 35 students from middle to high school, and they have great ideas and are very enthusiastic. A copy of the agenda and a set of minutes from this meeting on January 4th are linked to our agenda. We talked about many things, but just to give you an idea of some of the things we're discussing, one is the job shadowing and how to structure it, and the kids will help design that at our next meeting. For the job shadowing, we would like to get a list with job descriptions of all the jobs that are associated with Dore & Whittier's operation and SMMA. Then, what happens is that the kids become experts in one role or job. Then they will teach it to their peers, and the kids can pitch it to you in more detail once it is finalized, but we would like to schedule a job shadowing day where the kids spend the entire day with you. We would also love to expand the roles to the Select Board, Town Manager, Superintendent, and the School Committee members if people are interested. The students will learn, reflect, and report what they have learned at a School Committee meeting.

Jim Malloy gave an Article 97 update. At this point, with the architect determining the design of where the footprint will be, we will have a better idea of what properties will have to be swapped in the long term. We have scheduled an Article 97 working group meeting for January with the original group, which includes Select Board Members, School Committee Members, Appropriation Committee, Recreation Committee, Capital Expenditures Committee, Director of Facilities, Director of Public Works, Superintendent of Schools, Town Manager, and the Conservation Administrator. It was a broad-based group that met for some time to really go over the deed and the plans for the center recreation area and the high school property. We got to a point where we were convinced that the Vine Brook was the dividing line and nothing needed to go to the other side. Also, at that point, Mike Cronin put together some conceptual footprints of buildings and how much space it would take up. Until we were beyond conceptual, it did not make sense for this group to continue meeting because we couldn't take a good hard look at woodland until we knew where it was going to be located and the exact footprint was going to be. This was a year or so ago, and now we are at the point where we will start seeing some footprints, so this group needs to start meeting again. We did do an initial reach out to our legislative delegation to let them know that we would be submitting a petition in the next year or so to do an Article 97 land swap, so they are ready for when it does come forward to them.

Kathleen Lenihan: If someone is signed up for alerts for School Building Committee Meetings, will these same people get the notification of the Article 97 meeting as well?

Jim Malloy does not believe so but will find out.

Kathleen Lenihan does not have an update on the following community flyer as of yet, as we are working on setting up our next SBC Communications Working Group meeting.

Dr. Hackett: There was a question at the last School Building Committee meeting that we reached out to the Ethics Commission regarding what we can use funds for, such as developing the community flyer. I then shared with you the Brookline story related to the ballot. We then received information from Kseniya Slavsky, which prompted us to contact Town Council. Town Council advised us that we were in good standing, that our bases were covered, and that contacting the Ethics Commission was unnecessary unless we got into ballot territory.

Jon Himmel suggested adding the meeting calendar that was shown or the schedule or both to the next agenda to understand better what is going on. A brief description of each meeting would be helpful.

Kseniya Slavsky: I would like to have some talking points for speaking to the public about the project, like the expected reimbursement amounts, and not lead with the nominal rate because no community gets reimbursed at the nominal rate. I would like to discuss this before we present at the following community forum.

Hsing Ma Shin explained that this all relates back to the FAQs. They can be brought up at meetings verbally, but they should also be a part of the FAQs.

Dr. Hackett: I am waiting for some clarification from Mike Burton on who is developing the content for the FAQs.

Christina Dell Angelo: As a project team, we have been working with SMMA on reviewing the FAQs and then also adding additional content. We take any comments made and add them to the FAQ portion of the website. We will review the current information on the website this week and see if any additional content needs to be added. We are also currently working on scheduling the next few Communications Working Group meetings. These meetings will be to discuss the website, finalize the flyer, the mass mailer, etc.

Jon Himmel: How far before the community meetings will we send the postcard?

Kathleen Lenihan: We would like it to be out no more than one week before the forum. Otherwise, people will forget about it, which is a tricky balance. This is again something we will talk about at the Communications Working Group.

Dr. Hackett made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:58 p.m. Mr. Joe Pato seconded the meeting. Ms. Lenihan took a roll call vote, passed 10-0.