

School Building Committee
Thursday, May 4, 2023, from 9:00 - 10:30 a.m.
Central Office, School Committee Meeting Room, and Via Zoom

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

The minutes were taken by Sara Jorge, Administrative Assistant for the Lexington Superintendent.

The School Building Committee Chair, Kathleen Lenihan began the meeting at 9:06 a.m.

The Committee reviewed the minutes from the [March 23, 2023 meeting](#). Ms. Slavsky made a motion to approve the minutes from March 23, 2023. Mr. Voss seconded the motion. Ms. Lenihan took a roll call vote, passed 8-0 with Mr. Hsing Min Sha abstaining from the vote.

Dr. Hackett reviewed the [Owners' Project Manager Selection Process presentation](#). Dr. Hackett explained that the Owner's Project Manager is contracted with an entity that has the skills and abilities to provide a comprehensive scope of services, which will result in: (1) Selection of an experienced entity to achieve the oversight requirements of the Owner and the MSBA, as well as the timely and cost-effective completion of the project; (2) Effective monitoring and management of the project and the various consultants, vendors, and contractors from the feasibility study through completion of construction, building occupancy, and the warranty period; and (3) Selection of a respondent who meets the minimum requirements of Chapter 193 and has the broad range of skills required for the project (e.g., the ability to monitor and manage several participants and stakeholders, provide the Owner with timely recommendations relative to the successful implementation and execution of the various aspects of the project, monitor field operations, perform cost estimating and control, perform schedule, value engineering, and constructability analyses, quality control processes, monitor safety, and monitor the timely resolution of issues impacting schedule and costs.

Out of the seven firms that submitted an RFS, four firms were chosen to be interviewed by the OPM Selection Team. The four firms that were interviewed were: Dore and Whittier, Hill International, Skanska, and Colliers. These firms were selected based on their portfolio that was submitted and then ranked on a scoring sheet that was completed by each committee member on the OPM Selection Team.

Mr. Cronin and Ms. Lenihan reviewed the process of the interviews and the interview questions that were asked of each firm.

Mr. Voss: The candidates that we ended up struggling between were all highly qualified and had excellent references. What we appreciated about Dore and Whittier was they had a real finger on the pulse of the issues that were critical to Lexington, partly because they have worked in the Town of Lexington on a number of projects over the last few years. They have access to resources that we trust and are familiar with. They have really thought through how to tackle and they communicated quite effectively the issues that are going to be critical to us which includes soliciting upfront feedback from many stakeholders.

Mr. Levine: All the bullets have been done except for the vote of this committee, and signing and getting the approval from the MSBA.

Mr. Cronin: There are 2 steps that are left. One is to affirm our recommendation by this group, number 2 is to engage in contract negotiations. Our final recommendation to the MSBA is to be done by May 10th and then there will be a formal process on June 5th, with the MSBA.

Mr. Levine: What is the form of the contract? I assume it is not a fixed-price contract since we don't really know exactly what is involved with the project there must be that they get reimbursed for the effort they put in.

Mr. Cronin: So their expenses will be part of the process and we will do some level of explorations and do some level of requiring them to do some components but we do have a fixed number. We have a very small budget for this particular feasibility study, 1.825 million. If we feel they did a great job on the feasibility study, we will move forward in negotiating the next phase with the OPM. If we feel this firm is right for Lexington and they are working well and meeting all our expectations, we will move forward with them to discuss the fee structure as the case would be with the designer. The designer will also be hired at this next phase in the feasibility study. So we have a fixed number of 1.825 million and we will wind up having all of our expenses including testing, the OPM, and the designer fees come out of that one number.

Mr. Barrett: One of the things I liked about Dore and Whittier was their core project management team that handles sort of the day-to-day operations, apart from their specialists or consultants, that core team is really strong, in my opinion. They did bring in on their consulting team a value management consultant, which I thought was great for the project as we move forward not just another staff member but a specialist to task. From past experiences, they are problem solvers and bring the right people in to work through the problem and get results and answers in a timely manner, which I think is important.

Mr. Hsing Min Sha: What do you know about any other obligations they have, or are we going to get their full attention?

Mr. Barrett: Part of the process for when they fill out the forms, they have to report their past work and how much current work they have, so we did look at that. If they weren't the smallest workload they were in the bottom half compared to the other firms. Some of the other firms had over a billion dollars worth of workload right now.

Ms. Slavsky: What were their sustainability qualifications and approach? Did they have a consultant for that?

Mr. Cronin: Dore and Whittier is very familiar with Lexington and we are very familiar with them as we have worked with them since 2017 and their OPM on about 100 million dollars worth of construction projects, so we have had great success with them. They were hired for our Hastings project which was a \$65 million project but they have done a number of high schools as well. As Mr. Barrett mentioned they have an excellent core team, and the subcontractors that they brought have a green engineer, who is basically the individual that helped us create the integrated design into the construction process. They are critical as far as the knowledge and understanding of what we want to do as a community moving forward. So from a sustainability standpoint, I feel they had the upper hand because they know us so well. They are very intimate with the integrated design process with two buildings and the green engineer who literally helped us create that process, so I am feeling very good about that piece. The other contractor I wanted to mention was Jason Boone, he is super instrumental in developing the educational program.

Dr. Hackett: I worked with Dore and Whittier on a past project and they were fantastic as was Jason Boone. He was really excellent at engaging the community and in the end we really felt it was our school and not anyone deciding for us. Mr. Boone did great work with teachers, public safety, community members, etc. They have some interesting new updates with new high-tech software that seems useful in terms of engaging the community and receiving feedback in an equitable way so that we hear all voices and not one voice that is the loudest. When I think of Mr. Boone's work in particular, he would definitely do a fantastic job in Lexington with us along with the rest of the team. One thing in particular that stood out to me, which was impressive, they planned out the education program in advance. I had written part of the educational program several months

ago and Mr. Boone has written a copy as well, so we will be really ahead of the game. They also took the plans to plot out in a sort of simple schematic whether the high school fit in the way that we wanted it to on the site without disrupting the track and the other investments the Town has made. They also gave a sketch that showed how the building could be added on to if we needed to down the road. They did a tremendous amount of legwork in advance of getting our endorsement for their selection by the MSBA.

Mr. Levine: Is Jason a Dore and Whittier employee?

Mr. Cronin: He is not, he is a subcontractor for them. They have already contracted with Mr. Boone for this project.

Ms. Lenihan: Jason Boone's presence is really what set Dore and Whittier apart from the other firms. This is going to be our high school for at least 75 years and I want to make sure we are meeting the needs of our students. Dore and Whittier really did their homework, and I felt they really understood Lexington.

Dr. Hackett: For anyone who is listening, the people who submitted for this project were really impressive. This was a really difficult decision and thank you to everybody who was interested in this project.

Mr. Hsing Min Sha motioned to accept the recommendation of the Owner's Project Manager Selection Committee and submit to the MSBA Dore & Whittier as Lexington's preferred OPM. Mr. Cronin seconded. Ms. Lenihan took a roll call vote, 10-0 with Ms. Salvsky abstaining from the vote.

Ms. Lenihan discussed the [School Building Committee Town Update](#) that was submitted for Town Meeting. This video was not actually shown at Town Meeting but it was available to all Town Meeting members on the Town website. I am also drafting a letting for Town Meeting Members to hopefully generate some more engagement with the LHS building project, and I will include in that a link to the video and the slides and encourage everybody to watch it. This will also be shared with PTO/A Presidents and through other avenues as well.

Ms. Slavsky: What I think would be good for the public is a better understanding of where we are hoping for the school to go on the site, and what those thoughts are around the actual physical reality of a school being placed.

Mr. Cronin: We have had some suggestions and hypothetical ideas but we do not have any decision or direction for a path of renovation, addition, or a new school. We will go through the feasibility study to identify which pathway the Town should take.

Ms. Slavsky: Do we know what the site is?

Mr. Cronin: That is part of the review process for feasibility. We think we have an idea of where the site is based on the available square footage and acreages in Town, and which is the same site, but we have not eliminated any other large parcel that is available in Town for us to build a high school. I think the Town has a preference and we'll voice that as part of the feasibility study but that hasn't been decided that this is the only spot high school not yet.

Ms. Slavsky: I would like to hear more about the lessons learned from the Hastings project, especially around integrated design and sustainability matters.

Ms. Lenihan began the discussion regarding the multi-zoning requirements for the MBTA community. There was a concern raised during the PTA Presidents' meeting yesterday regarding the size of the high school, and if it's going to be big enough to accommodate what could be for expanded enrollment because of the zoning changes.

Dr. Hackett read the concern from the parent: Town Meeting passed Article 34, which allows for multiple times more than the 1, 200 plus units across 50 acres than the minimum MBTA rezoning requires. This individual is concerned that we are now building a smaller new high school than what we may need. MSBA gave us around 295 additional students after we pushed back. 50 of those students were to take into account the increases we were seeing in Special Education and the rest for the zoning. Mr. Pato, could you speak to this question of the vortex being larger than anticipated?

Mr. Pato: The actual increases are speculative. The increase that the MSBA laid out is consistent with the enrollment projection growth based on the number of units. What Town Meeting approved is in an area larger than what we brought to MSBA so it remains to be seen whether or not the growth exceeds projections. My sense is that if the growth does start rapidly exceeding what the Planning Board in Town Meeting presumed that there would be a change in zoning brought back to Town Meeting to slow that down so I'm not really concerned that we will exceed the size of the high school, based on the change in zoning over what we were expecting the change to be but it does mean that we, as a community, need to keep a close eye on, and I'm sure we would have in any case.

Dr. Hackett: Do you think it is worthwhile to submit a communication back to the MSBA just to record the action or do you think it was covered in our initial conversation?

Mr. Pato: I actually do think it is worth alerting the MSBA to that. They should probably know that the Planning Board proposed this range because they thought that development was going to be slow, but nonetheless, it is significantly larger than what we had previously told them.

Ms. Lenihan: When we built LCP, part of the design was in case the enrollment is larger than expected an addition could be built, and we will do the same with the high school. So we will absolutely build a high school that has the flexibility to accommodate more students than are predicted.

Mr. Levine: We don't want to spend more than we need to on a bigger high school right now. So the idea of making a plan that's flexible, that can be adjusted, based on enrollment is key. We don't expect the number of units that are going to be built in the next 10 years, to be, most of what's allowed under the zoning, could take 30 or 40 years.

Mr. Cronin: Some of the practices that we've done since as a Town is that every building that we're building the school buildings, particularly, we have designated as part of the design requirements have an area where in addition can be easily put on building from a system standpoint from the square footage standpoint from an area that makes sense for a cosmetic standpoint.

Mr. Hsing Min Sha: Is there a need for us to communicate that back to the community or add it to our FAQs?

Mr. Levine: I offered to work on the FAQs and I will start to work on this after mid-May.

Mr. Malloy: If we are going to highlight that information back out to the community, I think it is important to note that in a lot of those new zoning districts overlay districts, it would require a developer to purchase a number of separately owned parcels and consolidate them in order to do a multifamily housing project. That is one of the reasons why the Planning Board sees that it will take many years or decades for there to be substantive changes in multifamily housing because that is one of the key issues here is that these aren't 20-acre parcels sitting there, their numerous parcels within each one of those overlay districts that would need to be acquired by a single entity and then consolidated before they could be developed. If we are going to put something out to the Community, that is an important aspect that should be included.

Mr. Levine: What is the next piece of business for this Committee?

Mr. Cronin: Next meeting will probably not be until after June 5, 2023. We have not worked out the details of the next meeting yet.

Dr. Hackett explained that for the next meeting but we will have the additional presentations that Ms. Slavsky and Hsing Min Sha have requested.

Mr. Voss: Once we are through the formal process with the OPM, will they be joining the School Building Committee Meetings?

Mr. Cronin: Yes, they will be.

Mr. Cronin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:01 a.m. Mr. Voss seconded the meeting. Ms. Lenihan took a roll call vote, passed 12-0.