

A meeting of the Building Committee was held on Wednesday, October 15, 2008, at 6:30 p.m. in the Nonnewaug High School Library, 5 Minortown Road, Woodbury, Connecticut.

Present were committee Chairman Steve Sordi, and committee members JP Fernandes, Sal Catalano, Steve Morris, Ray Villanova, and Rob Van Akin. Also, Paul Lisi and Mike Ayles of Antinozzi Associates, Lorel Purcell and Ken Biega from O&G Industries, Superintendent Robert Cronin, Jay Hubelbank and Mike Molzon of Region 14 were present.

Mr. Sordi called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.

1. Report from the Chair

a. Meeting with Field of Dreams Representatives

Mr. Sordi reported meeting, along with Mr. Hubelbank and Mr. Molzon, with the Field of Dreams representatives to determine where they are with regards to the R14 property on Rt. 6. The State bridge work has set them back, he said, but they have cleared Wetlands for 2 little league fields there. Gravel has now been approved with that project instead of pavers. Mr. Sordi reviewed that the Gridiron Club was also involved, pulled out when former principal John Vecchitto stated that football would not be played there, and is now back in. Fencing is supposedly going to be donated, and the two groups do have some money and are working on bonding.

Mr. Catalano reminded the committee that the understanding has always been that whatever is developed there could also be used by R14.

Mr. Van Akin noted that this is all interesting, but wondered how it applies to the Building Committee's plans, particularly since Woodbury Baseball intends to put in little league, 60' fields. He wondered what the next steps for the committee are.

Mr. Catalano commented that all fields in Woodbury are overused. Any development reduces the over use of all the fields.

Mr. Fernandes noted that development on Rt. 6 does nothing to change the price of what is proposed at NHS.

Mr. Hubelbank agreed, but felt it could lead to better orientation of fields and more practice fields.

b. Meeting with Selectmen

Mr. Sordi asked Dr. Cronin and Mr. Hubelbank to comment on their meeting with Paul Hinckley.

Dr. Cronin said they had primarily discussed the economy and budget issues.

Mr. Hubelbank added that Mr. Hinckley is open to the idea of meeting and talking with the committee; but, he seems set on his opinions about asphalt and still sees community volunteers as a viable option for field work.

Mr. Van Akin views having Mr. Hinckley on board as key. If the Selectmen do not back the project there is no sense in having the committee work to get community support. He also sees the need to get Mr. Hinckley to abandon the idea of volunteers for this project.

Mr. Sordi reported having met with Jeff Hamel, who questioned getting the project done in this economy. Mr. Hamel stated that he would support certain of the projects as line items in the capital budget.

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Mr. Van Akin repeated his stand that the committee has the right plan, but that it would surely have failed at referendum because the town officials are not on board. He added that it doesn't seem to matter what the Board of Education wants.

Dr. Cronin asked the committee if it could try to identify factors keeping the project from moving forward. He asked, what if the Selectmen will not support the project, what then? Does the committee take the proposal to the BOE and ask them to take it to referendum regardless.

Mr. Catalano felt all the committee can do it provide a recommendation.

Mr. Van Akin felt that if Mr. Hinckley would not support the project while he was running for office, why would he support it now?

Mr. Catalano was not sure that Mr. Hinckley's approval is vital.

Mr. Van Akin repeated that he does not want to waste time. He offered the idea of going forward, but leaving out the field work.

He added that he sympathizes with Dr. Cronin and the students, who have a sub-standard school.

Mr. Hubelbank agreed with the idea of bringing the plan to the BOE and allowing them to decide when to attempt it, as a whole or in parts. The committee, he said, was charged only with bringing them a good plan.

Dr. Cronin suggested changing what the committee feels should be changed, and then bringing it to the BOE.

Mr. Morris agreed, adding that the committee could bring several options: interior work, exterior, fields, etc.

Mr. Molzon commented that this was what Mr. Hinckley wanted, an a la carte menu. He wanted to be able to choose those items deemed academically necessary; however, learning takes place in buildings, he said, which is an idea the Selectmen don't seem to understand.

Mr. Catalano asked Mr. Van Akin what he thought of that idea, allowing the BOE to choose from several packages?

Mr. Sordi did not like the idea, feeling a la carte does not work and causes special interest groups to vote for what is important to them, and then nothing passes.

Mr. Van Akin agreed and noted that is why it is best to package all the projects together, as the committee has believed all along. He suggested showing Mr. Hinckley the costs; if they are too high, then pull out the field work, but don't sacrifice the essential building work. He also asked if it wasn't the BOE's responsibility to sell the project to the Selectmen?

Dr. Cronin said he felt the Building Committee had done the job it was given.

Mr. Catalano agreed that it had, in addition to accepting other aspects like public relations.

2. Privilege of the Floor

None.

3. Follow-up from Last Meeting

a. Auditorium

The committee was offered an outline of what is and is not part of the auditorium bid in order to determine what is considered FF&E. Mr. Van Akin had been concerned that all that is included in the Oxford project was budgeted, or if some would be owner responsibility. If so, a larger budget would be needed. The acoustical shell, for example, is FF&E.

Mr. Biega suggested that Bruce Gelbar would know the FF&E from the Oxford project and would be able to tell the committee those details when it visits Oxford.

Mr. Hubelbank listed possible dates and times to visit Oxford.

b. Fields

The committee was shown that a field within the track would work, but just barely, and there would be no room for anything else, including anywhere to stand. There was definitely not room for any bleachers.

c. Cafeteria

Mr. Lisi showed a mapping of the seating suggested at the last meeting, to accommodate all the students without enclosing the patio section. He deems the scenario of 280 students in the café as it currently is to be unsafe.

Mr. Hubelbank added that, with the patio enclosed and utilizing the current teachers' lounge, 384 could be accommodated. This would almost allow for just 2 lunch waves and, as Dr. Cronin added, a block schedule.

d. Trip to Oxford – previously discussed.

e. Timeline

Mr. Hubelbank showed an updated timeline which Mr. Ayles explained pushes the project out a year from where it was last year. Mr. Catalano noted that it also adds more time where it will likely be needed, such as for State reviews.

Ms. Purcell suggested moving the site work, tennis court and parking, to later in the timeline.

Mr. Catalano felt the only nuance to the timeline would be to see how the Gridiron Club's plans fit in to those of the committee.

4. Update from Antinozzi Associates

Nothing further.

5. Update from O&G

Ms. Pucell offered handouts on conceptual design estimates, order of magnitude, and including escalation estimates, additional tennis court figures and bottom line numbers.

The committee also discussed with her the ramifications of starting the project prior to securing funding from the State.

Mr. Biega urged making sure the Selectmen are on board. If they are not, he said, in this economy the project will not pass. He commented that the most successful projects are those that provide more room where it is needed, such as the café work. Voters understand that need, he said, whereas the field work is harder to sell. He added that, even in a bad economy, referenda are passing. Voters feel that, by the time the tax impact comes due, the economy could be cycling back up.

Mr. Villanova stressed putting out the project in such a way as to draw in the interested groups and, thereby, creating interest in the entire project.

Mr. Catalano suggested that the only recommendation from the committee be to leave the field work out.

Mr. Ayles brought up the court ruling, and the possibility of waiting for that in order to package in the MES work, which is both clearly needed and also subject to a much higher reimbursement rate.

Mr. Van Akin asked Dr. Cronin for an update on the lawsuit.
Dr. Cronin explained the delays related to submitting briefs from the other side. He reviewed that once both sides submit briefs, the Judge rules within 120 days.

7. Next Steps and Timeline

It was discussed that the committee's next meeting is scheduled for 10/27, prior to any opportunity to visit Oxford. Mr. Hubelbank agreed to check with Oxford to see if a visit could be made on that day. It was also noted that the committee meeting dates of 11/10 and 11/24 conflict with teacher negotiations. (Note: it is 10/27 and 11/10 which conflict with teacher negotiations and this has since been communicated to the committee. The committee may choose to still visit Oxford on 10/27, although Dr. Cronin and Mr. Hubelbank will not be available) Meetings will be cancelled or rescheduled.

8. Privilege of the Floor

None.

Hearing nothing further, Mr. Morris made the motion to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Catalano.
The motion unanimously carried.

The meeting of the Building Committee adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra W. Carlton