

## **Dedham School Building Rehabilitation Committee**

Hosted at the Dedham Town Hall  
SBRC Meeting Minutes – **APPROVED**  
Monday December 5, 2022 – 7:00 PM

### **Members present:**

(A= attended Meeting; P= attended partial meeting)

	<b>Voting Members:</b>		<b>VERTEX: Owners Project Manager (OPM)</b>		<b>Other:</b>
A	John Tocci, Chair	A	Bryan Jarvis, Project Director	A	Mike Welch, Superintendent (non-voting)
A	Steve Bilafer, Vice Chair	A	Stephen Theran, Sr. Project Manager		Kimberly Hermesch, Oakdale Principal
A	Kevin Coughlin	A	Anissa Ellis, Project Manager		Matt Wells, Assistant Supt. for Business and Finance
A	John Heffernan		<b>Jonathan Levi Associates (Designer):</b>	A	Dedham TV
	Mayanne MacDonald Briggs	A	Jonathan Levi		Denise Moroney, Director of Facilities
A	Victor Hebert	A	Philip Gray		
A	Phillip Gonzalez	A	Carol Harris		

**Distribution: SRBC Members and other attendees**

### **1. Meeting called to order at 7:00 PM**

No public comment.

### **2. Previous meetings minutes reviewed:**

Mr. Tocci requested approval of the minutes from the previous meeting held on 11/21/22.

John Tocci noted a typo on page #4 about Rustrcraft Road being one word.

Motion: Mr. Hebert

Seconded by Mr. Gonzalez.

The motion passed. 7-0-0.

### **3. Introduction of Jonathan Levi Associates, Selected Project Designer:**

Mr. Levi introduced his Design team for the project. Jonathan Levi is the principal, Philip Gray will be the day to day contact for the project, Carol Harris will be the assistant PM and the internal Library/Media Specialist. David Stephen who is not in attendance tonight will be the educational program specialist for the project.

Mr. Levi began his powerpoint presentation highlighting his team, past experience, past projects, and the process he is proposing for the Oakdale School project.

Mr. Gray reviewed the overall proposed project schedule, including SBRC and School Committee meeting dates, to get to a Town Meeting vote in early 2024.

Mr. Hebert asked if Community Use of the schools was a part of the preliminary scope or how that became part of the project.

Mr. Levi noted that it was not originally part of the project but was developed through the design process. The Community's appreciate the intersection of the purpose of the school and including the larger community in that design.

Mr. Hebert noted that we have the opportunity to do that with Oakdale School and it would be a great benefit to the community.

Mr. Gonzalez asked how the break out schools came to be in the design for the Field School in Weston, MA and who requested these spaces?

Mr. Levi stated these spaces were requested by the teachers and faculty. The JLA team interviewed the administration of each school in Brookline and asked them what they want to see in the new school and how can a new school design best help them. The largest requested was outdoor teaching spaces. The same process in Weston brought about the break out spaces in the Weston school. These requests came about very early on in the process and were integrated into the design.

Mr. Gray added that teaching changes over the years and they strive to make flexible spaces that can be used in multiple ways for this reason.

Mr. Bilafer noted that one of the largest obstacles for this project, should the committee opt to recommend consolidation, is getting the community on board with a larger school than what they are currently used to. He asked if JLA can provide any research and data to show the differences between a larger school and a small school.

Mr. Gray stated he can provide that information. He also noted that it is very important, especially with the larger schools, to break down the school into "cohorts" so the students don't feel lost.

Mr. Levi added that the smaller schools have a history and culture. JLA will learn those traditions and honor them in a new way with a new school. He also noted that the resources available in a larger school is a great advantage and his team will work with the community to help them understand.

Mr. Tocci noted that the schools JLA highlighted for them show lots of natural light. He asked if there are any challenges with construction or any issues with maintenance or window failures with that technology?

Mr. Levi noted that the buildings use well known technology and that there are lots of different types of glass. They also use light shelves that bounce the light deeper into the classroom, this isn't new technology and the buildings do not leak. Mr. Levi noted that

they have a technical architect on their team and he reviews all the construction documents for constructability prior to finalizing plans.

Mr. Coughlin asked how much experience the JLA team has with PV and green energy. Mr. Levi stated his team built one of the first large scale geothermal buildings in the Northeast for the IRS revenue headquarters. They have also built schools with zero carbon emissions.

Ms. Harris noted that they are currently building a school with geothermal energy and it's 100% electric with a biodiesel generator and solar panels on the roof tops.

Mr. Tocci asked who is typically on a Working Group?

Mr. Levi stated they typically see the school principal, superintendent, one or two members of the committee.

Mr. Jarvis stated that's essentially what we have already. And we can pull in additional stakeholders as needed.

Mr. Tocci started a discussion on upcoming meeting dates. The SBRC decided on the following schedule: Monday 12/19, Monday 1/9/23, and Monday 1/23/23 all at 7:00pm.

#### **4. Site Considerations:**

Mr. Tocci noted that last meeting the SBRC started talking about potential sites for consideration. He noted that if the Town takes over any open space governed by Article 97 they have to give back similar open spaces. It is unclear if some of the properties being discussed (Striar property) are considered part of this Article 97 open space bylaw.

Mr. Tocci noted there is a list of sites for consideration and they all have challenges:

1 – All three current school properties, Oakdale, Greenlodge, and Riverdale.

1 - The Striar Property is large space off Sprague Street near the old Capen School. The issue with the Striar Property is it is near wetlands and there are traffic concerns. A field proposal for this location was not approved at Town Meeting in the recent past.

2 - The Capen school is a small parcel with elevation concerns.

Paul Park is a small park in a neighborhood, it may not be large enough for a school.

3 - Memorial Field is a large field in the middle of Town. There would be too much of a community uproar if this area is taken out of service.

4 - Rustcraft Road is a big open area with soccer and baseball fields, heavily used by sports.

5 - The Dolan Center is the current location of the recreation department headquarters. There are wetlands issues and a building that is not in great condition. There is also a dog park at this location.

6 – Whitcomb Woods has lots of woods and topography changes.

Mr. Theran asked if the heavily used fields are realistic.

Mr. Tocci does not believe the fields will be realistic but should be evaluated. Parks and Rec would have to approve the use of the fields, and then the SBRC would have to figure out what the process would be to use these fields. Probably a Town Meeting approval.

Mr. Welch noted that the Capen school is leased by the Blue Hills adult education school and part of the building is used by the Parks and Recreation department. The building can be evaluated as an option.

Mr. Levi asked what percentage of the population at the Oakdale School walks?

Mr. Welch noted that there is 1 bus for the school (about 40-45 students), and large number of students are driven to school. And Greenlodge and Riverdale are very similar.

Mr. Tocci noted there is a large number of students who use the before and after care at the schools.

Mr. Levi stated the team needs to review all of the potential sites regardless of if the SBRC doesn't think they are viable. The Design team will create a matrix and map out all of the potential sites and evaluate them all based on the same criteria.

Mr. Heffernan stated the SBRC wants to have a very clear reason to explain why some sites are not viable. He asked what the evaluation criteria will be, example site size would be one.

Mr. Levi stated within a couple of weeks JLA can provide a suggested list of criteria and start mapping out all the sites that have been mentioned.

Mr. Jarvis stated it is important to have a complete list with parcel numbers to start the process.

Mr. Levi asked if there is a map showing locations of all the houses that are providing students to the schools that can be used when evaluating sites?

Mr. Welch stated there is a map that can be provided.

Mr. Gray stated he would like to set up walk throughs of the existing schools with the principals. He will coordinate with Vertex.

## **5. Frequently Asked Questions Review:**

Mr. Tocci stated there is a list of Frequently Asked Questions that are on the project website and there is a list being circulated within the subcommittee for review. Mr. Tocci asked if the subcommittee had a chance to review the next round of questions and answers.

Mr. Hebert stated he is good with the responses.

Mr. Heffernan stated he just wants to make sure the responses are accurate.

Mr. Tocci will reach out to Mayanne to get her feedback as well.

Mr. Welch stated it's important for JLA to hear the question that has come up a few times asking if there is a benefit of having a large school vs. a small school. He requested JLA's assistance in helping to answer this question and make them aware that this reflects the community concern with school consolidation.

Mr. Levi said he will look into and review with his educational planner and provide some feedback.

Ms. Ellis stated she will get the approved questions and answers posted this week once the final comments are received back from the SBRC.

## **6. Future Public Meetings:**

Mr. Tocci noted that tomorrow night is another PTO meeting and the Middle School PTO meeting in February. He stated the team needs to start thinking about future meetings with the larger community and put a schedule together now.

Mr. Welch stated we have met with all the elementary school PTO's, however we have not reached out to the broader community and it is critical to educate them on the project as well.

Mr. Jarvis stated they have typically started visioning sessions and then provided feedback from those sessions to the broader community. That process should start so the SBRC has something to show and for the community to react to prior to scheduling a meeting. Vertex can provide some examples of previous "first community meetings" to the SBRC for review. He also noted that Vertex has also sent out mailers to every home in the Town through the post office along with principal newsletters and posting in town spaces.

Mr. Levi stated his team has also done road shows ahead of the community meetings at churches etc. to touch base with some community groups prior to the initial meeting.

Mr. Jarvis stated the logistics of getting these things done will be handled through the working group.

Mr. Tocci also noted that they will need to address some of these sites with the parks and rec department prior to the community meeting to make them aware of the project and process.

## **7. New Business:**

Mr. Tocci asked for any public questions. There are none.

Mr. Tocci asked for any new business.

Mr. Theran asked if the SBRC had a chance to review the information he sent over for the demographic and redistricting consultants.

Mr. Tocci stated he thinks that will be a school committee decision. He also asked if this is the right time in the process to get those consultants engaged.

Mr. Jarvis believes it is important to have that data now as part of the evaluations and consolidation decision.

Mr. Tocci asked if the consultant will be hired through Vertex.

Mr. Jarvis stated they can be and we have used them on many previous projects.

Mr. Levi agreed it is important to have that information during the site evaluation process.

Mr. Welch wanted to note that JLA and Vertex will be presenting at the School Committee meeting this Wednesday and that is the first opportunity for JLA to meet the school committee.

## **8. Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Hebert

Second by Mr. Heffernan

Unanimous vote to adjourn

Meeting Adjourned at 8:50 pm.

## **Attachments:**

Vertex SBRC PowerPoint

JLA PowerPoint slides.