

Arlington Redevelopment Board
Monday May 20, 2019, 7:30 p.m.
Town Hall Annex, Second Floor Conference Room
Meeting Minutes

This meeting was recorded by ACMi.

PRESENT: Andrew Bunnell (Chair), David Watson, Eugene Benson, Kin Lau

STAFF: Jennifer Raitt, Director, Planning and Community Development

The Chair called the meeting to order and notified the attendees that ACMi is recording the meeting. The Chair then introduced the first agenda item, Presentation by Arlington High School Building Committee (HSBC).

HSBC members introduced themselves: Sandy Pooler, Deputy Town Manager, Kent Worst, teacher at Arlington High School (AHS), John Cole former chair of the Permanent Town Building Committee, Jeff Thielman, Chair of the HSBC. Mr. Thielman reviewed the proposal approved by Town Meeting. As of 2013, the state placed AHS on warning because the facilities are deficient and the layout is very complicated. AHS was built in 1914 with additions in 1938, 1960, and 1961. In 1970, a proposal to build a new high school was voted down, leading to the 1980 and 1981 additions. The building serves multiple uses as well as the High School, including the Lab Collaborative, Adult Community Education, and Town offices. In 2014 the process started, was accepted by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) in 2015, and the HSBC formed in 2016. The HSBC has been working with MSPA for several years now on this project. The HSBC expects to receive \$86 million from the State for this project.

Mr. Thielman explained that there are some site issues that increase the project costs. The high school site is compact, there are grade changes, the Mill Brook runs under the site, and some of the site is contaminated. Mr. Thielman explained that some Town offices in the current High School will not be located in the new High School building. The Information Technology Department will be moving to Public Works building, the Comptroller's office will be moved to Town Hall. Payroll, District Administration, and Menotomy preschool will remain at AHS. MSBA will be reimbursing the Town for the cost of the pre-school.

Mr. Worst reviewed the educational plan written by AHS principal. Mr. Worst reviewed the layout central spine that connects Mass Ave. from 55 doors down to 2 public entries and exits. The four major components of the school will be along the "spine" of the building.

The HSBC decided to build a new school because it is the best option for children, viability/sustainability for the school, and a faster construction cycle. The other option would also require longer time with modular classrooms which are not reimbursable by the Commonwealth. The design will also allow more green space around of the school and more capacity for fields behind the school. Mr. Worst said the design will save the lawn and all mature trees on the lawn. Historical aspects and legacy of the site should be commemorated and will be incorporated into the new campus.

Mr. Pooler explained that the new High School will be a green building, a net zero building with geothermal heating. It will be determined what the mix of geothermal and other elements to make the building as green as possible. The plans currently meet silver LEED certification with a high likelihood to hit gold. The new High School will be carbon neutral, the utilities provided and energy consumption analyses of building plans versus current building find the energy use will be at least a third less than the existing building.

Mr. Thielman said if there is a 'no' vote on the debt exclusion on June 11th, the design process will have to start over. The HSBC would have a new design firm contracted within two years, will identify a new OPM, and request a new debt exclusion. With that option the Town will have an inferior school with some undersized spaces and some windowless education spaces and will cost more money. The HSBC is holding a forum at town hall with give a longer presentation to allow for more dialogue with the community.

Mr. Watson asked if the HSBC will need anything formally reviewed and approved by the ARB. Ms. Raitt stated there would not be any formal Special Permit review. Mr. Watson asked about how much more green space would be on site after the 3rd and 4th wings are built and the fields are completed. Mr. Thielman stated there will be more green space, an amphitheater on the side of the building, a courtyard, green space in front and back of the building, softball, baseball, soccer fields, and connection to the bikeway. Mr. Watson asked about the involvement of the neighboring Schouler Court residents. Mr. Thielman said the Schouler Court residents have been attending meetings and have been updated.

Mr. Lau asked who will be overseeing the construction. Mr. Thiemann said the oversight committee requested proposals and could have a construction company as soon as early June. Skanska is the Construction Manager (CM) at Risk.

Mr. Benson asked how the staff is reacting to these changes. Mr. Worst said the staff is very excited about working in a new building; the current building design is confusing, there is poor temperature control in the building, and the building is in a state of poor repair.

The Chair introduced the 2nd agenda item, ARB Property Portfolio updates. Ms. Raitt reviewed her memo to the Board. She explained that the ARB has to decide if they will grant an extension for the tenants at 23 Maple Street for an additional five years, up to 6/30/2025. The ARB has to notify the tenant by 6/30/19 of their decision. Ms. Raitt recommends not extending their lease understanding the building and capital needs throughout the ARB's portfolio. The Town is also looking for options for additional space during upcoming construction at the Central School and other Town buildings. The Board will have the option to lease the space to a future tenant through a Request for Proposals process managed by the Town. The Chair stated his support to not renew the lease for 23 Maple. Mr. Lau motioned to approve the recommendation not to renew the lease. Watson seconded. All voted in favor 4-0.

Ms. Raitt reviewed the next property, the STEP Program (Schools for Children), housed at Central School. Their lease ends on 6/30/19 with an option to extend monthly for an additional 6 months, until 12/31/19. That will have an impact on the Central School renovation plan causing a two-month construction delay. The plan was to start the renovation on the second floor so the ground floor tenants can move to the second floor and then move the renovation to the ground floor. STEP currently plans to stay through the end of summer 2019.

Ms. Raitt then discussed Christine Bongiorno's, Director of Health and Human Services (HHS), memo requesting a name change for the Arlington Senior Center. Many communities have moved towards more age-friendly terminology. They propose renaming the building the Arlington Community Center. Ms. Raitt said that the Building should remain the Central School since it is historically known as the Central School, but to support the HHS's request to allow the Senior Center to change their name to the Community Center. Mr. Benson asked if the Council on Aging (COA) board and Arlington Seniors Association (ASA) support the name change. It is Ms. Raitt's understanding that they are in support. Mr. Lau said he feels this decision is up to the COA and ASA. The Chair moved to retain the name Central School for the building but allow the HHS to rename the space being used as the Senior Center to the Arlington Community Center. Mr. Lau seconded. All voted in favor 4-0.

The Chair introduced the 3rd agenda item, Debrief Annual Town Meeting/ Special Town Meeting, next steps. Ms. Raitt provided the Board with a summary of what was adopted during town meeting, other bylaw amendments of interest and funding appropriations made. Ms. Raitt announced that Rachel Zsembery will start as a member of the ARB and will be attending the 6/3/19 meeting. Ms. Raitt asked for any additional thoughts and ideas before the 6/3/19 meeting to assist with the ARB's goal setting. Mr. Watson stated he would like to take into account community priorities when setting goals for next year.

The Chair moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Lau seconded. All voted in favor 4-0.

Meeting adjourned.