

FACILITIES TASK FORCE III

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, July 19, 2007

Groton-Dunstable Regional High School – Library
6:30 p.m.

Present: Bill McDonald, Maryanne Squeglia, Nancy Bugbee, Gary Hoglund, Art Campbell, Dave Johnson, Walter Alterisio, Betsy Dolan, Josh Degen, Pete Carson, Tim Sheehan

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m.

Minutes were approved from the June meeting, with some minor edits.

Tim Sheehan reported briefly on District monies in the E & D fund and what they had been used for and plans for future use of the funds. The District had spent (this past year), about \$30-35,000 from the E & D fund, and that for FY '07, \$45-50,000 had been targeted by the School Committee *specifically* for improvements/maintenance at Prescott for remediation of the air quality problem there.

In regards to engaging possible firms to conduct enrollment projection studies for this Task Force, Mr. Sheehan reported that he did not feel the necessity to check into *other* firms since this District was already an existing member of NESDEC. Subsequently, the Task Force agreed that it would use the services of NESDEC at the appropriate time when an enrollment projection study was to be conducted.

Prescott

Discussion ensued regarding the maintenance/renovation issues at Prescott. It was stated that if a substantial amount of money *was* agreed to be allotted for renovations to Prescott, then the FTF would need to make sure that it justifies the expense. It was also felt that part of this Task Force's charge was to make the important decision of whether to continue to use it as a District school.

It was noted that any major renovation which is greater than 30% of a building's assessed value would reach a 'threshold', which *then* would require full compliance with disability codes. (The term "ADA compliance" has been used by this committee, however, it is actually the Massachusetts General Laws on disability accessibility which prevail and are adhered to.) The 30% value is based on one project whether it is done at one time or over a period of up to 36 months. It is not based on several projects over a period of years. There are also several exemptions to this rule, such as roof and window repair, etc.

In reference to ADA compliance rules, it was agreed that it would be a good idea for these rules to be posted on the District website, in the FTF's domain.

MSBA Letter

The Chair presented to the FTF a letter that had been written to the District by the MSBA Board. This letter referenced the District's 'Statement of Interest' for renovations/maintenance projects with regards to the following schools: Prescott, Florence Roche Elementary, GD Regional Middle School and Swallow Union Elementary. In doing this, it would 'get' Groton-Dunstable on a list for reimbursement from the state for the listed projects. The Chair then put forth the question of what the Superintendent's expectation was, from this Task Force, in regards to this letter. Tim Sheehan offered to look into this with Dr. Genovese.

High School Site – Land

Some discussion ensued regarding the ‘available’ land at the High School. It was noted that the Natural Heritage Division of the Fish and Wildlife Agency had recently written new verbage and definitions in regards to what was buildable land and what species of animals were on the endangered list here in Massachusetts. This new ‘verbage’ would most likely affect *what* land could be used to build on at the High School. It was agreed that there exists a number of issues involved at the High School site – the land that could be used to build a new elementary school (i.e. the creation of a self-contained water system, conservation issues, etc.). This subsequently led to the conclusion that this FTF needs to decide if the District needs to build a new elementary school, or, if we should keep Prescott operating as an elementary school and invest in the major renovations that may need to be done there.

Information Gathering

In discussion regarding the question of either building a new elementary school or renovating Prescott and keeping it in operation, the Task Force agreed that it needs to:

- Come up with solid, accurate demographic/enrollment projections
- Get a solid estimate as to what it *would* cost to renovate Prescott and the *extent* to which it would be renovated
- Find out what building permits are currently in the ‘pipeline’ in Groton and Dunstable
- Look at the 40B projects in both towns
- Look into answers to:
 - a) the birth rates in Groton and Dunstable (probably available from the Town Halls);
 - b) the average number of children in a household and what are the ages of the children who move into town;
 - c) the average number of years residents are ‘staying’ in their homes
 - d) the trends at Boutwell (Early Childhood Center) in terms of enrollment/population
 - e) which buildings (District schools), can have additions built on to them and which ones cannot

Gary Hogle and Dave Johnson have been working on researching some of this information and hope to summarize their findings and report back to the Task Force at the next scheduled meeting. There was a request for them to present a ‘best case’ and ‘worst case’ scenario.

Josh Degen stated that he, also, would be willing to help out with getting some of this information (av. @# of children in a household, av. # of yrs. residents stay in their homes).

In reference to the demographic/enrollment projection study, it was agreed that members of this Task Force would do a study/research in reference to these projections *as well as* have NESDEC conduct its own professional study – done in ‘parallel’.

Formation of Subcommittees

Due to the amount and complexity of information and research to be done in reference to the Prescott School and the enrollment/demographic projection study, a suggestion was made to form subcommittees in reference to these two particular ‘areas of interest/*need* for information’. It would also cut down the amount of time the Task Force would need to spend discussing these complex issues and the concerns associated with them at *each* monthly meeting. After research

was done, each of these subcommittees could then give a detailed and thorough report on its particular 'assigned topic'. A motion was made to form two subcommittees:

- 1) one committed to *exclusively* exploring the maintenance needs/renovations to Prescott, the costs associated with that *and* the feasibility of keeping it in operation as an elementary school; and
- 2) one committed to looking into enrollment/demographic projections and 40B projects and building permits that were 'on the table' in both towns

Art Campbell agreed to chair the Prescott subcommittee, and Gary Hogle and Dave Johnson agreed to chair the enrollment/demographic/'building scenario' subcommittee (which they had already begun researching). Each of them would recruit other FTF members to help in serving on the subcommittees.

It was brought up that another *possible* subcommittee might be one which would look into possible building sites/land in the event that a decision was made in favor of building a new elementary school. It was believed that there exists (from the work of the last Task Force- II), a list of the parcels of land that were available three years ago to build on. It was agreed that it would probably be helpful if someone could retrieve that list. Nancy Bugbee agreed to look into this.

It was agreed that FTF meeting minutes, after formal approval by the FTF, should be posted on the School District website, in the FTF's domain. Nancy Bugbee agreed to get in touch with Joan Campbell to check to see if this could be done.

There was discussion re: site of the next FTF meeting; a decision was made that the next meeting would be held @ Florence Roche Elementary School – August 16. Nancy Bugbee would get in touch with the new Florence Roche principal, Ruthann Goguen, to notify her of the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.