

FACILITIES TASK FORCE III

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, November 15, 2007

Groton-Dunstable Regional High School – Library

6:30 p.m.

Present: Voting Members: Bill McDonald, Nancy Bugbee, Maryanne Squeglia, Gary Hoglund, Dave Johnson, Karen Lofgren, Elena Lazaris, Josh Degen, Pete Carson
Nonvoting Members: Shelley Marcus Cohen, Betty Lavin, Pete Myerson, Karen Tuomi
Others present: Berta Erickson

Chair Bill McDonald called the meeting to order at 6:50 p.m.

Member Josh Degen stated to the task force that he had received word from Mihran Kohesian that he was going to be resigning his position on this task force due to time constraints. Nancy Bugbee agreed to follow up with Mr. Kohesian to verify this and to inquire of the Superintendent's office as to who his replacement would be.

The Chair made a motion to accept the FTF meeting minutes from both the July and August meetings. The motion for both sets of minutes was unanimously accepted.

Bill McDonald stated that he was hoping to have a discussion regarding the MSBA, specifically: where Groton-Dunstable was on the 'list', what regulations the MSBA had as far as funding, what kind of renovations we were possibly considering, etc. However, with the absence of Dr. Genovese, this topic would have to be postponed until the next scheduled meeting.

The remainder of the meeting consisted of two notable presentations: one by Dave Johnson and Gary Hoglund on demographic/enrollment projections for the two towns and the other by Elena Lazaris on the Prescott School – a building evaluation covering such topics as future maintenance plans, enrollment trends, space considerations and renovation of Prescott vs. new construction.

Demographic/Enrollment Projection Report

(Please note: These are merely notes culled from discussion about the report, not detailed information regarding specific data that was presented for the District schools' enrollments as part of the report. For more detailed information, please refer to the report itself.)

Dave and Gary began this project by looking at previous studies that had been done in the past to see how accurate they (the enrollment projection/numbers), had turned out to be (or not). They then decided to replicate this to try and come up with, or predict, their *own* projections for future enrollment numbers for this school district three to five years out.

They created a simple model in which to enter data with an assortment of different assumptions. The idea was to have a framework/model in place that they could plug in a variety of assumptions and then see what projections came out of it. They also wanted to create a 'range' – with enrollment projections showing the numbers resulting from 'high growth' within the two towns and one which would show enrollment projections resulting from 'low growth'. It was stated during the presentation that birth rates have been going down in BOTH towns for the last six years. It was also noted that the huge boom in housing development and population growth during the '90s was, in large part, due to the hi-tech industry moving out to the Rt. 495 area and families moving to Groton and the surrounding towns along the 495 belt because of the job

opportunities. Discussion ensued in reference to the present real estate market and how it has affected the number of people moving into Groton and Dunstable (considerably down), and conversely, the population of people who cannot *sell* their homes, desiring to move 'out'.

There was a particular question posed regarding certain figures and space capacity that were presented in the report: were the modulars (i.e. at the Middle School and Florence Roche), included in the report's numbers as 'meaningful' space and/or were they taken into consideration in reference to available space? Mr. Johnson and Mr. Hogleund noted that the modulars *were 'included' and considered* available classroom space in their projected numbers. It was stated by one member that perhaps a new projection could be made *without* taking into account the current, available modular space now at the Middle School and Florence Roche, particularly because most of the present modulars are reaching the end of their 'life span'. Both Mr. Johnson and Mr. Hogleund agreed that this could be done in time for the next meeting.

Before beginning this project, Gary Hogleund mentioned that he had looked at the 2000 and 2005 NESDEC enrollment studies that had been done to see how accurate they actually were (comparing *its* numbers to the '*actual*' numbers from those two years). He stated that they had been quite accurate and that perhaps this task force should consider joining NESDEC so that it could take advantage of its service of providing enrollment studies to school districts at no cost (one caveat: it *would* cost around \$2,300 to join NESDEC with one of the benefits being the ability to have them conduct an enrollment projection study at no additional cost). It was noted that if the task force decided to take action on this, that it would need to do it fairly quickly as there was a December 7 deadline for membership applications to join NESDEC. Bill McDonald noted that he would need to contact Dr. Genovese to inquire about the GD School District applying for NESDEC membership. Subsequently, member Josh Degen then made a motion for a recommendation to the Superintendent that the District Administration fund membership in NESDEC for the purpose of gathering long term projection enrollment data for pertinent informational use by this task force. The motion was seconded, voted on and accepted by the majority of the voting members present.

Elena Lazaris noted that there was a new, 'free' on-line tool that the MSBA was piloting whereby school districts who entered information/data into an MSBA database, on-line, could then get future projected enrollment figures for its particular school district. She was not sure exactly when this would be available for use.

Member Josh Degen stated that the only information that the FTF was notably missing was: 1) the numbers regarding how many building permits are currently available (in both towns); and 2) how many lots were available that could be potentially approved to be developed (i.e. 40B and residential).

One other comment and/or discussion centered around the issue of possibly taking students out of Prescott (*if* the decision was made to take Prescott 'off-line' as an elementary school), dividing them up and then placing them in Florence Roche and Swallow Union, *if* the numbers 'worked out' and *if* there was space. A variety of issues were brought up concerning this topic: real space availability at each of the schools, possible overcrowding at each of the school's common/core areas (cafeteria, library, playground), division/placement of staff, etc. It was decided that this particular issue needed to be discussed more in depth and at the next possible meeting.

Prescott School Building Evaluation

(Please note: These are merely notes culled from discussion about the report, not detailed information regarding specific data that was presented for Prescott as part of the report. For more detailed information, please refer to the report itself.)

Elena Lazaris presented an in-depth and detailed report on the Prescott school. To name a few, the report included information on Prescott's property background, its existing structural conditions, areas for concern, future maintenance plans, space considerations and regulatory requirements. Ms. Lazaris noted that *if* Prescott is accepted 'into' the National Register of Historic Places, it would open up possible funding for renovations (estimated time of acceptance into the Register – early 2009).

Several facts noted:

- ❖ Prescott's present property value: \$1,685,000 (the land and building included)
- ❖ Only three classrooms meeting code compliance at present
- ❖ 34 parking spaces

Ms. Lazaris stated that Steve Byrne, the Director of Facilities/Maintenance, would be doing some in-house air quality testing in the next several weeks to see where the CO2 levels were. He preferred to do them at the end of November because the school would be 'closed up' due to the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday and the cold weather would be here.

The issue of obtaining and using CPA funds for a feasibility study on Prescott was brought up. Josh Degen offered his assistance and time to Ms. Lazaris if she chose to go before the CPC to give a presentation on Prescott and inquire as to whether Prescott would possibly be eligible for CPA funding. They decided to look into this and to see when the next CPA meeting was scheduled.

Praise was given to Gary Hoaglund, Dave Johnson and Elena Lazaris for their hard work and time spent in putting together these two aforementioned reports.

Again, 40B was determined to still be the wild card in the 'development' projections. A member also asked whether there were any trends in regards to how many students continue on in the District public schools from grade 8 on and how many 'opt out' to other schools (i.e. Lawrence Academy, Parker Charter School – gr. 7). Dave Johnson stated that they did not have that information, except for one year, 2000, which was information for that 'one point in time'.

Since the FTF was tentatively scheduled to present a report before the School Committee on Wednesday, January 2, it was agreed that the next scheduled meeting of the FTF would take place on Thursday, December 13, at 6:30 p.m. at the High School to gather input and information from members and to formulate a report for that presentation.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.