

Thursday, October 15, 2020

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held October 15, 2020, by video call, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 5:17 p.m. Present were members Chair John Weldon, Vice Chair Hernan Illingworth, Secretary Bobbi Brown, Joseph Sokolovic, Jessica Martinez, Sybil Allen, and Albert Benejan.

Superintendent Michael J. Testani was present.

The first agenda item was on the conceptual design for the new Bassick High by Perkins Eastman.

Joseph Costa of Perkins Eastman; Joe Banks, project manager; Mike Berger, design architect; Alison Dobbertin, design architect; and Michael Cegan, landscape architect, were present.

Mr. Costa said finished designs are not completed, but preliminary conceptual drawings would be shown. He noted that for the first time in a hundred years the school would have its own home field. He said the presentation would be a repeat of what was just presented to the School Building Committee.

Mr. Banks said the schematic design is just underway, which will be followed by design development and construction documents. These must be completed before the project goes out to bid.

Ms. Dobbertin said the site is about 1.25 miles south of the current Bassick site. Almost half of the new site is taken up with the athletic field. She pointed out the areas for vehicles and pedestrian access to the site. The location of the front door is still to be decided.

Ms. Dobbertin said there is a coastal flood defense system that is being planned. Regrading will be required to cover up the berm.

Mr. Berger said two options were presented to the School Building Committee: a four-story building or a three-story building. He said the School Building Committee voted for the four-story option.

Mr. Berger said the site has a great location adjacent to the harbor, Seaside Park, the field, and higher education. The building will be out of the flood zone.

Mr. Berger described the four levels of the proposed building. A lobby space would overlook the park and the ball field. There is a detached auto shop in the upper left-hand corner of the site.

Mr. Berger said the floors are designed in a simple L-shaped circulation plan and an administrator can stand at the intersection of the two corridors and observe the entire floor from one vantage point.

Mr. Cegan described the site. He said the main parking lot would be south of University Avenue and the parking lot was adjacent to the field.

Mr. Berger also described the three-story option for the building. The main difference is more program space is

packed into the upper floors, including a lot of inward-looking classrooms, which do not include the great views of the first option.

Mr. Costa said the level of detail will increase by orders of magnitude with the upcoming schematic design.

In response to a question, Mr. Berger said an area for parents will be provided, but that level of detail is not included yet in the plans.

Mr. Benejan said it appeared great and was proceeding in the right direction. Ms. Martinez said she was excited about the plans

Mr. Weldon said it was at these very preliminary stages that public input would be sought.

Mr. Weldon noted the School Building Committee voted on the option and they are the ones that have the contract with the architect. He described this as an informational item for the board.

Mr. Costa said he would be happy to respond to further questions in writing from the board.

The next agenda item was on a pending claim with the Make the Road.

Attorney Marsha Moses was present.

Ms. Martinez moved *“to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing a pending claim of Make the Road.”* Invited to participate were the board members, the superintendent and Attorney Marsha Moses of Berchem

Moses. The motion was seconded by Ms. Allen and unanimously approved.

The executive session began at 5:42 p.m.

The board reconvened in public session at 6:23 p.m.

Ms. Martinez moved *“to decline to enter into the agreement with Make the Road as discussed in executive session and to advise the superintendent to carry that out, also noting that we continue to be partners with Make the Road and we look forward to collaborating for many years in the future.”* The motion was seconded by Mr. Benejan.

The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote. Voting in favor were members Martinez, Benejan, Illingworth, Sokolovic, Allen, and Weldon.

Ms Brown abstained.

Ms. Allen moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod