

**LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Tuesday, January 20, 2015**  
**Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room**  
**1625 Massachusetts Avenue**

**PRESENT: Superintendent Dr. Paul Ash, Chair Margaret Coppe, School Committee Members Jessie Steigerwald, Judith Crocker, Alessandro Alessandrini, William Hurley**

**The minutes were taken by Christine Ashness, Recording Secretary**

**The meeting convened at 7:33pm**

**Call to order and welcome:** Chair Margaret Coppe called the meeting to order, and introduced committee members.

**Public Comments:**

None

**Superintendent's Announcements:**

None

**School Committee Member Announcements:**

Judith Crocker: On January 23 from 7:00-8:30 at Lexington High School there will be a lecture on mental health stability in college. It will be a panel discussion with representatives from several area colleges. It may be taped by LexMedia.

Jessie Steigerwald: An update from the Youth Service Council meeting: The Community Center is opening soon and there will be staffing changes. They have had some responses to the Youth at Risk report. She asked if it is possible to check in with our staff to see if they are doing some things, as further information from staff would be helpful. Dr. Ash responded that he anticipates a formal written response to all aspects of the report. He had to work with a lot of staff so it has taken a while. Jessie Steigerwald suggested there be an agenda item for the School Committee to discuss next steps if possible. A former teacher, Norma Regillo has passed away. A moment of silence was held for her.

Margaret Coppe: On Saturday January 24 the Chinese American Association of Lexington (CAAL) is celebrating Chinese New Year and the community is invited to daylong activities at Cary Library and a performance in the evening at Lexington High School. All activities are free and open to the public.

Jessie Steigerwald: A huge thank you to the community for sponsoring the Martin Luther King walk. It was quite a moving tribute to the legacy of Martin Luther King.

## **Agenda:**

### **Discussion of the Recommendation from the Ad hoc School Master Planning Committee**

The committee is focusing on several ways to proceed on what to present to the Board of Selectmen for the warrant articles. The Town Manager will present the impact on tax rates of proposed projects at the Summit meeting on January 22. The Board of Selectmen is voting Monday, January 26, on the warrant.

***MOTION to request from the Board of Selectmen a Special Town Meeting on the first night of town meeting to appropriate funds to engage professional services to begin the design process to address the existing system-wide over-crowding with a focus on Pre-K, Elementary and Middle Schools and to respond to the enrollment working group's five year forecast.***  
(Steigerwald, Hurley)

John Himmel, Chair of the Permanent Building Committee and Pat Goddard, Director of Public Facilities showed a presentation based on the draft Phase Three report from SMMA. They received cost info and a series of alternatives. They showed the history of how this came to be and a plan on how to go forward now that they have the sense of urgency related to the entire elementary school and middle schools. Plan needs to focus on enrollment and the flexibility to add on to in the future. To get the answer, more public and policy discussion are needed. Right now, there is not a plan but there is a need. A plan that looks at each of the schools is needed; go to work before Town Meeting looks at solutions. Parameters and solutions are needed, and then put into a design and development phase. Funds are needed to develop the most responsive system level solution that addresses the capacity, cost, and timing issues.

Recommendations to the school committee were:

1. Request adequate funds at the 2015 Special Town Meeting to commence the design process (schematics through Design Development on the majority of the projects)
2. Hire an Architectural/Engineering firm (A/E) to better understand the situation and define the range of viable solutions.
3. Request that the Town commence immediately with the selection process for the A/E and Owner's Project Manager Team (OPM) so they are on board when the funds are available.
4. Start the Construction Manager (CM) process when the OPM services commence.
5. Better define project scope items not examined by the Enrollment Working Group that have a direct bearing on the Project Solution.

Members thanked Mr. Goddard and Mr. Himmel. They then had questions, comments and discussions on the sequence of when to do things and laying the groundwork, working with all people involved to make sure space in buildings is appropriate, and the timetable on the initial vote for money.

The discussion is recessed for the public hearing.

## **8:15pm Public Hearing on the Recommendation of the Ad hoc School Master Planning Committee**

Kristen Gray, 177 Burlington Street, Unit-2, Woburn: She is a Kindergarten teacher at Bridge and presented a petition from educators and staff at the Bridge school fully supporting Option 9.

Sara Conrad, 176 Cedar Street: She has a third grader at Hastings and a rising Kindergartener. She also works at the Stepping Stone Foundation, which works closely with Boston Public Schools and other schools. She is a big fan of Hastings and supports rebuilding it and also addressing capacity issues at the other elementary schools. It does not make sense to delay the Hastings rebuild if there is a delay getting funding. She wants equity between schools and believes the community of a school has a huge impact on students and teachers. All children should be challenged, known and supported.

Marina Levitt, 7 Idylwilde Road: She disagrees with the Kindergarten teacher from Bridge. The Bridge parents were not surveyed. There are core space problems and they have asked many times to address it. There is higher enrollment, and not enough space for special education. We do not need the extra size if there will be a larger population. The district does not have a plan to use space we already have. How many additional spaces could Estabrook hold? It is not ideal, but we need to make every effort to fill every available space. She urges people to oppose modulars at Bridge and Bowman. We have the space in the district for the short term and need to use the space we now have. Look at creative town wide cost savings. She is very concerned that without showing taxpayers that all options have been looked at, they will not support the vote. She opposes modulars at Bridge and Bowman. You need to have flexibility in the school assignment process for new students.

Stephanie Mitzenmacher, 33 Carey Avenue: She is representing the Bridge PTA Executive Committee and is following up on a letter sent to the School Committee. We are in favor of option 9. It will give our principal flexibility in the short term and redistricting when other projects are done to reduce enrollment in the future. They look forward to working with the School Committee and they understand it will not be easy. Thank you.

Dan Ostrower, 65 Paul Revere Road: His family moved to Lexington 4 years ago for the schools. He has not been disappointed with Hastings. He is happy with the teachers and staff, and the vibrant PTA. He chose Lexington for its schools for good reason. Hastings is an incredible group of people who do an incredible job. They deserve a facility that is worthy of their needs to accomplish their goals. We all bear some responsibility to the overcrowding issue. We should fix it. The timeline needs to be faster and we need to act with greater urgency.

Christina Lin, 2 Eustis Street: She is a Bowman parent and knows the School Committee has a difficult task of bringing forward an affordable solution. She would like to support the concepts of option 9. Her concern at Bowman is the overcrowding. Bowman needs the prefab modulars. The School is at capacity. We are 2400 square feet short for the special education program. The efforts will not be wasted.

Dahua Pan, 34 Balfour Street: He supports option 9. He is asking the School Committee and the public to look at this cost as an investment. A moderate 3-bedroom house can be sold for \$700,000 in Lexington, while it would sell for \$400,000 in Waltham, because we have better schools. It is a desirable place to be, partly because of our schools. We cannot turn our backs on our schools. Replacing Hastings is not a luxury; it is a basic need for education. He hopes the School Committee and the town can work out a plan to move this forward.

Sharon Musto, 12 Augustus Road: If we cannot get money for Hastings and cannot move forward, what can we do to fix the problems i.e. cold, heat, plumbing, etc.? What will be done in the short term and what will the cost be? Core space is necessary. Is there a commitment from the School Committee that once more space is acquired; we will be downsizing the schools that are getting the prefabs? Could we do temporary ones instead?

Kate Colburn, 49 Forest Street, Precinct 4 Town Meeting member: She is confused after the presentation. What are the differences with his proposal and option 9? What does it mean? Hastings is no longer possible for 2018? Prefabs are no longer possible for 2016? Please address where Fiske falls in this plan.

Ruth Litchfield, 6 Conestoga Road: She is a reading specialist at Bridge. Thank you for considering it, we really need your help.

Curt Barrentine 100 Bedford Street: He has a child at Hastings and one at Diamond. You are going to spend the money one way or another. Do it now or later when it will be that much more expensive. You do have to rebuild, as it is an investment. Lexington has a fabulous school system and he recommends we build.

Lynn Murray, 5 Butler Avenue: She's lived here for over 20 years, her kids went through the Lexington schools, and she is a teacher at Bridge. The sense of urgency in working in an overcrowded school is huge. She's seen 20 years of plans and assessments and population evaluations, and would hate to not see something move forward for all of the schools.

Public Hearing closed: 8:38pm

### **Discussion of Ad hoc School Master Planning Committee Recommendations continued**

Dr. Ash explained that at Special Town Meeting in June 2014 \$250,000 was voted to hire SMMA, and an Ad hoc Committee worked with them for months. He wants to know what happened to the recommendation that was voted 6-1. His expectation was that the questions would be answered when an architect was on board.

Members explained that the point of the motion is to make it broad enough so that if something does not make sense, we can make changes and have some flexibility. Mr. Himmel's presentation added specificity to the process and defined what to do in order to get through to town meeting.

Dr. Ash is now in full support after hearing Mr. Himmel.

Jessie Steigerwald shared her handout for the need of a possible facilitator to figure everything out.

Members agreed that the architect would look at Hastings, look at modulars for Bridge and Bowman. Go forward with developing a larger Harrington, preschool expansion, Clarke and Diamond funds, modulars for Fiske, and see how plan fits.

Judith Crocker reviewed her handout about the summary of the Ad hoc Committee meetings.

The Motion is re-read.

***The Motion was approved 5-0***

\$118 million is what the committee will ask for and Margaret Coppe will get in touch with the Town Manager.

The committee takes a recess at 9:50pm.

The committee reconvenes at 9:57pm.

### **FY16 Budget Discussion**

The committee's goal is to vote on the budget on February 10th.

Members had discussions, questions and comments on guidance counselors and social workers and the strong need for increasing them and they would like Val Viscosi, Director of Guidance, to report to the committee on how the department is doing; the transition coordinator position; staffing for transportation; Estabrook morning club/before school care; policy on extended day programs; the per pupil supply adjustment; landscaping; additional positions being added; summary of enrollment; medical records technician; School Committee budget.

Members decided they did not need Thursday's scheduled meeting.

### **Vote to Accept a \$500 Donation from ExxonMobil's Education Alliance Program to Support Fiske's Math and Science Program**

***MOTION to accept a \$500 Donation from Exxon Mobil's Education Alliance Program to Support Fiske's Math and Science Program (Crocker, Alessandrini)***

***The Motion was approved 5-0.***

***MOTION to adjourn (Steigerwald, Hurley)***

***The Motion was approved 5-0.***

The meeting was adjourned at 11:08pm.

Meeting Materials: Agenda; Ad hoc School Master Planning Committee Option 9 Recommendation; Letter from Fiske Elementary School regarding ExxonMobil donation; Letter from Global Companies llc for ExxonMobil donation; Handout on Mental Health Stability in College; Handout on the AdhSMPC summary from J. Crocker; Handout “In search of the Solution;” Handout SC Working Group model from J. Steigerwald

Place on Consent Agenda for SC Approval 3.8.16

Voted Approved by the School Committee 3.8.16