

School Building Advisory Committee
Design Review Subcommittee
Meeting Via Zoom:
4:00 pm, Thursday, July 27, 2023

Attendees:

SBAC Subcommittee Members: Cindy Voltz, Penny Jordan, Larry Benoit, David Andrews, Corinne Bell

Staff: Christopher Record, Superintendent, Matthew Sturgis, Town Manager, Dave Bagdasarian, Facilities Director

Consultants: Brian Hromdka, Mark Lydon, and Mark Stafford, Turner Thompson / HEERY

Agenda

1. Chair Voltz opened the meeting at 4 pm and provided an introduction. All attendees introduced themselves.
2. Review of preliminary report of the owner's rep of prior work and identifying areas where the design firm will need to dig deeper on.
 - Brian Hromdka provided an introduction on the progress draft of the Colby / Simons schematic design report.
 - Mark Lydon of Turner Thompson / HEERY discussed the evaluation of the needs assessment performed in the prior work.
 - An overall discussion of the committee was held over the report.
 - Corinne Bell encouraged that the programming is considered early on in the process so the information can be shared and understood. Many different modes of exposure of information will be important as well.
 - Cindy Voltz commented that the information program began late in the process, which challenged the project. Also, US Mail is also an effective approach as it is more acceptable to many residents and is credible.
 - The programming requirements are also important to understand in relation to State guidelines where appropriate, and must be documented.

- David Bagdasarian spoke about the challenge with the prior project was the increase in the cost of the project from 80 to 140 million dollars, and the community was surprised by the increase.
- There were also challenges in the renovation amounts as the estimates were significantly off for such elements as brick repointing, phone systems, etc. It could be argued that the decision to build new undercut the analysis needed to evaluate renovation.
- Brian H. noted that their cost team will be reviewing the elements and updating based on current cost as well as evaluation of the elements of existing structures. The firm has a team of seasoned estimators who can compare what was in the prior report as well as provide their own revised estimates of cost.
- Penny Jordan noted that what was missing in the communications was the linking of preparing students for the 21st century work environment, and what is needed for graduates to develop skills for employment. The dots need to be connected from why we need space with programming and matching to developing these skills.
- Additionally, the understanding was the detailed schematics of the prior plan was to allow to phase the project, but instead there was project creep including what was a dream vs. reality, and the vision was never conveyed clearly via communications on the project. The narrative that is conveyed is about the solution to the problem not the consequences if the project is not done.
- Brian agreed that the employment skills and tie to education is critical. It is also imperative that the public understand the process every step of the way and be informed. What is happening needs to be explained clearly and often.
- Larry Benoit stated he was glad the firm emphasizes what does the education plan need to provide, but cannot in the current situation. The committee needs to be able to understand the education plan and what the actual physical needs are to accomplish the plan successfully. Prioritization of needs will need to be ordered and chosen during developing the options for the project. Cost of the original project was a primary driver for its defeat. The burden of the tax increase is focused on the fact that 98% of the tax base is residential, and the percentage of increase in taxes will challenge the project. One final question is that are the existing classroom sizes appropriate for our current education program? The prior project had a

significant amount of space in relation to the student population, and that was a major driver of the cost of the project.

- Brian H. agreed that the education program is the driver of the facility needs, and cost is and will always be an issue, but first good information needs to be developed, the education program goals understood, building needs understood, and then evaluate what options meet the overall acceptable cost for the community. Much of the items identified will be explored and answered once the design team is on board.

3. Review of the Request for Services for the design team.

- Brian H. described the request for qualifications project, and the outline of what is needed to craft a successful rfq, and what is needed specific to this project's needs. The goals and scope need to be well defined, as well as the project phases and work plan. The minimum qualifications, selection criteria, proposal requirements, pre-proposal meeting, and other elements are all well defined in the rfq.
- Cindy Voltz and Corinne Bell emphasized the need for the design team to have a strong communications component.

The meeting adjourned at 5:50