BERKSHIRE HILLS REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Great Barrington Stockbridge West Stockbridge

MONUMENT MOUNTAIN REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE (SBC) MEETING

In-Person/Virtual

November 20th, 2024 – 5:30 PM

In-Person Location: District Office Professional Development Room, 50 Main Street, 2nd Floor, Stockbridge, MA
Virtual Location: (Public attendance) * Zoom (details provided on meeting agenda)

SBC Members:

Present: Stephen Bannon- School Committee Chair, **Stephen Boyd-** Community Member, **Peter Dillon-**Superintendent, **Jason St. Peter-** Building Committee Chair/School Committee, **Chrstopher Barnes-** School Principal (virtual), **Steven Soule**- Director of Operations, **Ananda Timpane**- Community Member (virtual), **Eric Gabriel-** Community Member, **Bill Fields-** Retired Teacher/School Committee(Virtual), **Daniel Bailly-** Community Member, **Sarah Bourla-** School Committee Member, **Diane Singer-** School Committee Member, **Stephen Shatz-** Community Member, **Sharon Harrison-**Business Administrator(Remote), **Kara Staunton-Shron-**Teacher/ Librarian,

Absent: Jamie Goldenberg- Community Member, **Lily Haskins-Vaughn-** Student**, Retired** Teacher/School Committee, **Kristina Farina (Kristi)-** Retired Principal/Community Member, **Kate Van Olst**- Community, Member, **Ian Brown-** Assistant Principal for Career, Technical and Vocational Education, **Rob Putnam-** Interim Assistant Superintendent,

Other Attendees (virtual):
THE Newsletter (virtual), James (Great Barrington), Bill Vogt

Owner Project Managers (OPM):
John Benzinger, Brayden Smith

DiNisco/WRA (Design Team):
Donna DiNisco, Jeff Oxsalid, (DiNisco Design, Inc.), Sam Lasky, Andy Jonic, Andrew Corcoran (WRA)
Meeting opened at 5:30 PM by Jason St.Peter.

Public Participation:

- None

1. **Meeting Minutes Review/Approval:**

- **Jason St. Peter moved to approve the 10/23/2024 meeting minutes. Steve Bannon seconded the motion.**
- Daniel Baily called a roll call vote:
    - Yes: Stephen Bannon, Peter Dillon, Jason St. Peter, Chrstopher Barnes, Steven Soule, Eric Gabriel, Bill Fields, Daniel Bailly, Stephen Shatz, Stephen Boyd, Sarah Bourla Kara Staunton-Shron, Ananda Timpane, Sharon Harrison
    - No: None
    - Abstained: None
    - Absent: Jamie Goldenberg, Lily Haskins-Vaughn, Kristina Farina (Kristi), Kate Van Olst, , Ian Brown, Diane Singer
- **The motion passed unanimously**

2. Skanska Update

- Approval to PSR, for schedule Design Phase
- MSBA Board meeting in February, where approval for PSR will be decided
- Upcoming Meetings:
  - **11/20**: SBC Meeting (this meeting)
  - **11/22**: Sustainability Meeting (rescheduled from earlier in the week)
  - **11/25**: Community Forum (High School Auditorium, 6-7:30pm)
  - **12/4**: SBC Meeting
    - **Important Vote**: Preferred Option decision
    - **Attendance Encouraged**: In-person participation is preferred
  - **12/11**: PSR (Preliminary Site Review) Submission for review by the group
  - **12/17**: Vote to Approve the PSR:
    - Approve the PSR submission to MSBA (Massachusetts School Building Authority)
    - Approve the meeting minutes earlier the same day
    - **Format Recommendation**: Online-only meeting, ~15 minutes
  - **12/19**: PSR submission to MSBA milestone.
  - **TBD**: MSBA Facilities Assessment: Date may fluctuate based on MSBA scheduling
  - **1/22**: Overview of Facilities Assessment Subcommittee Meeting (to address MSBA comments)
  - **Key Items**:
    - Preferred Option discussion and vote on **12/4**
    - PSR submission approval vote on **12/17**
    - Would be optimal to have a meeting before to discuss Preferred Options with Community

- Upcoming Outreach Items:
  - Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for Nov. 21st at 5:30pm with the towns within the district.
  - The preceding meetings on Nov. 18th and 19th have already been completed

3. Design Review of Options

a. Estimate Review and Project Costs:

- **Hazardous Material Assessment Savings**: Adjustments yielded 50% savings on hazardous material costs (from $3.2M to approximately $1.6M).
- **Cost Eliminations**:
  - $1M earmarked for traffic improvements removed.
  - Renovation of horticulture buildings excluded.
- **Contingency and Escalation Adjustments**:
  - Design contingency reduced from 15% to 12%.
  - Escalation also reduced to 12%.
- **Construction Costs**:
  - Range from $129M for gas boiler systems to $136.5M for ground-source heat pumps.
  - All options include demolition, site work, and abatement of the existing building.
- **Soft Costs**:
  - Include furniture, fixtures, technology, and testing.
  - Additional funds are allocated for Chapter 74 program technology.
- **Total Project Budget**: Ranges from $157M to $169M depending on the system chosen.
- **Incentives and Grants**:
  - MSBA grants offer additional funding for green school options (3% bonus for non-fossil fuel buildings).
  - Mass Save rebates provide $400K–$1.6M depending on the system.

- Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding is a potential future benefit for green energy systems.

b. Design Review

- **Base Designs**:
  - All options share the same site layout and building design.
  - Systems vary between gas boilers (base), VRF (air-source heat pumps), and ground-source heat pumps.
- **Green Building Implications**:
  - VRF and ground-source options align with sustainability goals and provide long-term benefits.
- **Life Cycle Cost Analysis**: Reviewed to compare the costs and benefits of each system.
- **Sustainability Considerations**:
  - Positive environmental impacts of green systems.
  - Discussion with sustainability subcommittee planned for further review.
- **Add/Reno Projects**: Recommended to use a construction manager (CM) during design for phasing and coordination in an 8-phase project.
- **New Construction**: Both CM and general contractor (GC) delivery methods are viable, with slight cost differences.
- **System Selection**:
  - Decision needed on ground-source heat pumps versus VRF.
  - Factors include soil testing and well quantity confirmation.
  - Financial impact is significant for geothermal with IRA incentives roughly 30% (roughly $5M for the project).
- **Next Steps and Timeline**:
  - Preferred solution vote scheduled for December 4th and December 12th.
  - Detailed review of pros and cons of CM versus GC to occur in January.
- **Cost Considerations:**
  - Minimal differences in cost between the three options, estimated at a few million dollars.
  - Federal funding (like the IRA) might be available but uncertain until the end of construction (2029/2030).
  - Solar readiness is included, but actual solar implementation costs (e.g., $1M–$1.5M for panels) are not yet factored.
- **Solar Integration:**
  - Infrastructure will support future solar installation, which could include rooftop or canopy systems.
  - Options like Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) and outright purchase of solar panels are being explored.
  - Further solar studies are suggested to assess the building's energy generation potential and its impact on operational costs.
- **Design Options Overview:**
- **Option 3H:**
  - Main entrance is visible from the street.
  - Cafeteria near entrance provides a welcoming feel.
  - Flexible parking and vehicular circulation.
  - Multi-story design with a 75,000 sq. ft. footprint.
- **Option 3E:**
  - Maintains a smaller building footprint (40,000 sq. ft.).
  - Preserves agricultural facilities and integrates well with campus.
  - Staff and students favor this option for its compactness and campus compatibility.
- **Option 2C:**
  - Single-story design (146,000 sq. ft.).
  - Retains "lap model" valued culturally by staff and students.

    - Most disruptive during construction but aligns with the current building layout.
- **Staff and Students:**
    - Option 3E is preferred for its layout, visibility, and minimal disruption to existing functions.
    - Concerns exist about losing the single floor "lap model" with multi-story designs.
    - Parking and accessibility are significant for special events.
- **Community Members:**
    - Mixed opinions regarding the aesthetic and practical impacts of the options.
    - Sustainability and minimizing impervious surfaces (like parking) are emphasized.
- **Sustainability and Green Space:**
    - Emphasis on reducing impervious surfaces and increasing green areas.
    - Parking requirements are being reassessed to balance special event needs with sustainability goals.
- **Parking and Circulation:**
- **3E:**
    - Includes a redesigned parking lot.
    - Existing lot will be mulled and replaced.
    - Concerns about parking disruptions during construction; pedestrian access from temporary lots needs improvement.
    - Entry administration placement offers partial oversight of incoming traffic.
- **3H:**
    - Similar to 3E but includes added focus on integrating bus and car drop-off zones.
    - Parking is adjacent to the school, minimizing disruption.
    - Security benefits with visibility from administration to key traffic points.
- **2C:**
    - Temporary parking during construction will use existing practice fields.
    - Pedestrian traffic from lower temporary lots to the school during construction poses a challenge.
    - Final parking incorporates spaces but may lose spots due to ADA and crosswalk requirements.
- **Building Layout and Integration**
- **3E:**
    - Academic areas and specialty classrooms (e.g., ESL) well-placed.
    - Student comments emphasize good flow but less visibility to scenic views.
    - Art room on ground floor facilitates outdoor access.
- **3H:**
    - Highly integrated layout, blending CTE programs and academic classrooms.
    - Increased proximity between classrooms and shared facilities, fostering interaction.
    - Three-story design maximizes interior use while maintaining views.
- **2C:**
    - Focus on minimal disruption to current site use.
    - Design less vertically concentrated, which reduces compactness of connections.
    - Scenic visibility and balance between wings emphasized.
- **Educational Experience**
- **3E:**
    - Strong focus on adjacency between academic and specialty areas.
    - Offers opportunities to refine layouts for better classroom circulation.
    - Students noted a practical design with proximity advantages.
- **3H:**
    - Layout creates a cohesive integration of technical and general education spaces.
    - Students and staff favor its open design and ease of navigation.
    - Prioritizes educational flow with adjacency between general and specialized classrooms.
- **2C:**

    - Emphasize placement flexibility but potentially less cohesive than other options.
    - Offers scenic views, balancing academic and recreational needs.
    - Integration between academic and shared spaces (e.g., cafeteria) less refined.
- **Security**
- **3E:**
    - Entrance away from Route 7; oversight depends on internal design.
    - Admin offices are positioned to monitor primary traffic points but less visible from main road.
    - Security features such as window block guards and optional parking lot cameras.
- **3H:**
    - Strong front-facing design with clear sightlines from admin to parking and drop-off zones.
    - Compact design improves internal surveillance.
    - Favors prominent and secure entry-point layout.
- **2C:**
    - Admin views focused on vehicle entry points rather than pedestrian access.
    - Challenges with temporary pedestrian paths during construction.
    - Considers community input on privacy versus surveillance.
- **Environmental Considerations**
- **3E:**
    - Geothermal well field under existing practice fields, requiring significant grading.
    - Initial disruptions are offset by long-term sustainable energy benefits.
    - Design integrates with existing site gradients.
- **3H:**
    - Similar geothermal implementation under softball field.
    - Focus on restoration post-installation (e.g., rebuilding softball field).
    - Compact footprint minimizes environmental disturbance.
- **2C:**
    - Well fields placed with minimal impact on primary sports facilities.
    - Sustainable energy integration is slightly less ambitious than 3E and 3H.
    - Challenges with restoration of tennis courts if disrupted.
- **Community Feedback:**
- **3E:**
    - Mixed opinions on scenic visibility and flow but generally positive.
    - Concerns about parking access during construction.
    - Students like proximity of classrooms and outdoor access for art.
- **3H:**
    - Highly favored for its integration and efficient use of space.
    - Positive response to adjacency of classrooms and shared spaces.
    - Scenic views slightly reduced compared to 2C but still satisfactory.
- **2C:**
    - Appreciated for its balance of views and layout.
    - Concerns about pedestrian pathways and temporary parking access.
    - Scenic priority weighed heavily but with compromises on circulation.

- **Cost and Construction Implications**
- **3E:**
    - Cost-efficient redesign of parking and building footprint.
    - Construction disruption is managed by phased development.
- **3H:**
    - Similar cost implications to 3E.
    - Efficient use of space minimizes additional expenses.
- **2C:**
    - Potentially higher cost due to restoration needs (e.g., tennis courts, practice fields).

    - Phasing impacts traffic and parking logistics.
- **Conclusion:**
    - **3E:** Practical and efficient with strong integration of academics and specialty spaces but slightly less scenic views.
    - **3H:** Most cohesive layout with strong integration and compact design, favored by community feedback.
    - **2C:** Prioritizes environmental considerations and scenic views but less efficient academic integration.
- **Next Steps:**
    - Continue evaluating solar study outcomes and integrating these into the schematic design phase.
    - Prioritize stakeholder feedback on layout, functionality, and parking.
    - Finalize design choice based on alignment with long-term sustainability goals and community preferences.

c. Discussion

- Bill Fields asked in regarding the two new sites, is there any provision for courtyards? I don't see any in the drawings.
- Donna: "There are no courtyards."
- Bill fields then asked, "The second question I have is concerns for the agricultural areas, April talked to you after the faculty meeting, and she gave me a very interesting sheet. And it seems that her classroom has special needs…Her classroom needs to be size larger, due to some of the things that she pointed out in regards to what goes on in her classroom, that wouldn't go on in another vocational classroom. I'm just wondering, have, since that conversation with April. Have you looked at the classroom size and the parking in regards to the greenhouse? Because I can tell you that during a greenhouse sale there are a lot of cars, and I'm not sure I know it's an only once a year, but it could cause a logistic problem in regards to the flow of traffic both before and after the this".
- Donna Responded, "The area of the space that we are giving to her now is slightly larger than what she currently has. So, we can organize it differently to support her needs. We also have at square footage allocated for storage of what she needs. So, we're confident that we can achieve what her goals are programmatically within the building and with the educational greenhouse that will support her needs". "Once we know which option it is because they are slightly different. But I'm confident, with the square footage we've allocated, we should be able to meet her needs. You and I should have a conversation offline. There's some other potential information that's important. We visited some greenhouses in other schools that have been running for years and we should just talk.
- Donna also suggested to April to go and check out the other beautiful greenhouses in the state.
- Diane Singer stated that she liked the 2C Design Option and more windows, and traffic through spaces that do not get them now, the school would be very cohesive
- Diane also pointed out that the courtyards are a nice feature
- Dan Bailey then said that PHS rarely uses the courtyards, and that they are hard to maintain.
- Dan asked if the teachers were in favor of this one, most likely due to nostalgia
- Kara Staunton-Shron answered, some are in favor of it
- Dan then said that the walk from one-side to the building on a one-story building might take 4min, but the kids will say that it takes 10min
- Donna then agreed and said that it has been proven, when things are vertical, they do not take as much time to get to class to class
- Dan finished saying that he is not in favor of the one-story add reno(2C), as for these reasons
- Eric Gabriel then said that he is in favor of the option that takes the least amount of time, and is the least disruptive

- Ananda Timpane, said she values the importance of choosing the right design within the budget, rather than over-prioritizing construction phasing or short-term challenges.
- Sharon Harrison favors new construction over renovation options.
- Sharon advocates for Alternative 3H due to its better integration of vocational and special education spaces compared to other alternatives.
- Donna said the community's and students' attachment to the current hill but points out that in 10 years, perceptions may differ.
- Bill Fields raised questions about whether MSBA (Massachusetts School Building Authority) would cover the costs of fields in Alternative 3E, comparing it to past experiences at Mount Greylock.
- Donna clarified that MSBA limits site cost reimbursements and will not cover non-essential additions like stadiums but will support basic fields.

4. Subcommittee Updates

a. Sustainability:

- Nov. 22nd Sustainability Meeting will occur at 12–1:30pm (rescheduled from earlier in the week)

5. New Business

None