

HHS2 In Design Phase

By MEGAN WILLIAMS Daily News-Record

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HARRISONBURG — The new Harrisonburg High School has moved out of the programming phase and into the design phase.

On Wednesday night, the city Planning Commission officially approved the rezoning of the land where the new high school, commonly referred to as HHS2, will be built.

Also this week, the programming committee, which has met 12 times to discuss what the needs of the new school are in terms of classes offered, teaching spaces and technology, wrapped up its last meeting.

The meetings were all two hours long and hosted by the project's architect. They were attended by students, teachers and community members. The groups were intentionally kept small to allow everyone a chance to voice opinions on what the programming needs will be for the new high school, said School Board Chairwoman Deb Fitzgerald.

The meetings also addressed various instructional areas. Stakeholders felt it was important to have their needs and concerns addressed, such as athletics, fine arts and math and science. Now that programming meetings have wrapped, the HHS2 project has moved into the design phase. This means taking all of the suggestions from the programming meetings and finding ways to make them work within the scope and budget of the project.

The design committee met with the contractor and architect for five hours on Thursday.

They started with a potential layout design for the school and from there crossed out, moved or altered the design based on what was gleaned from the programming committee.

"That template is a rough draft," Fitzgerald said. "And now they're picking it apart."

It's about taking the hundreds of suggestions from the programming committee and finding a way to incorporate them into the design, Fitzgerald said. And it's also about deciding what is affordable and what isn't. For every item or design element that the design committee suggests, something else is not going to make the cut.

These design committee meetings will continue through the month and into July. As a rough draft becomes more solid, the school board will weigh in and a second draft will begin based on its input.

In designing HHS2, the committee has to take into account what the current high school is best suited for and how the second high school can compliment.

“Nobody should assume what they’ve seen so far is going to be the final design,” Fitzgerald said.

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