

Penn Brook School Building Committee Meeting Notes

November 16, 2011

7:00 PM

Georgetown Town Hall, 3rd Floor Meeting Room

Committee:

<u>Voting Member</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Ellie Sinkewicz	Building Committee Co-Chair	X
Michelle Smith	Building Committee Co-Chair	X
Alan Aulson Jr.	Citizen	
John Bonazoli	Finance Committee	X
Glenn Clohecy	Citizen	
George Comiskey	Citizen	
Peter Durkee	Highway Surveyor	X
Tillie Evangelista	Planning Board	X
Rob Hoover	School Committee	X
Kerry Stauss	Citizen	X
C. David Surface	Chairman, Board of Selectmen	X
Eric Zadina	Citizen	
Jeff Wade	Citizen	X
<u>Non-Voting Members</u>		
Carol Jacobs	Superintendent	X
Michael Farrell	Town Administrator	X
Dr. Donna Tanner	Principal, Penn Brook School	X
<u>Other Attendees:</u>		
Carl Franceschi	DRA	X
Paul Brown	DRA	
Pat Saitta	Municipal Building Consultants	X
Chuck Adam	Municipal Building Consultants	X

1. Co-Chair Opening Comments:

The co-chairs opened with a joint statement that reviewed the progress taken to date, the steps that were taken to get the project this far and the steps going forward. The chair also extended thank to a number of boards, committees and people involved.

The sole purpose of the meeting is to review the options that have been prepared, presented and priced and see a consensus leading to a vote could be obtained.

2. Presentation and Comments from Harry LaCortiglia:

- Thanked board members for service and efforts to date
- Comments are his alone and not from his positions on town boards
- "build in the woods" is the best option
- Loss of playing fields during construction, about 3-years will not only impacts students at Penn Brook but after school programs and athletic programs as well.

- There are field projects being planned that could take a number of years to plan and execute
- Building the school on the existing fields will create a loss of at least 2 fields
- From a Planning board perspective:
 - o Building in woods more closely aligns with town wide master plan for recreational space
 - o Traffic flow is greatly improved and helps Elm Street residents
 - o The 2nd means of access to site is a driveway not a public road.
 - o The project will require a site plan review as part of permitting and abutter issues can be addressed at that time as well
 - o He also believes there are minimal wetlands issues as well
- Educational issues:
 - o Why move Kindergarten – no real research on this, less transitions are good, would never create to lower grade buildings. Tough transition 1 to 2
 - o Combining makes sense for teacher development, curriculum,
 - o Kindergarten has grown into more
 - o Consistency of curriculum
 - o “Best chance for success”
 - o Would restructure admin to be more cohesive
- *Questions from Committee Members for Harry:*
 - o Jeff Wade asked Harry if CPC funds could be used for field construction on this site. Harry: not under present legislation
 - o Rob Hoover asked of Harry could expand on the roadway/driveway issue
 - o David Surface asked how long access road existed. Believed to be at time the town purchased the property.
- Access Driveway discussion:
- David S: Who would control the driveway use, it was believed the town and school department would share the operational responsibility.
- David S: Couldn't the driveway be smaller than a typical drive/road, all felt yes perhaps a small as 12' with 8-10' on each side of grass for drainage control. Tillie when would the driveway be used. All agreed that it would only likely be used only in emergencies.
- Rob: Driveway may also be as narrow as 10'
- Rob: Root system of existing mature trees may likely be damaged
- Ellie: could landscaping be used as well?
- Rob asked Harry how building in the woods was more in line with Master Plan. Harry: only from a recreation fields perspective

3) **Public Comments:**

a) Faith Johnson – 104 Elm Street:

- Concerns with: access road as she is closest abutter; damage to mature maples; damage to existing stone walls; may hurt character of nice country road; concerned with water problems and run off.
- Told a number of years ago by another building committee that access road was too expensive to build. Would like to see old report discussed
- Has also been told by many in the town over a number of years that storm water problem would be addresses, nothing has happened
- Would like to see a comparison to the 2002 survey

b) David Keene – 112 Elm Street:

- Concerned with character of land and adjacent properties being changed
- It was once a logging road never a driveway
- Questioned who really owned the land
- Urges no full-time use of the access driveway

4) **DRA update:**

- Addressed parking counts, there are approximately 80 parking spaces, option in fields shows about 125 spaces, while option in the woods now shows over 200 spaces which reflects more of the needed spaces
- Queuing / Stacking counts:
 - Existing about 80-90 cars
 - Fields option – 100-120 cars
 - Woods option 150+ cars – about a 200% increase over existing
- These options eliminate a lot of queuing on Elm Street

b) Traffic Engineer Review: Access road is used as 2-way traffic would not ease the congestion on Elm Street considerably, therefore should only be used as emergency access but could be used for construction traffic.

5) **Committee Member Comments :**

a) David Surface:

- Option in woods gains one field which helps entire town
- Concerned that other potential town recreational projects will take years as town doesn't even own some of the land being considered
- Impact is lessened on traffic, students and community by building in the woods
- This option is only a \$1.3 million dollar difference when comparing impacts of all the options equally

b) Tille Evangelista:

- Concerned with driveway creating a greater impact to Elm Street residents
- Reminded everyone that charge to building committee was Penn Brook School and not fields projects
- If driveway is used would like an arborist to assist in protecting trees as well
- Feels that the project on the existing project has greater design options for new school than in the woods

- Wants to see damaged trees replaced
- c) Jeff Wade:
 - Project has (2) great options which is unusual for most projects
 - Building in the woods provides minimal disruption to school and site
 - Believes design in woods can be accomplished with sensitivity to natural environment
- d) Ellie Sinkewicz:
 - Safety has always been biggest concern
 - Option in woods gives better flexibility for 2nd access to site in case of emergency
- e) Michelle Smith:
 - Asked DRA to clarify storm water drainage concerns – storm water will not get worse and designs will be implemented to improve water runoff from this site. Elm Street road drainage may need to be addressed by town.
 - Asked DRA if there are there any concerns with the wetlands identified near the option in the woods? There is a 100' buffer that must be respected and will be. Have we verified that it is not a vernal pool? Yes the site engineers have determined that it is not a vernal pool.
 - More of a safety issue, less of a fields issue
- f) Rob Hoover:
 - Educationally both options are equal as design has not been completed
 - Southern Exposure concerns with class room day light in both are equal but building on fields allows for easier sun control
 - Access for construction – believes both projects will “fight” with local traffic and school traffic unless access road is used for construction
 - Concerned that split votes on School Committee and Board of Selectmen weakens the project and thus could lose popular vote due to selecting an option that costs more just for fields
 - Noted that he disagreed with David Surface's analysis of the figures
 - Emphasized that the conditions around the Johnson property need to be protected
- g) The co-chairs presented correspondence from committee member, Eric Zadina and George Comiskey outlining their views on the options. The correspondence was read into the record by David Surface and attached to the minutes.

6) After all the discussion a motion was made by Tilled to approve the option of building on the existing fields as the preferred option for the school, seconded by Rob.

Discussion: Tillie felt that the project was always about the educational issues and they project should focus on the academic and safety issues and less on the fields.

Vote was taken, 3 voted for the motion while 6 voted against the motion. The motion failed.

7) Jeff Wade made a motion to approve the option of building in the wooded area south of the existing building as the preferred option for the school, seconded by David.

Discussion:

David – we have one chance to do this and therefore should do it right, this option may be able to help resolve the Elm Street traffic and water issues as well as assist with a Town Wide problem of recreation space.

Ellie – All about safety, the DRA designs work well, this is a project about 800+ kids and their needs

Jeff – process decided many important issues, this may be the last school Georgetown builds therefore should do it right and special, building on a flat plate like the fields is fine but not always interesting, building in the woods and its topography offers unique opportunities, the woods do not have to be cleared which also offer unique natural environment opportunities.

Rob – hard time accepting that this is the best educational fit. Believes this has become more about the fields. The woods may create a greater safety issue and he will continue to have construction access concerns and is somewhat disappointed in the division on the boards/committee's.

John – While he originally voted for the field's option, because he preferred that over the woods option, he felt both were good proposals and he would support this motion to diminish the division in the committee

At the conclusion of the discussion a vote was taken, the motion passed 7-2.

- 8) Motion to adjourn made by David, seconded by Jeff and all voted to adjourn.