

Minutes
Farmington High School Facility and Financial Ad Hoc Committee
November 8, 2018

Present:

Edward Giannaros, Chair	Kathy Eagen, Town Manager
Bruce Charette	Kathy Greider, Superintendent of Schools
Paul Cianci	Kim Wynne, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Liz Fitzsimmons	Vince LaFontan, School Business Administrator
Christine Arnold	Tim Harris, Director of School Facilities
Sharon Mazzochi	Matt Ross, Director of Technology- FPS
Michael Smith	Kat Krajewski, Management Specialist

A. Call to Order.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Edward Giannaros, Chair of the committee, welcomed members of the community and introduced the voting and non-voting members of the FHS Facility and Financial Ad Hoc Committee. He informed the audience that the purpose of tonight's meeting is to hear the community's thoughts, opinions, and suggestions regarding the next steps for the FHS facility. The information gathered at tonight's meeting will assist the committee in formulating recommendations to the Town Council and Board of Education.

B. Public Comment.

Stephen Kay, 57 Garden Gate, expressed his concerns about the process and believes that the end result won't be different. Mr. Kay thinks that there was not enough done to correct misinformation regarding the previous project and questioned what will be done to prevent this from happening again. He asked the committee to consider the opportunity cost and the impact on students who are in the FHS facility in the meantime. He expressed that the reasons the project failed at referendum were the cost and the impact on students.

Matthew Huntvagner, 4 Deepwood Road, communicated his support for a project, and he believes that the facility is past its useful life. He said that Farmington's reputation shouldn't be tarnished by a failing facility. Mr. Huntvagner believes that the statement of needs is all encompassing, and not something you can pick and choose from. He requested that the committee communicate in detail the cost of inaction.

Ines St. James, 11 Brightwood Road, Unionville, voted for the project in the last referendum, and believes that FHS is not an adequately sized learning facility. Ms. St. James is president of the Friends of Music and highlighted issues with the auditorium. With approximately 550 students in the music

Minutes are considered "DRAFT" until approved by the committee

program, she believes that updates to the auditorium are vital, and the Friends of Music commissioned an acoustic study in the past. She asked that if nothing can be done immediately, at least consider updates to the seating situation in the auditorium.

John Vibert, 126 Main Street, Unionville, announced that he has been following the renewed efforts closely. He is concerned about the cost of a project for a new school and felt like there was not an opportunity to closely evaluate a renovation project. He explained the cluster format of the classrooms that was in the last building project, and felt that this format drove up the cost of the project. He urged the committee to review the education specifications and look at different options to incorporate interdisciplinary collaboration in a future project as well as the cost to renovate the building in the existing footprint.

Emily Kaliney, 20 High Street, urged the committee to think outside the box to get people involved, or we will end up with a similar problem as last time and suggestions from the public received when they are too far in the process to implement. She believes that the more people involved in the beginning of the process, we are more likely to end up with a project the Town can rally around.

Sarah Burns, 3 Hidden Spring Lane, echoed Ms. Kaliney's remarks, and believes that the high school is an asset for the Town. The committee needs to think about how they are communicating with the public and to engage new populations, especially those without children in the school system who focus on the tax impact.

Les Wolkoff, 14 Hidden Oak Drive, informed the committee that he has three children in the school system that would not experience the benefit of a high school project, but that doesn't mean it is not needed. He urged the committee to review the cost of inaction, the reputation of the Town, and to understand the value of education. He questioned what the committee learned after the last project and what will be done differently in the future. He believes that if it is done right, a project would get passed at referendum.

Joanne Lawson, 9 Prattling Pond Road, expressed that she is a retiree that voted no on the last high school project. She questioned if the last project was the best option, if the committee looked at every possibility, and how the committee ended up at the option they did.

Mr. Giannaros thanked everyone for attending the meeting. A member of the audience asked if there is a comment form online so people can submit comments/questions to the committee after tonight's meeting. The FHS Facility and Financial Committee Comment Form is located on the Town of Farmington website here: <http://www.farmington-ct.org/government/fhs-facility-and-financial-ad-hoc-committee/fhs-facility-financial-online-comment-form>.

Minutes are considered "DRAFT" until approved by the committee

C. Adjournment.

Upon a motion made and seconded (Charette/Mazzochi) the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathryn Krajewski
Management Specialist