

Minutes of the Town of Farmington
Special Town Council Meeting
February 25, 2021
Zoom Webinar Meeting due to the COVID19 Pandemic

Attending:

C. J. Thomas, Chair
Joe Capodiferro
Brian F. X. Connolly
Christopher Fagan
Edward Giannaros
Peter Mastrobattista
Gary Palumbo

Kathy Blonski, Town Manager
Paula B. Ray, Clerk

A. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

The Council and Staff recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Public Comment

Marcus Fairbrother of 12 Candlewood Lane asked the Council to separate the question of what to do with the 1928 Building from the new high school project. He told the Council it would be necessary to well educate the public on the division so there would be no confusion on the subject. He encouraged the Council to not defer to long decisions on the 1928 Building for the public's benefit.

D. Consideration of Special Topics

1. That the Town Council discuss and give direction on the future of the 1928 High School Building

Motion was made and seconded (Mastrobattista/Capodiferro) to discuss and give direction on the future of the 1928 High School Building.

Adopted unanimously

The Manager began the discussion with the presentation recorded with these minutes as Agenda Item D-1. The Council discussed the 1928 High School Building with Meghan Guerrera, Chair of the Farmington High School Building Committee and Ryszard Szcapedk, TSKP Studio.

Motion was made and seconded (Mastrobattista/Capodiferro) that the Farmington High School Building Committee remove the demolition of the 1928 High School

Building from the Farmington High School building project and that upon a successful Farmington High School Building Project referendum the Town Council will establish a charge for a 1928 High School Building.

Motion was made and seconded (Mastrobattista/Capodiferro) to amend the motion to add that the Farmington High School Building Committee will communicate that the 1928 High School Building is not being demolished as part of the project; that no action on the building will take place for a few years since students will still occupy the building, and that the Town Council will establish a committee, after a successful referendum to study options for the 1928 High School Building.

Adopted unanimously
Adopted as amended unanimously

E. New Business

There was no new business conducted.

F. Executive Session

There was no Executive Session held.

G. Adjournment

Motion was made and seconded (Mastrobattista/Capodiferro) to adjourn the meeting at 7:29 p.m.

Adopted unanimously

Respectfully submitted,



Paula B. Ray, Clerk

Agenda Item D.

Consideration of Special Topics

1. That the Town Council discuss and give direction on the future of the 1928 High School Building.

At the February 16, 2021 Special Town Council meeting, there was a preliminary discussion regarding establishing a Town Council Ad-Hoc Committee to review the options for the future use of the 1928 building as a separate referendum question. This motion was tabled for further discussion.



Points to guide the discussion on the decision of 1928 Building

- The 1928 Building is a landmark in our community and has sentimental value to many residents.
- Both the Town and the community have space needs. But the Town has not thoroughly examined the cost to meet those needs. Further analysis could conclude that there are more economical solutions to meet our space needs, as older buildings are costly to renovate. That said, the fact that we have a potentially vacant, iconic building that could be available for our use in the near future warrants further discussion.



900 wing vs. 1928 Building for FPS Central Offices

The 900 wing is proposed to be renovated for the FPS Central Office/locker rooms. The architect determined that the 900 wing meets the space needs for FPS Central Office, and it costs less to renovate the 900 wing (approximately \$6.0 M), than to renovate the 1928 Building (approximately \$10M). Another factor was that the reimbursement for the renovation of the 900 wing seems to be more favorable than the reimbursement for the renovation of the 1928 Building. The proposed use of the 900 wing instead of the 1928 Building was a result of a competitive design process that allowed us to meet the educational needs at the best value.



Time of Project/Implication on 1928 Building

Students will continue to occupy the 1928 Building for the next several years. Should the proposed FHS Building Project pass at referendum, the 1928 building would continue to be occupied for its current use as classroom space until the demolition of the existing high school facility, which is *tentatively* scheduled for Summer of 2024. Therefore, it may not be necessary to include the 1928 Building as a separate referendum question in early June.



Deferring the Decision

- Deferring the decision, and not taking any action on the 1928 building, will provide the Town more time to study the options (demolish, mothball, renovate).
- Additional time will allow the Town to complete a formal needs assessment.
- Deferment would provide ample time for public participation and input.

Overall, there does not appear to be a downside for deferring the decision and not including the 1928 Building as a separate question on the FHS referendum.



If the Town Council chooses to defer the decision, I would recommend the following:

- Direct the FHS Building Committee to remove the demolition of the 1928 building from the proposed project scope.
- Upon a successful referendum, the Town Council should regroup and begin establishing a charge for a 1928 Building Committee.
- **The FHS Building Committee will communicate that the 1928 Building is not being demolished as part of the project, that no action on the building will take place for a few years since students will still occupy the building, and that the Town Council will establish a committee, after a successful referendum, to study the options for the 1928 Building.**

