

Minutes are considered "DRAFT" until approved at next meeting.

Special Meeting Minutes
Farmington High School Building Committee
Communications Subcommittee
Friday, March 3, 2017

Present:

Kathy Eagen, Town Manager
William Wadsworth, FHS Renovation Committee Chair
Jean Baron, Subcommittee Member
Justin Bernier, Subcommittee Member (by phone)
Kathryn Howroyd, Management Specialist
Marc Sklenka, Colliers International
Suzy Schuck, Kaestle Boos Associates
Kris Dargenio, Kaestle Boos Associates

A. Call to Order.

The meeting was called to order at 12:38 p.m.

B. To approve the attached January 9, 2017 minutes.

C. Upon a motion made and seconded (Baron/Bernier) it was unanimously VOTED: to approve the January 9, 2017 minutes.

D. To review and approve various marketing materials.

The committee reviewed the attached draft newsletter for the FHS Building Project. The subcommittee had general discussion on what should be included and how information should be presented to the community. The newsletter will include project history, important dates, information regarding the features of D1. It was also suggested that pictures of community meetings, presentations and visioning session be included to highlight and encourage community involvement in the process.

It was determined that a more detailed letter will be sent after the community meeting on March 30th, and the save the date letter that has been distributed for previous community meetings will be sent again. Kat will update the save the date letter and send to the subcommittee for review in order to get it to the printer the week of March 13th.

E. Other Business.

None.

F. Adjournment.

Upon a motion made and seconded (Baron/Bernier) the meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathryn Howroyd, Management Specialist

Farmington High School Building Project

The Town Council established the FHS Building Committee in January 2016 to resolve deficiencies in the school identified by the Board of Education through multiple studies and reports, including the New England Association of Schools and Colleges recent review. The FHS Building Committee's final responsibility is to recommend a project scope with cost estimates to the Town Council for consideration. A referendum is anticipated in June of 2017.

Between now and the town referendum, the Building Committee will continue reaching out to the community for opinions and advice. There are many stakeholders in this project, from Farmington's children and parents to its teachers and taxpayers. We want every voice to have the opportunity to be heard ahead of this important decision.

That's why we have scheduled a series of Building Committee meetings, community briefings, school tours and presentations. Every event is open to the public and every core document is available for viewing on this website. We encourage you to provide feedback at one of our events, on related social media sites or directly to the committee and its members.

Farmington High School isn't just our town's flagship school. FHS is in many ways the center of Farmington – a place where students become graduates while forming lasting bonds with the community.

Please join us as we strive to keep Farmington High School a center of excellence in education for the students of today and tomorrow.

The Farmington High School Building Committee

SAVE THE DATE

Community Meeting
*to review the option
selected by the
FHS Building Committee*

Thursday
March 30, 2017

FHS Facility Tour:
5:30 PM

Community Meeting:
7:00 PM

FHS Auditorium

Farmington High School Building Project



REFERENDUM: JUNE 2017

Farmington High School Building Project



Frequently Asked Questions...

What is the project?

The Town of Farmington and the Farmington Public Schools (FHS) are evaluating options to address the needs of Farmington High School. A number of concepts for the school will be developed and reviewed, including but not limited to renovation only, renovation and additions and a new facility. The goal is to develop a preferred solution to bring before the Farmington voters at a referendum on June 15, 2017. The project is very early in development and will be updated as new information is available.

Why does Farmington High School need to be addressed?

The existing Farmington High School does not support the delivery of a 21st century educational program. As a result of the numerous additions over the years, students travel large distances between classes, often traveling outside to shorten travel times, creating a security risk. A number of areas throughout the school are undersized including the auditorium, cafeteria, media center, and hallways.

Please see the website for a summary of the identified needs and a more detailed summary of the existing conditions of the Farmington High School facility: www.fhsbuildingproject.org

The school has received a number of additions over the years. Why do we need to do anything to the high school?

While the additions addressed enrollment needs at the times, all of the additions have been single story resulting in a sprawling, building with an inefficient footprint. The additions did not address any code compliance, undersized learning spaces, and aging mechanical and electrical systems.

What reviews or studies have been conducted to determine the Statement of Need?

The following reviews and studies have been conducted to determine the FHS Statement of Need:

- Acoustic Study, May, 2013
- Auditorium Study: November 2013
- Office of Civil Rights Review: April 2014
- FHS Acoustic Study: May 2015
- TECTON FHS Facility Review: January, 2015
- NEASC Review and Report: Sept. 2014 (visit) and Feb. 2016 (report)

How is the plan for the high school being developed?

Representatives from the Farmington Board of Education, as well as Farmington High School administrators, teachers and students participated in a 2-day "visioning" session with renowned educational planning consultant Dr. Frank Locker and our architectural consultant Kaestle Boos Associates, Inc. During the sessions, participants examined educational trends, best practices, and issues affecting the delivery of a rigorous, well-rounded middle school education, and addressed overarching themes as identified by participants.

On the third day, a session was held at the Farmington Senior Center to allow the Farmington community to participate in the visioning session, reviewing what had taken place the previous two days and identifying community goals for the Farmington High School project. Prevalent themes at this session included multipurpose use of the facility, cost control, flexibility for the future, customization, energy efficiency and a need to serve the needs of all students. The design team utilized this information to develop the design concepts which represents the Farmington community's vision for FHS.

Are you going to build a new facility?

On March 1st, the Building Committee approved Option D1 which is a new facility on the existing site.

How are school construction projects funded?

School construction projects are funded through a grant provided by the Connecticut Department of Administrative Services Office of School Construction and authorization of funds at the local town level.

The Office of School Construction document describing the School Construction Grant Process states:

The state school construction grants pay upon a 20% to 80% sliding scale, a percent of eligible expenditures in accordance with a relative wealth rank. Percentages are assigned to a project based upon date of grant commitment.

Reimbursement rates for projects are determined based upon the date that funding is locally authorized in an amount sufficient to at least cover the local share of the project. Local share is defined as total project costs less the state school construction grant. School construction projects are typically authorized for the full amount of project costs but financed for only the local share."

What is Farmington's reimbursement rate from the State of Connecticut?

Farmington's maximum possible reimbursement rate is 29.29% of eligible project costs. The actual reimbursement rate will be determined by the preferred design solution (addition/renovation vs. new facility) and the date that funding is locally authorized.

While we will not know the exact reimbursement rate until the very end of the project (after auditors review the final project), the Renovation Committee is working with the architects, OPM, and Construction Manager to receive the maximum allowable reimbursement.

Frequently Asked Questions...

What is the timeline?

The preliminary design phase of the FHS Building Project was completed on March 1st. Conceptual option D1 was selected as the preferred concept to bring to a debt exclusion question before the Farmington voters in June 2017.

The following is a preliminary timeline of this process:

Schematic Design Phase:	Mar 2 – April 5, 2017
Special Town Meeting:	April 17, 2017
Referendum Vote:	June 2017

What is a Learning Commons and how is it different from a library?

A traditional library was primarily designed for quiet, independent research and reading from the collection of books housed in the space. More recently, libraries have also included a bank of desktop stationary computers that allowed for internet access. The traditional library was also used as a teaching space for whole class instruction. During these lessons it was often necessary to essentially close the library space to other students looking to do independent or small group work.

A Learning Commons is often referred to as the "heart" or "hub" of the school. It is a space designed to be open and inviting with flexible and adaptive space and furniture to accommodate multiple purposes.

- **Research and Reading** - With ubiquitous access to digital resources and information, there is less of a need for hardcover texts as primary sources for the informational reading or literature. A Learning Commons will, however, continue to house a collection of texts that students may use on site or check out to bring home.
- **Small Group Study** - Given the emphasis on collaborative work and project-based or inquiry-based learning, students will use the Learning Commons to meet together in small group conference rooms or clustered seating areas. They will have access to white boards, technology, and flexible seating in order to facilitate productivity and critical thinking.
- **Independent Quiet Study** - Students will be able to find spaces in the Learning Commons where they can read, write, and think without interacting with others. Students of this generation are accustomed to working independently in public spaces within an academically stimulating environment. Soft seating and comfortable work surfaces are dispersed throughout the space.
- **Teacher Collaboration** - A Learning Commons is designed to encourage teacher to teacher and teacher to student interaction that is more spontaneous in nature. There is typically an open space or a "café-like" area that encourages conversations and informal meetings among adults and students with high top tables and stools or longer tables and benches.
- **Classroom Space** - There is a continuing need for direct instruction and as well as the possibility for whole class learning through videoconferencing, webinars, and other multimedia learning opportunities. The classroom is outfitted with the necessary technology and flexible furniture to adapt to multiple learning modalities.
- **Exhibitions and Presentations** - The Learning Commons is often used to showcase and celebrate student work. Display panels, wall hangings, showcases and LCD screens are used to make learning public and to facilitate a core instructional practice of using models and critique to enhance learning. There may be an amphitheater space for guest experts or student panels to present their work to an audience of faculty and/or students.

Why has Farmington Public Schools adopted "cluster" concept for the academic classroom spaces?

As an architectural feature of all 3 designs, the clustering of classroom spaces into 6 clusters with adjacent breakout spaces is intended to maximize light and an open concept feeling. These clusters do not represent a teaming structure for students.

Smaller clusters create a sense of community as opposed to long stretches of hallways or corridors with classrooms on both sides. The cluster design keeps the building compact and efficient, avoiding a sense of sprawl. As students move among the clusters from class to class, they will not encounter "bottleneck" intersections of corridors as traffic patterns are varied to facilitate a better flow.

Programmatically clusters can be used in different ways, as models of teaching and learning evolve and change over time. For example, one cluster might become a freshman academy or a department-based model only.

Farmington Public Schools ("FPS") currently envisions students moving about all 6 clusters depending on where their classes are scheduled as they do now. Students will not be grouped by teams as they are in middle school.

FPS does see an advantage to scheduling classes from different disciplines in every cluster to encourage multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary teaching and learning. Synthesizing subject matter content and skills across discipline enhances critical thinking and creativity and also reflects the nature of real world problem solving. It is this kind of learning that Farmington's Vision of the Graduate reflects.

Teachers will not be assigned to the teacher prep space by discipline. There are currently structures in place which support discipline-based collaboration through monthly department meetings and course-based teams of teachers who meet twice a week. FPS is seeking to promote innovative inter-disciplinary curriculum units and course offerings. In our current department-based structure, it is likely that a World Language teacher would rarely interact with a Social Studies teacher because their offices and classrooms are in opposite corners of the building and they typically spend most of their time in that one location.

The visibly collaborative work going on in the clusters will enhance a culture of learning and a strong sense of self-direction and resourcefulness. Students will be working independently or in small groups utilizing the breakout space between classrooms or in the small group work areas. An emphasis on making work public will invite student discussion and feedback in ways that walled classrooms and empty hallways do not.

I cannot attend the Building Committee meetings in person. Is there another way to view the meetings?

FHS Building Committee meetings are now recorded and uploaded to the Resources page of the web site. Please utilize the Contact page with any questions or comments about the meetings.

For the most up-to-date information,
please visit our website:
www.fhsbuildingproject.org