



## **The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:02PM**

### **Present:**

Chairman Steven Stone, Phil Thibault, Dennis Piendak, David Martin, Rebecca Duda, Linda Trouville, Rob Sheppard, Renee Young, Mike LaCava, Marybeth Veilleux, Nicholas Botelho, Stefanie Fields, Barbara O'Connor

Mount Vernon Group: Frank Tedesco, Al Cuevas, Bill Peters, Susan Taylor  
LiRo-Hill: Paul Kalous, Andy Vo

Also Present: Town Manager Kate Hodges, Community Development Alison Manugian, Chair of Conservation Commission Dave Sutherland

Absent: Andy Graham

### **Minutes**

Mr. Martin made a motion to approve the minutes of March 5 2025 as presented. Mr. Sheppard seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

### **Invoice for Approval LiRo-Hill February 2025**

Ms. Trouville made a motion to approve the monthly invoice from LiRo-Hill for February in the amount of \$21,205 as presented. Mr. Thibault seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

### **Present and Review Option 4D Conceptual Design & Estimated Cost**

Mr. Kalous began the discussion by stating everyone should refer to the paper copy of the presentation to start, as the slide show is in transit to the meeting. He went over the schedule for the feasibility study and schematic design. LiRo-Hill have been on this project for about a year and Mount Vernon Group joined in the summer. Since that time the SBC and Dracut Public Schools have reviewed building programs for enrollments of 580 and 860 students. They have tested the viability of these programs for four possible sites. The SBC has weighed pro's and con's and determined that the focus should be on the Campbell School site. For the Campbell School site MVG generated five and now six alternative schemes. He commended the design team for responding to SBC concerns and creating the sixth scheme called 4D. In the evaluation over the past months, the SBC has reviewed the design alternatives relative to traffic, wetlands, setbacks, height issues, pros and cons of addition/renovation versus new construction. The Project is working toward making the Preferred Schematic Report submittal to the MSBA for May 1,

which the MSBA will vote on PSR June 25 2025. Today the SBC can select a Preferred Schematic alternative.

Mr. Cuevas from the MVG Design Team went through the Location and Address chart and explained each of the nine alternatives in the study. They have narrowed their choices down to five concepts. The other properties evaluated at 384 Proprietors Road and 1365 Broadway Road were determined not to be viable.

Mr. Cuevas began going through each site plan in detail to bring everyone up to speed on the discussions the committee has had. He talked about the code upgrade plans and if the Town were just going to bring the buildings up to code and what that would entail such as enlarging the classrooms, doing a full code upgrade, adding an elevator, modifying bathrooms. This would be done on Campbell School (alternative CB-X) and Greenmont Avenue Schools (Alternative GM-X) and you would still have two schools. The MSBA would not participate in funding the code upgrade renovation options.

The addition/renovation for the Campbell School site 1021 Methuen Street for 580 students would be a one-story addition with the site being modified to bring all the population onsite (alternative CB-1). The queuing of cars would need to add the parking lot area in the back area to keep all cars off Methuen and Bellevue Avenue. There was a discussion on the addition/renovation of the school for 860 students (CB-3) which would combine both schools and also keep the curing off of the roadways. This would entail a thirty-six month schedule. The existing school would stay operating while the construction went on around it. Once the addition was completed they would move students into the new addition and then renovate the old school. This is more disruptive to the student body. Mr. Stone expressed the concern that construction over a three year period directly adjacent to an occupied school may deter local families from sending their children who may not elect to join the district when work is complete.

New Construction (860 Students) – Mr. Cuevas went through the site plans for three new construction schemes (CB-4B, 4C and 4D). The students would stay in both existing schools while the new school was being built. In these schemes the queuing of cars would be onsite, but extend into the back portion of the site so that the queue at drop-off and pick-up does not overflow to the streets. The placement of the building avoids encroachment into wetland locations and the alternative schemes test the fit of the program on the lot and, in turn changes the interior classroom layouts. Each alternative layout has the classroom neighborhood concept to make a large school feel small. The special classrooms like art classes etc. are in the center of the building. CB-4C shows a similar configuration. 4B and 4C schemes, like the add-reno will require the extended driveway and lot in the back of the site to accommodate the queue.

CB-4D New Construction (860 Students) – Shows a different location for the new school, being on the back parcel of the site. MVG devised this plan in response to the need to develop the back portion of the site to accommodate driveway length to prevent queuing onto local streets at drop off and pick up times. This iteration would also be likely be a thirty-month schedule but possibly less. The old school would be demolished after the new building is occupied and operating. The biggest advantage of this scheme is that construction work would be far away from the existing school operations, being way to the back of the site. This scheme is the very least disruptive of any of the other alternatives. Another big advantage to this alternative is the potential future possibilities for the site once the old building is gone. This alternative will work as designed without the need of any augmentation to the site. There was a discussion regarding vacant lots behind the school site, owned by the Town, and whether they could be utilized for a rear entrance to the site, which would enhance this design even more. The team stated that the project would have an early sitework construction package to save time and money. The site

preparation can take place while the building construction documents are in progress. The awarded building contractor can begin right away and not wait for sitework to be completed. This will be the most economical approach and save time.

Mr. Cuevas went over the pros and cons of each conceptual schematic drawing. The 4D alternative has the added advantages of the remote construction site, and expanded site opportunities that GM-X, CB-X, CB-1, CB-2, 4B and 4C do not.

Mr. Kalous reviewed the estimates received from PM&C and Fennessy Consulting Services with the committee. Each of the new construction alternative costs 4B, 4C and 4D are very similar. The Committee reviewed the Preliminary PSR Estimated Costs with the soft cost estimates added in. The split showed the estimated MSBA portion of 45% and Dracut's being 55%. The Committee went over the upcoming scheduled activity chart showing the schedule. A question had come up about the district vote date and Superintendent Stone stated that he was having Mr. Graham and Ms. Curtis check with the Town Clerk on these dates.

Ms. O'Connor asked about the design and whether it could still move forward without a second exit. Mr. Tedesco stated the site works without the second exit.

Ms. Manugian the Community Development Director for the Town had some questions and concerns on the site. She asked about whether consideration was given to the current landowners and she was extremely concerned about permitting. This site would require a Zoning Board Variance for setbacks, height concern due to only two stories being allowed in this zone, Conservation Commission concerns and Special Permit from Planning Board would also be needed. Ms. Young stated that Ms. Manugian was on the emails inviting her to these meetings and she did not attend until now to voice these concerns.

Mr. Sheppard asked if the parcels of land adjacent at the back of the site are owned by the town. Mr. Tedesco said that the Town stated that they are. The Adjacent Parcel slide shows this. The 4D concept plan would keep the construction away from the existing school and use of an adjacent parcel for egress would improve this alternative even more. He stated this is a pretty good site, it is a little hilly. Mr. Tedesco stated this is still a conceptual design. The schematic design would not be done for another six to seven months to work through the issues being addressed tonight.

Ms. Hodges mentioned that she had looked on the school's website and did not find much about this project. Mount Vernon Group stated that it is in the binder at the front of the room all the information up to this point on the project was in there. Ms. Hodges asked where one would be able to look at this conceptual design. Superintendent Stone stated it is in his office. There was a question of what happens if a special permit from a board does not get granted. Mr. Tedesco stated they would then learn what the concerns are and work through the issue to resolve it. Mr. Tedesco said they will have workshops with the land use boards, with the police and fire departments, building inspector, etc. to understand and resolve concerns they may have. The MSBA does not expect the town to have all these answers at this conceptual phase, however the answers will develop from their process in future phases.

Mr. Sheppard went back to page 18 relative to the building height as the 4D scheme is a four-story building and the other schemes are three story that may exceed the height limit. Mr. Cuevas stated in all concepts the project will have to go to Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission and Planning Board. Ms. Manugian thought that even though this is preliminary that some conversation with the town would have been had.

Ms. Hodges asked if you vote on one concept and the building had to be moved is there wiggle room to move the building. Mr. Tedesco said there is leeway to do this as these plans are conceptual.

There was a discussion on the timeline from this point and Mr. Kalous stated that slippage to the PSR submittal date would have a big impact. Mr. Piendak asked if the vote for PSR took place next week or the week after, if that would make the PSR submittal slip. Mr. Tedesco confirmed that would not make the submittal date slip.

Ms. O'Connor asked what if a Board doesn't approve the project? Mr. Tedesco stated they learn what the concern is, and work through it to make the project approvable.

The Committee asked Superintendent Stone if he received an answer back from Town Counsel. Mr. Stone stated that he did not. Ms. Hodges stated she supplied Superintendent Stone with a detailed answer to his questions regarding ownership and permitting. Ms. Manugian suggested a meeting be set up with the Chairs of the conservation, planning board, and zoning to try and get a temperature from the boards. She would be happy to set that up. Mr. Tedesco stated that MVG will furnish dates for their team's availability immediately.

There was a discussion of which design would be brought forward and presented to the Chairs of the Boards. There was some disagreement on everyone agreeing with the last design being Option 4D. Superintendent Stone would rather talk about the different options because a couple of Board members are not in agreement on one design.

## **Adjournment**

Superintendent Stone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:35 PM. Seconded and approved.