

CIAC - Capital Improvement Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 17, 20118 DPW Building Meeting Room

Present: Susan Asbedian-Ciaffi, Susan Abrams, Jamie Gossels, Tom Travers, Michael Cooper, Matt Dallas, Joe Scanga Note: Joe left at 7:55

Also Present: Pat Brown (most recent Chair, Fairbank Task Force), Jack Ryan (Former Chair, Fairbank Task Force), Bella Wong (Superintendent/Principal, LSRHS) Radha R. Gargeya (LSRHS School Committee Chair)

Handouts: 420 Lincoln Road Proposal from Bella Wong

Chairman Jamie Gossels, following acknowledgement of a quorum, called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

Item 1. Welcome to newest member, Matt Dallas.

Item 2. Approve minutes from August 22 meeting.

A motion to accept the minutes as amended (Amend minutes to include Joe Scanga as absent.) was made and seconded

Aye: Susan Asbedian-Ciaffi, Susan Abrams, Jamie Gossels, Tom Travers, Michael Cooper

Abstain: Joe Scanga

Item 3. Meeting schedule

There are a few items on the October 15 Warrant that the committee may want to review. Jamie will contact Melissa to explore potential projects that should come before the committee. The next meeting will be Wednesday, September 26 at 7PM in the DPW Building meeting room.

Item 4. LSRHS proposal to renovate 420 Lincoln Road

Presenter: Bella Wong

Estimated cost: \$359,000 (to be taken from LS Excess and Deficiency Fund)

The proposal would create a substantially separate program to support students with social and emotional disabilities whose needs are currently met through placements outside of the school district.

The building (the Former White House Preschool) has been unused for about 8 years and is currently out of code. This proposal would pay for final renovations to the building in order to create an in-district special education program that would allow LS to keep more students in-district and save money on tuition and transportation.

LS has spent about \$67,000 from their budget to do initial repairs (gutting the inside of the building and doing asbestos mitigation, repairing the roof and upgrading HVAC) to make the building water tight and avoid further deterioration. Superintendent Wong reviewed the handout, which broke down numbers for both the renovation and the program costs and provided supporting detail for the creation of the program.

Discussion:

- The need for finding a way to keep more students in district is ongoing. Superintendent Wong explained that, based on an enrollment of 10 students the program is projected to be cost neutral (after reimbursing the E&D fund) by 2020. Primary savings are in tuition and transportation but the ability for students to stay in their home school is a definite plus for the students and their families.

- Questions regarding the program included how/if it would be integrated into the mainstream, whether the program might be able to recruit tuition students, and projections of numbers going forward.
- There was some concern that the costs for the renovation did not reflect architectural drawings and hard numbers. The building inspector is working closely with the LS staff but without the more detailed information from an architect it is very possible that the actual costs will be higher.
- The E&D fund currently has just under a million dollars. Given the upcoming need to address the fields, how will the use of funding for renovations impact the ability to pay for field repairs/replacement. The 5 year plan has already identified funding for the fields.
- The superintendent explained the process for accessing the E&D funds and the role of the LS School Committee in that process.
- All staffing and facility costs going forward would be a part of the LS operating budget. There is a good possibility that a grant will fund the counselor for the program, which is reflected in the projected staffing budget of \$300,000.

The motion was made and seconded: The CIAC supports the concept of converting 420 Lincoln Road to provide an in-house program for students with social and emotional disabilities contingent on more detailed construction costs.

The vote was unanimous.

Item 5. Fairbank Community Center Design Funds (article 3 in October Town Warrant)

Presenter: Pat Brown

Estimated Cost: \$1,900,000

The warrant article for October 15 Town Meeting seeks \$1,900,000 for design fees to replace the current building with a 62,000 square foot facility that includes a full size gym, walking track, refurbished pool, new locker rooms and dedicated space for both the Senior Center and Park and Rec programs. It would also provide a civic emergency space. The current facility's space limitations (40,000 square feet) impact the summer Park and Rec program, and is not sufficient for the Senior Center programs.

The total estimated cost for the new facility will be about \$33,000,000. This includes upgrades to the current pool and a new diving space. Operating costs are still not nailed down; with double the size it is anticipated that the staff will also double. All documents can be read on the town website.

Discussion:

- The survey that was sent to residents asked about fitness memberships but did not include several clubs in town so the marketing analysis of the results was questioned.
- The survey responses did not identify how many households responded.
- The inclusion of a full service gym was questioned, given the other options available in town and the cost of operating a fitness facility.
- The pool membership is currently down (which may be attributed to its condition and the condition of the locker rooms) but it has never been self sufficient, even at its peak membership. This generated concern about operating costs being even higher than they currently are.
- There is no cohesive plan for the SPS administrative offices, currently using a considerable part of the Fairbank building. The committee felt that SPS needs to be more proactive about finding their own space.
- There was a great deal of concern about operating deficits. Pat Brown and Jack Ryan reminded the committee that the gym facility was added to make the project revenue neutral, based on the operating costs from the first proposal. The gym facility was added in the second proposal to address this issue. The committee continued to express concern about the operating costs.

- There was a question regarding other towns' community centers and what facilities they provide. It was noted that one of the most popular aspects in Natick was the walking track.
- The committee thanked the Fairbank Task Force for all the time it has given to this project over the past 6 years.

No vote was taken on this article.

Meeting adjourned at 9:12pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Abrams

Clerk