



Concord Commission on Disability Meeting

Minutes

March 11th, 2021 – Via Zoom

Present: Jean Goldsberry, Chair, Mary Beth Barker, Janet Beyer, Lloyd Price, Karen Young, Bonnie Albright, Meryl Schwartz, Jennifer Brooke, Prow Sarns

Guests: Kristen Olsen – Architect, SMMA, Phil Poinelli - Educational Planner, A4LE, Laurie Hunter – Superintendent of Schools, Mathew Rice – Architect, SMMA, Ian Parks – Project Executive, Hill International, Pat Nelson – Member of Planning Commission,

Minutes:

Minutes from March 4th meeting approved as written.

Old Business

Vaccine Concerns

Meryl expressed her chief concern being access to vaccination for homebound people with disabilities. She suggested that the Commission write a letter to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Janet questioned whether vaccine distribution to homebound residents was not the responsibility of the PCP offices, if they are able to request vaccine from the state. Meryl reiterated that it should be made available by the legislators. Jeff Dugan, representative from the State Office on Disability, has not responded to Meryl's attempts to contact. Mary Beth added that there is no representation on the Governor's vaccine advisory committee. Mary Beth has reached out to Tami Gouveia as suggested in the last meeting, and is awaiting a response. Jean motioned to write a letter to legislators and local commissions. Motion passed unanimously.

Needs of People with Cognitive Disability

No updates. Agenda item postpone to April meeting.

White Pound Update

No updates. Jean will reach out to Kate Hodges for an update status on the project.

New Business

Concord Middle School Plans

Superintendent Hunter introduced the design team from SMMA, A4LE and Hill International. Kristen presented the Educational Plan – CPS Goals of Multiple Paths to Success, Inclusive Culture, Well Being, Innovative Environment, Community, High Achievement and Lifelong Learning. The charge of the 2021 feasibility study is to balance the scope/quality of the project with the budget/cost and the schedule of the project. The project's goals are to stay within the cost range of \$80 - \$100 M, combine the two middle schools, for 700 students, using the team teaching model to meet the education plan and to design for net zero energy. Kristen reported that their team is currently holding a number of

community discussions and that the feedback is integrated by the Concord Middle School Board Committee. At this point in the process, they do not have a design; they have a site and building program that outlines the spaces and site specification that they will include in the design. A team teaching model is a priority in the design as is providing flexible teaching and learning spaces. The educational development brought to light the need for an auditorium that is large enough for an entire grade level to gather. Unfortunately, it is cost prohibitive to have an auditorium large enough for the full student body. The current budget allows for an auditorium that would hold 280 people. The total square footage is projected at approx.. 143,000 gsf. The preliminary cost analysis comes in at \$79.98 million and the total project costs at \$99.975 million.

Jean expressed the Commissions appreciation for being given the opportunity to comment on the project so early on in the design stage.

Lloyd asked about the buildings “usefulness” life expectancy. Ian responded that the building is built for a 50 year expected duration. Some of the mechanical elements will have a shorter life.

Jean questioned whether the auditorium would be large enough to hold town meeting. At a meeting earlier this week, that possibility was discussed and it was determined not to be a viable option, as the auditorium will hold less than 500 people. The Town Manager reportedly is also looking into the gymnasium as a possibility.

Meryl expressed concern that there will never be an opportunity for all three grades to be together. The hope is that all three grades will fit in the gymnasium.

Janet ask if there will be ramps at all doors. Mathew explained that at all entrances and exits there will be ramps only. Including the main (external) entrance from the parking lot.

Jennifer inquires about whether the design is considering programs for outdoor spaces, and if these spaces are included on the budget spreadsheet. Kristen stated that the outdoor spaces are not included in the budget spreadsheet. Matthew stated that all outdoor spaces and surfaces will be accessible, made of resilient materials.

Pat questioned the commission with regards to what in their experience are things that go wrong with designs that the team should consider now. The commission members listed a few previous projects that they have be consulted on that have had problematic design flaws.

Jennifer observed that there is often a disconnect between indoor and outdoor spaces and that they should be considered equally important in terms of education. She also noted that a majority strategy for program access is preferable to that of accessible. Phil responded that these are issues that will be able to be seen in the graphics, and that the outdoor spaces are an integral part of the plans and not an afterthought. He confirmed that they will engage with the commission early on.

Janet questioned if there was a plan for the inclusion of braille. Mathew stated that room identification will be in full compliance as will a path finding resource. Laurie mentioned how a student group had created braille signs for each classroom at their current school.

Laurie stated their goal in keeping more student in district. Jennifer asked who is advising from a special needs perspective. The design team responded that they were getting as many perspectives as possible, including from the special ed teachers, but that they do not have a central coordinator. Jennifer

expressed the need to talk to the teachers of the students that are not currently being taught in district to understand their need.

Karen expressed her strong feelings about the integration of special ed classes and that they not be pushed off to the side or isolated from other class rooms. Kristen responded that the classrooms will be integrated fully throughout the school.

Bonnie mentioned that the town has been working to make public buildings more accessible to people with hearing loss, and asked what are the design team was planning in that regards. It was suggested that they contact the Town if that is not yet being considered.

Jean thanked the members of the school planning committee for their time.

The next meeting will be Thursday April 8th at 5:00 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 6:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Lauren Barretta