

JOHN R. PIERCE SCHOOL – BROOKLINE, MA	MEETING MINUTES Approved 6/14/21
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PIERCE SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE		January 28, 2021
Location:		Online GoToMeeting
Time:		6:00 PM
Name	Assoc.	Present
Bernard Greene	Voting Member – Committee Co-Chair, Select Board	Y
Helen Charlupski	Voting Member – Committee Co-Chair, School Committee	Y
Melvin Kleckner	Voting Member – Town Administrator	Y
Suzanne Federspiel	Voting Member – School Committee	Y
Dr. Jim Marini	Voting Member – Interim Superintendent of Schools	N
Charlie Simmons	Voting Member – Director of Public Buildings	N
Daniel Bennett	Voting Member – Building Commissioner	Y
Lesley Ryan-Miller	Voting Member – Pierce School Principal	Y
Carol Levin	Voting Member – Advisory Finance Committee	Y
Steve Heikin	Voting Member – Planning Board	Y
Ken Kaplan	Voting Member – Building Commission	Y
Aaron Williams	Voting Member – Pierce School Parent	Y
Nurit Zuker	Voting Member – Pierce School Parent	Y
Nancy O'Connor	Voting Member – Parks and Recreation Commission	Y
Mary Ellen Normen	Non-Voting Member – Assistant Superintendent of School Administration & Finance	Y
Melissa Goff	Non-Voting Member – Deputy Town Administrator	N
Michelle Herman	Non-Voting Member – Deputy Superintendent	N
Tony Guigli	Non-Voting Member – Building Department Project Manager	Y
Matt Gillis	Non-Voting Member – School Department Director of Operations	Y
Jim Rogers	LEFTFIELD	Y
Lynn Stapleton	LEFTFIELD	Y
Jen Carlson	LEFTFIELD	Y
Will Spears	MDS Architects	Y
Amy Mackrell	MDS Architects	Y
Margaret Clarke	MDS Architects	Y
Vinicius Gorgati	Sasaki	Y
Carla Ceruzzi	Sasaki	Y
Kate Tooke	Sasaki	Y
Tamar Warburg	Sasaki	Y
David Stephen	New Vista	Y

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.

Co-Chairs Bernard Greene and Helen Charlupski welcomed everyone to the first School Building Committee with the design team.

Meeting Minutes from the October 6, 2020 School Building Committee meeting were unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Leftfield explained that of the 8 design firms that submitted a proposal in response to the RFS, 3 firms were interviewed. MDS/Sasaki team was chosen as the design team for the Pierce School Feasibility Study phase by the Designer Selection Panel (DSP) that included members designated by the MSBA as

well as three members of the Town. MDS is no stranger to the Town of Brookline, they have worked on the Heath and Lawrence schools previously. The OPM, design team, and members of the SBC introduced themselves.

The design team reviewed their organizational chart with the committee. It was noted that MDS is in charge of project management, and will sharing design with Sasaki through the feasibility study phase. MDS will take over in Design Development and Construction Documents and leading Construction Administration. Sasaki brings a wealth of master planning knowledge to the project and will be focusing on how the exterior of the building interacts with its surroundings.

The design team explained the diversity represented across their firms. MDS is a Woman Business Enterprise (WBE). They shared that their company is comprised of 41% women, 2% non-binary, and 23% minorities. They presented a chart showing a list of the 39 people in their firm, the number of years each person has worked there and each person's race. It was noted that there are three Black/African American employees of the firm, all of which are shown to have been with the firm for 1 year, their positions are listed under the "Staff/Project Architects/Designers/Job Captains/Drafters" portion of the chart.

Sasaki is a much larger firm with 264 total staff located in Boston and Denver offices. The diversity chart shown for their company is comprised of 48% women, 1% non-binary, and 37% minority individuals with a total of 30 countries represented. Co-chair Greene requested MDS follow up on the number of Black/African American employees and to provide job titles and responsibilities of those people.

MDS and Sasaki reviewed their experience working on addition/renovation projects, including the Lawrence School in Brookline, designed by MDS.

The design team explained that engagement is a wholistic conversation between communities and designers woven into entire process. There will be a significance placed on how the building functions within the wider civic center. The Pierce Project will touch a wide variety of users/stakeholders, some of whom will be focused on interior feedback and others will provide feedback on exterior spaces and civic campus. The project will host meetings and public forums to reach all of those users and stakeholders. A wide variety of interaction types will be utilized to encourage community engagement and make providing feedback more accessible to all. Sasaki is working through COVID considerations on how to interact and get people engaged. The team has successfully used both high tech, and low tech ways of engagement.

The Educational Visioning process will be conducted through a series of workshops hosted by David Stephen of New Vista Design. To start this process, an educational leadership team needs to be identified. This leadership team will be working together during the Educational Visioning workshops to take deeper dive into project possibilities and process. They will be looking at successful elements of other schools to see what resonates with group and to help define project educational goals, priorities, and guiding principals. From those workshops, the team will move to developing the educational plan and working with MDS to define how that is translated into spaces and adjacencies within the building.

Sasaki's Director of Sustainable outlined projects that the design team has completed that are net zero academic and tech buildings. The team will track metrics throughout project. Tracking energy, water and embodied carbon in construction materials.

Leftfield reviewed the project budget which shows the commitments made for the Leftfield and MDS contracts. A Budget Revision Request (BRR) will be submitted to the MSBA to align the budget in their system. A total of \$2 Million is available for the project's Feasibility Study phase.

MDS reviewed the project workplan. The focus over the coming months is educational programming. The team will be setting up a meeting with the educational leaders to define who attends the visioning workshops. 5 visioning sessions will be scheduled with a wider group of people including parents, teachers, staff, etc. A sustainability workshop will be held to define the green goals of the project. Toward the end of this process, there will be two community forums to gather more feedback.

The Town and School should begin their educational plan at this time, using the Driscoll and Ridley educational plans as a starting point would be a great start as these are the two most recent K-8 projects in the District. Principal Lesley Ryan Miller noted that she is looking forward to tackling the educational plan and reviewing that plan with Pierce constituents.

The Educational Leadership group typically consists of the district superintendent, the school principal, and members of the School Committee. The group will be determined and a meeting will be set. For the wider Educational Working Group, parents and students should be included in the visioning workshops, which will be led by David Stephen of New Vista.

MDS explained that there are several activities that are being scheduled over February Break week including a Site Survey and other site-related due diligence required for the Preliminary Design Program (PDP) submission. The Project Team will keep the Town and School updated on the development of that scheduling. All people on site will have been CORI'd prior to being on site.

MDS reviewed the design process, noting that during this process, issues and key factors for project will be identified with the ultimate goal of finding out what is important to Brookline. The team will be considering equity with other schools in the district – is the Pierce program, site, and open space equitable? Construction Implications will be considered, the Town noted that swing space will be available at Old Lincoln School, which has a capacity of 525 students. This swing space will need to be supplemented somehow. MDS noted that more options become available and possible if the students can be moved off site during construction.

The Pierce playground site has been identified as a potential location for the school, though it is Article 97 park land and would be subject to a lengthier process to develop it for school construction. It was noted that there was a recent renovation of the park in 2016, it is also a smaller site surrounded by residences. Putting a building on the site would mean a denser, taller building. As the team begins to understand the square footage required by the educational program, it will become clearer whether the full program could even fit on the smaller site. It was also noted that the footprint on existing Pierce school does not match the playground site and it would be very difficult to match the full program of that site on the existing school site. A member of the committee noted that a park could be installed over the existing parking garage. Sasaki reviewed how the space around the existing building is shared with other civic building. There is currently a balance of open green space and building.

A member of the committee noted that the street that divides the school from the playground should be studied. Is it possible to change the street to a one way or limit car access to the street in some way?

Site Circulation was reviewed. Where should the front door be? Walkers and vehicle drop off currently happen from all directions. The design team would like to know if limiting entry points is a goal for the School. Traffic patterns are being studied, though it was noted that it is difficult to conduct a baseline traffic study during COVID. It would be important to have a better understanding of the numbers on students that walk vs. bus vs. dropped off. The School noted that there is only one bus for the Pierce School even pre-pandemic, the bus drops students off at the circular drive on the Town Hall side of the building. Approximately two thirds of students walk to school. All non-parent transportation goes through the circular drop off.

The Town noted that there has been a walking study conducted that can be shared with the design team. Members of the committee noted that the biggest issue currently is lack of parking. Separating vehicular traffic from pedestrian traffic is a high priority as cars currently drive through the circular drive where students are also walking. This is a safety concern, though closing the circular drive is not an option. Town Hall parking lot lined with cars at pickup which is also dangerous. The school has an extended day program that runs until 6:00PM that serves approximately 200+ students (pre-pandemic).

A member of the committee noted that some parents pull up to drop their child off on side of unit A, adding that a dropoff location on that side of the building may be useful. The Town noted that there are crossing guards located at Lyndon/Harvard, Harvard/School, School/Washington, Washington/Thayer.

The design team asked about how many main entrances the project should include. Members of the committee noted that other schools in Town have multiple front entrances. Driscoll was noted as an example, which includes two main entrances and a separate entrance for the Pre-K program.

The design team asked about how the current loading area is used, the School explained that they have deliveries from a box truck with gate lift, food service deliveries, custodial purposes, and furniture and equipment from time to time. There is no loading dock currently, and the school does not anticipate requiring one. A member of the committee added that a compactor for trash with a separate compactor for cardboard is important as most other schools in town have. The School has a vendor that takes care of approved compost. The largest truck that accesses the loading area is a 14' box truck. Deliveries are not scheduled for pickup/drop off times.

The existing parking garage accommodates school staff and is connected to the town hall garage, though parking between the two does not mix. Members of the committee noted that it is important to maintain or replicate the amount of parking that already exists on site. It was noted that parking dominates the School Street experience and should be considered when developing the street scape at that side of the building.

Parking equity is not consistent across schools in Brookline. There are teachers and staff that live outside of Brookline. Pierce has no available street parking as compared to other schools. The site is very tight and is surrounded by businesses, civic buildings, etc. There is currently less parking available than is necessary. A buddy parking system and parking in lanes has been adopted to ease the parking issue. The remaining parking for teachers and staff is dispersed into neighborhoods with permits. A member of the committee asked if there is an opportunity to relocate the parking on site as parking is deficient across the entire site. It was noted by the project team that during construction parking for employees on site will need to be considered.

The design team asked if there could be a different use for the Historic Building other than a school considered. The building seems very disconnected from the 1970s school and the team is wondering if the lack of connection makes it better to be used as something else. In that instance, maybe not connecting to it makes sense which would take pressure off what is being built off new school and create an opportunity for more open space on site.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00PM.