

<b>DRISCOLL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – BROOKLINE, MA</b>	<b>MEETING MINUTES APPROVED 2/04/22</b>
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<b>DRISCOLL SCHOOL BUILDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE</b>		<b>November 5, 2021</b>
Location:		Online GoToMeeting
Time:		9:00 AM
<b>Name</b>	<b>Assoc.</b>	<b>Present</b>
Miriam Aschkenasy	Town of Brookline, Co-Chair SBC, TOB Board of Selectmen	Y
Valerie Frias	Town of Brookline, Co-Chair SBC, PSB	Y
Susan Wolf Ditkoff	Town of Brookline, SBC, PSB	Y
Karen Breslawski	Building Commission	Y
Ken Kaplan	Town of Brookline, Building Commission	N
David Pollak	Advisory Committee	Y
Ali Tali	Transportation Board	N
Nancy O'Connor	Parks and Recreation Commission	Y
Dan Deutsch	Community Representative	N
Victor Kusmin	Community Representative	Y
Linda Monach	Special Education Parent Advisory Council	N
Arjun Mande	Community Representative	N
Lakia Rutherford	Parent Representative / METCO	Y
Sara Stoutland	Community Representative	N
Mel Kleckner	Town Administrator	N
Dr. Linus Guillory	Superintendent of Schools	Y
Matt Gillis	Director of Operations	Y
Michelle Bartley	Driscoll School Vice Principal	Y
Samuel Rippin	Deputy Superintendent for Administration and Finance	Y
David Youkilis	Interim Driscoll School Principal	Y
Helen Charlupski	School Committee	N
Tony Guigli	Project Manager, Town of Brookline	Y
Dan Bennett	Building Commissioner	Y
Charlie Simmons	Director of Public Buildings	N
Jim Rogers	LEFTFIELD	Y
Lynn Stapleton	LEFTFIELD	Y
Jen Carlson	LEFTFIELD	Y
Matt Casey	LEFTFIELD	Y
Adam Keane	LEFTFIELD	Y
Jonathan Levi	Jonathan Levi Architects	N
Philip Gray	Jonathan Levi Architects	Y
Carol Harris	Jonathan Levi Architects	N
Walt Kincaid	Gilbane Building Company	Y
Lynda Callahan	Gilbane Building Company	Y
Colleen Shouldice	Gilbane Building Company	N
Sam Ditzion	Community Member	Y
Erin Gallentine	Commissioner of Public Works	Y
Jessie Waisnor	Parks and Open Spaces Division	Y
Scott Landgren	Parks and Open Spaces Division	Y
Derek Hatchett	Driscoll Parent	Y
Casey Hatchett	Town Meeting Member	Y
Andrew Fisher	Town Meeting Member	Y
Clint Richmond	Town Meeting Member	Y

The meeting was called to order at 9:00AM.

The incoming SBAC co-chairs Miriam Aschkenasy of the Select Board and Valerie Frias of the School Committee introduced themselves and opened it up to others for introductions.

**Nancy O'Connor made a motion to approve SBAC Meeting Minutes for May 20, 2021, Victor Kusmin seconded. Roll was called and the vote was 7-0-4, the motion passed.**

**Nancy O'Connor made a motion to approve SBAC Meeting Minutes for October 1, 2021, Miriam Aschkenasy seconded. Roll was called and the vote was 7-0-0, the motion passed.**

Leftfield presented an update on Neighborhood Communications. Since last meeting, the Project Team has been meeting weekly with the SBAC co-chairs to review progress and any issues that may have come up during the week. A weekly construction update is being produced and distributed via email to those subscribed to receive project notifications through the website. An initial hardcopy flier with instructions on how to subscribe to emails was mailed out to the community. A bulletin board was installed along Westbourne Terrace to physically post these updates and any other pertinent information about the project where parents and school visitors are able to see. Leftfield reviewed the project website and how to subscribe to project updates.

It was noted that an abutter had some concerns that have been addressed through the improved communication from the Project Team to the community.

Gilbane provided a construction update and progress photos. Gilbane reviewed their 3 Week Look Ahead schedule highlighting that they are currently installing soil nails to secure the walls of the hole they are digging. They are close to reaching the depth required. Gilbane continues hauling soils out of the hole and are approximately 75% complete with hauling. The concrete contractor is mobilizing to the site today and will be starting on site next week to prepare for installation of the foundations. The 3 week look ahead can be found on the Driscoll project website.

A member of the committee asked what is going into the hole. JLA explained that the gymnasium and some mechanical spaces will be installed at the depth of the hole.

A member of the committee noted that in the site survey there was an underground culvert. Gilbane explained that the culvert is being redirected by the project to avoid the building footprint.

A member of the community asked whether the construction noise will be getting louder as the project progresses. Gilbane noted that they did not expect the project to create much more noise than it is creating currently. The community member asked what is being planned for work during the colder months and how that would be managed. Gilbane plans on winter conditions and will bring in heating blankets to allow for concrete placements to occur during the colder months.

Co-chair Frias noted that Town Meeting did vote to add geothermal wells to the project and the project team is working to add EV Ready spaces to those already included in the project. The Building Commissioner noted that the only change being proposed by the Town Meeting article would be that all ADA spaces will now also be required to be EV Ready. The bylaws currently require 15% of spaces to be EV Ready.

A member of the committee asked if moving to geothermal would free up roof space and asked if photovoltaics could be added to the roof. JLA explained that the project is designed to be photovoltaic-ready.

Leftfield presented a budget update highlighting that the project has spent 10% of the budget to date, which translates to \$13,301,149. The budget has been increased by the \$4.9 million voted by Town Meeting to include geothermal in the project. The project has approximately \$5.8 million total left in the contingency line item, with \$4.9 million of that being in construction contingency for change orders and \$1 million for soft cost changes. It was noted that while the project is 10% through the budget, it is important to note that the highest risk of encountering issues is during excavation. With the project 75% through excavation, the team is comfortable with the remaining budget and contingency available.

#### New Business

Clint Richmond, Town Meeting Member, chair of the Green Caucus, member of the board of the Brookline Green Space Alliance, and member of the Solid Waste Advisory Committee, presented his concerns about the turf field planned for the Driscoll School project. He noted that there are toxic chemicals, PFAS, in the blades of a turf field. He noted that PFAS are found in many places including drinking water and items people use daily. Recently, the State began regulating PFAS in drinking water.

He also noted concern that while there is an increase in open space for the project, there is not necessarily an increase in green space. He noted that the turf space is the centerpiece of the park space. He proposed the turf field be reconsidered for the Driscoll School project.

Andrew Fisher, Town Meeting Member and Driscoll neighbor, added that he agreed with what Clint said. He noted that there is opposition in the neighborhood to a turf field that has not been identified and that from what he can tell, many people in the neighborhood are opposed. He was concerned that the turf field takes away from drainage of the site. He is concerned about other projects in town creating runoff issues that he wants to make sure do not happen at Driscoll.

Casey Hatchett, Town Meeting Member, neighbor and Driscoll parent, explained that the current field at Driscoll has never been able to grow grass and is often closed due to weather events. This severely limits outside space for children and the impact was felt when outside space became a priority when COVID hit. She added that there is significant support in the neighborhood and from parents for synthetic turf.

Joan Miller noted she is against a synthetic turf field.

Co-chair Aschkenasy summarized the concerns heard from the community to include concerns about PFAS risks, drainage, the community engagement process, and the weighing of opposition vs. support.

Erin Gallentine, Commissioner of Public Works noted that synthetic turf is an important part of the Parks and Open Space inventory to ensure access and playability to athletic fields in Town. The Parks and Open Space department supported the public engagement process that was spearheaded by a subcommittee. She noted that for the past 20 years the Town has received letters and requests from Driscoll neighbors and parents to contemplate synthetic turf at the Driscoll School due to the poor conditions of natural grass at that field. The Town loves natural grass where it is appropriate. Turf fields make the most sense where there is heavy use, such as at school locations. She explained that with school use, after hours use, and summer use, the Driscoll field gets at least 1,000 hours of use per year, anything over 600 hours of use leads to degradation of the field which creates unsafe conditions. She

added that the infill for the turf field is coconut husk fiber in lieu of the old technology of crumb rubber infill. She explained that the turf field will have better drainage than a natural grass field due to the way it is constructed.

Scott Landgren, Senior Landscape Architect for the Parks and Open Space Division who is also a soil scientist with years of experience working with synthetic and natural turf fields, added that the Driscoll School usage creates an intense environment that does not allow natural grass to grow and thrive. There are letters and testing provided by some manufacturers that show there are no PFAS in their products. He added that it is easy to contaminate during testing, PFAS are ubiquitous and can be found in clothing, carpets, and everyday products.

Victor Kusmin, a member of the SBAC and Driscoll parent with a background in environmental science and land management and who also was on the subcommittee that designed the Driscoll Park and Playground, explained that he was originally against turf fields for some of the concerns raised earlier. He noted that during his career in landscape architecture, when dealing with more urban environments like the Driscoll School, there is heavier traffic on fields. He explained that the Driscoll field is often closed and unusable due to weather. He added that the chemicals used to maintain and grow grass have an impact over time as well and that needed to be weighed when making the decision to move to a turf field.

Mr. Kusmin explained that during the process, shade trees were identified as a priority for the project. The shade trees will benefit from a turf field as there will be no competition for sunlight and water and there will be no grass-related soil compaction to impede on tree root growth.

Nancy O'Connor, vice-chair of the Parks and Recreation Commission and member of the subcommittee that designed the Driscoll Park and Playground explained the public process undertaken to design the park and playground. The committee was comprised of 2 members of the Parks and Recreation Commission, 2 members of the School Committee, and 3 members of the public. The meetings of the committee were very well attended by the members of the community, the Project Team and representatives from Parks and Open Spaces including Commissioner Gallentine, were present at the meetings. She added that during her time with the Parks and Recreation Commission, there were many times that members of the Driscoll community petitioned the Commission for a synthetic turf field, though there were no funds available previously.

Susan Wolf Ditkoff, former co-chair of the SBAC and member of the committee that designed the Driscoll Park and Playground, explained the public engagement process and how people in the community were notified of the series of meetings that took place. There was a very wide outreach effort with notices going out to several neighborhood groups, through the Town notice system, and public posting. Representatives from the Parks and Open Space Division explained that a hard mailing went out to neighbors within at least 300 feet of the school, and the area was broadened to include streets across Washington as well, and a legal ad was placed in the Brookline Tab. The PDF of the limits of the mailing was shown on screen.

David Youkilis, principal of the Driscoll School, explained that the grass on the existing school field deteriorated to the point of being a dirt and mud patch. Through compaction, roots, rocks, and sprinkler heads were revealed to become tripping hazards. The field became unsafe and was a challenge to program given the uncertainty of it's condition over time. The school will benefit from an even surface of turf in the new design.

Co-chair Aschkenasy thanked everyone for their participation in today's meeting. Based on the extensive community engagement and weighing the pros and cons of each option, it is very unlikely that any change will be made to the design of the Driscoll field. She added that this discussion should lead to a Town-wide policy and standards on turf fields.

Co-chair Frias noted that the School Committee is advocating for many green initiatives and that issues related to green space and sustainability are priorities for the School Committee and the Select Board.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:27am.