

JOHN R. PIERCE SCHOOL – BROOKLINE, MA	MEETING MINUTES Approved 1/13/22
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PIERCE SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE		December 13, 2021
Location:		Online Zoom Meeting
Time:		4:00 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	N
Andy Liu	Voting Member – School Committee	Y
Dr. Linus Guillory	Voting Member – Superintendent of Schools	Y
Charlie Simmons	Voting Member – Director of Public Buildings	N
Daniel Bennett	Voting Member – Building Commissioner	N
Lesley Ryan-Miller	Voting Member – Deputy Superintendent of Teaching and Learning	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
Sam Rippin	Voting Member – Assistant Superintendent of School Administration & Finance	Y
Jamie Yadoff	Voting Member – Pierce School Principal	N
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

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM.

1. Project Approvals:

Approval of the meeting minutes from the December 6, 2021 meeting will be pushed to the next SBC agenda for approval.

2. Announcements, Updates, and Comments:

There were no Announcements, Updates, or Comments made at this time.

3. Discussion by the Committee on Preferred Schematic Report (PSR)

A member of the committee asked if mass timber is still being considered in the project and if moving forward this would be an alternate that would result in two separate structural designs. MDS explained that the structural consultant did not think a full mass timber structure would be possible on this project, but they are exploring options for partial mass timber and a decision will be made during Schematic Design. The project is carrying a premium for the total project cost.

A member of the committee asked if geothermal is currently in the project costs. Leftfield explained that it is being carried as an option within the total project budget amount at this time. The Town asked that the cost be moved into the above the line costs as opposed to being carried as an option at this time. Leftfield will update this in the PSR before it is submitted to the MSBA.

A member of the committee asked if the current schedule allows for the construction documents to be complete by December 2023 in order to be on target for an early 2024 bid period. The current project schedule shows the bid period starting in January 2024 and wrapping up by March 2024. Leftfield explained that the schedule could only start earlier if early bid packages were considered which may allow for early demolition work to begin over the summer with sitework starting in Fall 2023. Leftfield added that the Building Commission has historically not allowed early bid packages. This is a discussion that will need to be had with the Building Commission in early SD. The current schedule shows school opening in January 2027, while a schedule with early bid packages allowed the school to open for September 2026.

Leftfield outlined some of the main changes that occurred in the PSR between the initial draft sent to the SBC on December 7th, and the final draft sent on December 10th. The original draft was updated to correct a few documents that appeared out of order. The Design Team also updated the space summary spreadsheet per a conversation with the MSBA. The MSBA requested that the space summaries be broken into three separate spreadsheets to show total square footage, addition/renovation square footage, and new construction square footage.

Leftfield included an updated Comparison / Probable Cost Analysis to capture potential cost impacts including a conservative number to cover student relocation costs, potential costs for changes at School Street, and budget lines for Building and School Department administrative costs. The project team is confident that a not to exceed project budget of \$220 million will be more than enough to carry forward into Schematic Design.

There are several factors, including a decrease in overall square footage that has not yet been captured in the cost estimates, that is likely to drive this not to exceed number down before the end of Schematic Design. It is important to remember that the numbers in the initial estimates are based on narratives and basic square footage, which has gone down since the estimates were run, not real plans. The Design Team and Leftfield understand that the goal is to drive the cost of this project down over the course of Schematic Design and will work to ensure that happens, and keep costs at the forefront of our conversations as the project advances.

Members of the committee asked about the \$25 million being carried for potential student relocation costs. School Department Director of Operations Matt Gillis explained that he had taken a

close look at several options for relocating students and staff during construction. The \$25 million is a conservative number that allows for flexibility at this time as the plan for relocation has not been finalized. He noted that if there is a chance for early packages on this project, it would allow the school to open sooner and would shorten the length of time the Town would need to pay for another location, and therefore would save money in relocation costs.

A member of the committee asked if the school carries utility costs to run spaces that are used for relocation. Mr. Gillis explained that the Town does pay utility costs at the Old Lincoln School that is currently being used as swing space for the high school project. The committee member suggested the Town look into capitalizing the cost of utilities to the project instead of taking them out of the Town of School operating budgets – she would follow up with Mr. Gillis and Melissa Goff to determine a path forward on this. She asked if the relocation costs cover the cost to relocate Town archives that are currently stored in the Historic Building basement. Mr. Gillis explained that the places considered in the relocation cost study would have enough space available to house those archives.

A member of the committee noted that there are conversations by climate groups in town about district heating for the wider municipal campus. She added that it would be good to know if the MSBA would participate in shared infrastructure and how the project might include itself in, or at the least not preclude itself from, this wider campus plan.

Building Department Project Manager Tony Guigli explained that the integration of Pierce into a wider energy plan was not included in the scope of the Pierce School project and therefore there are no funds available to study this broader Town issue during the Feasibility Study. He added that the Traffic Study the Project Team has been asked to undertake is also beyond the scope of the project as it is a broader Town issue, and that study is already putting stress on the Feasibility Study budget.

A member of the committee emphasized the importance of the traffic study for the safety of the students crossing School Street, adding that this study should be a priority. The project team clarified that there is money for the traffic study, and that a proposal is being priced currently. The point being made was to show that all of the requests to add scope to the project do come with a cost and that there is a fixed budget for the Feasibility Study. There are contingency funds to address issues or concerns that come up during the course of Feasibility, but they are typically used for project-specific needs, not broader Town issues.

A member of the committee asked if the VRF system would be included in either HVAC option, whether there are geothermal wells or not. The VRF system was shown as an option to the base system in the cost comparison of the project. MDS explained that the two additional HVAC system options, VRF and Geothermal, were in addition to the base system as MSBA requires that three options be studied. MDS would pose the question to their MEP consultant, but noted that the VRF system is a different system than the geothermal and the base.

Co-Chair Charlupski moved to approve submission of the Preferred Schematic Report to the MSBA after it is amended as discussed in this meeting. The motion was seconded by Co-Chair Greene. The SBC voted unanimously with 9 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstained, to approve and submit the presented Preliminary Design Program documents to the MSBA on or before December 28, 2021.

4. Old Business

Leftfield explained that the traffic study scope is being finalized this week with pricing expected by the end of the year. The proposal will be ready to be discussed in more detail at the next SBC meeting before it is presented to the Building Commission as an amendment to the Designer's contract. Leftfield expressed concerns about pricing for the study, which includes a much broader scope than is typical for a school project, echoing statements made earlier about having finite uncommitted funds for this phase of the project.

MDS explained that the original traffic study scope was based on the drop in school enrollment agreed upon by the Town and MSBA, and took a much more localized look at just the surrounding streets. The new traffic study is needed because the Town is now asking the team to look at potentially closing School Street which would have a much wider impact to the Town.

The traffic study will likely be conducted early in 2022 with a report expected in early spring. The report would be provided to the SBC and to the Transportation Board. While the SBC can make a recommendation to the Transportation Board, it is the Transportation Board that will ultimately make the decision based on the information provided and what it hears from the community on the subject. The project team and SBC do not make the decision on the best path forward.

Leftfield explained that there is approximately \$325,000 left uncommitted in the Feasibility Study budget. That amount is meant to cover competing interests, some of which have unknown cost impacts at this time. Leftfield noted that we need to include Town Administration costs, a potential geothermal test well (which cost \$150,000 at Driscoll) that could be conducted during SD to inform the number of wells likely needed which would help better define the cost going into Design Development (DD), property line due diligence and legal work needed to obtain the deeds for the site, the potential cost to bring a Construction Manager (CM) on board during SD given the complexities of this project – this would ensure cost and schedule confidence before asking the Town to vote on the project, and the traffic study. Leftfield will present the budget in more detail at the next SBC meeting.

A member of the committee noted that the original traffic study did not take into consideration the number of students crossing School Street at grade once the bridge is eliminated. She felt that School Street should be considered part of the school because the school has to cross the street to access the park and playground during school hours.

A member of the committee asked if there are existing traffic studies being done in Town that the school's traffic study could use to inform theirs. It was noted that there is a study being done for the impacts of route 9 being narrowed to one lane. The traffic consultant will be using all information and studies available. She suggested a meeting with herself, co-chair Charlupski, Melissa Goff, and Erin Gallentine to determine how to possibly align timing on broader Town-wide initiatives and to identify funding sources for further study by the project team.

A member of the committee emphasized that the traffic study should be a top priority for project funds as it ties directly to student safety. Leftfield explained that the traffic study will be completed, it is just a question of how the study is funded, or how it affects funding for other priorities.

Co-chair Greene noted that the safety of children on all streets surrounding the project campus is important and should be considered. Members of the committee noted that concerns are

heightened about crossing School Street as it is part of the school day, not just a route used getting to and from school.

A member of the committee noted that if the Town decides an at-grade crossing at School Street is the path forward, there should be money carried in the budget for a bridge/overpass to cross from the school to the park as there is now. The team explained that there is no bridge in the current budget.

MDS explained that because the decision on what is done at School Street is outside of the SBC and Project Team's purviews, there is a real concern about how the timeline is affected. A clear process is needed from the Transportation Board to understand the timeline once they have the traffic study report in hand. MDS needs to provide the estimators with documents in May 2021 to price – it would be helpful to know at that point whether a bridge is included in the project or not. MDS added that if the process for deciding what happens at the street cannot be decoupled from the school project, one process may delay the other.

A member of the committee commented that a future bridge will be required to be ADA accessible, unlike the bridge that currently exists. This would result in a larger footprint on the park side of School Street than there is now, which could result in the need to take away some usable park space. Another member of the committee suggested that if a bridge is needed, that properties along School Street be taken by eminent domain to avoid losing park land.

A member of the committee noted that she felt the Designer should be exploring broader Town-wide initiatives to ensure the timing of the school ties into other Town projects. It was clarified that these broader Town-wide initiatives are not part of the scope currently included in the Designer's contract and that additional funding and clear direction on what studies should be pursued would be necessary to expand their contract.

Co-chair Charlupski noted that the traffic study should be added to the project, but that tying into a municipal campus-wide energy is not part of the Pierce project and if funding is found for it, it should be pursued as a separate project that does not impact the timeline of the Pierce project. She emphasized the safety of children being the highest priority.

Leftfield noted that a meeting is needed with Transportation Board representatives to determine the timeline necessary to reach a decision on the School Street issue to see how that process could affect the project timeline, or how the project could be decoupled from the process as MDS suggested.

Leftfield reviewed next steps, noting that the Project Team would be updating the PSR with the few small changes indicated by the group today, and that there are a few graphics that will be updated in the report as well prior to submitting to the MSBA. There are also a couple of backup documents that the team is working to track down with the Town and a letter that will be circulated for signature now that the submission has been approved by the SBC.

The next SBC meeting will include information on the traffic study, the project budget, and the work plan as the team moves through Schematic Design. This work plan will inform when decision need to be made and will take a closer look at school and community engagement during this phase. Leftfield will reach out to schedule the next SBC meeting.

5. New Business

There is no New Business.

6. Public comment

There is no Public Comment.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM.