



TOWN OF BROOKLINE

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BROOKLINE

BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS
02445

TO: Board of Selectmen
School Committee

FROM: Melvin A. Kleckner, Town Administrator
Andrew Bott, Superintendent

DATE: September 6, 2016

RE: Summary Update sites not included for consideration for the 9th Elementary School

The current process to identify and select a location for the 9th elementary school began in 2015 when the Civic Moxie Site Identification Study was completed and presented to the public in October 2015. Civic Moxie investigated 26 sites and identified six as preferable based on the established criteria as documented in their report.¹ Since the release of this study the Board of Selectmen and the School Committee have hosted a combined 14 open and public meetings to discuss the location of a new school and gather public input. Through collaboration, town and school department staff provided additional information to the boards that is available on the 9th School Site Selection web site regarding Article 97, eminent domain considerations and land acquisition costs, enrollment growth numbers, and the location of anticipated future housing development.²

Responding to this input, the boards agreed in the spring of 2016 to study three sites more thoroughly to assist them in making a final selection; Beverly Road Site at Baker School; the Village School Site at Stop and Shop; and the Baldwin School Site adjacent to the Soule Recreation Center. These sites required further study and will be the subject of a presentation on September 8 by our consultant, JLA.

At the same time as the three sites are being studied, the staff working group has been reviewing various sites and locations that were either part of the Civic Moxie Recommendation or emerged through the public interest in the public forums. We believe that the boards should vote to formally eliminate from consideration the following sites at this time.

Civic Moxie sites recommended for no further study at this time

1. **Cottage Farm/Amory Street**: Located in the Local Historic District of Cottage Farm and utilizes the adjacent Amory Park as the school's playing fields and recreational area. The site has adjacency to the Amory Woods Conservation Area, Amory Park, Massachusetts Association for the Blind (MAB) and Boston University.³ The location has a variety of variables requiring consideration. There are Local Historic District considerations, access points to the property which would need to be carefully planned. For example; the effect of a K-8 Elementary School on open space and the environment (Amory Playground, Hall's Pond, Amory Woods, green space); impact on abutting MAB Community Services, a school for students with special needs; potential flooding mitigation; and review of Wetland Resource Area Boundary, along with Isolated Land Subject to Flooding (ILSF).⁴

¹ <http://www.brooklinema.gov/1286/9th-Elementary-School-Study#Presentation1>

² <http://www.brooklinema.gov/1286/9th-Elementary-School-Study>

³ <http://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/8299>

⁴ The boundary is defined by 100-year flood line.

2. **TJ Maxx – 525 Harvard Street:** The location would require a mixed use project constructed on the privately owned parking lot adjacent to the TJMaxx site and would require the relocation of an existing bank and temporary relocation of parking for TJMaxx during construction.⁵ The location puts a school at edge of Town & attendance district without substantial growth in a district where the Town just invested in the Edward Devotion expansion.
3. **Centre Street Parking Lot/Coolidge Corner:**⁶ Site is being considered for a number of different public uses. For example, the Library was engaged in a community process about renovating/rebuilding the Coolidge Corner Branch. This study included looking at one off-site option which is the Centre Street parking lot. The site in general is constrained and concerns about having no open space/schoolyard, traffic and congestion concerns, and potential loss of parking in most dense commercial area.
4. **Old Lincoln School/Walnut Street:** The Walnut Street School expands the Old Lincoln Street school site on Route 9 to the west, incorporating off-street parking, and approximately 36,000 gross square feet of additional school area, while fully renovating the existing structure. The Walnut Street School alternative requires acquisition of the existing U-Haul site to the west of the former school.⁷ The challenges surrounding the expansion at this location are finding options to meet space requirements. The site has limited/difficult to reach playground space; the building is used as current and future swing space; is being considered as potential expansion of BHS; concern about use as a permanent K-8 elementary school pedestrian travel and contiguous route 9 vehicle proximity is of community concern.
5. **The Isabel School at Larz Anderson Park:** The Isabel School would be located in Larz Anderson Park and would be part of a new campus adjacent to the existing historic structures including the Auto Museum.⁸ Isabel Anderson donated the land to the town "for purposes of public recreation, or for charitable purposes, or for purposes of public education" in 1951. The property is individually listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places. There is also a 1998 Massachusetts Historic Commission Preservation Restriction for the top of the hill. Fall Town Meeting Warrant Article 6_proposes to dedicate 55.05 acres of the Larz Anderson site for public park purposes under the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 45, Section 3, and authorize said land to be under the care, custody, management and control of the Town's Department of Public Works, Parks and Open Space Division. In addition, according the Town Counsel's memorandum of January 21, 2016, *"Larz Anderson Park was acquired by the Town in 1948 for "public recreation, charitable, or public education purposes" under the will of Isabel Anderson. Consequently, the Park is not considered to be Article 97 land. However, because the Town accepted funds for improvements to the Park under at least one federal LWCF grant that purports to protect the entire Park as open recreational land, a decision to use any portion of the property for educational purposes is highly vulnerable to challenge."*

While this site may be a practical location for school building site, the complexity of the Town of Brookline owning City of Boston property puts additional complications on permitting and land use. Even though this property is owned by the Town of Brookline, the City of Boston would have permitting authority over the building, or portion of the building on City land. In this site option shown in the report, the DPW shed is relocated to the City of Boston portion of the site as this is the most logical place for that building and this structure would indeed be subject to City of Boston land use regulations. The location of the parcel would result in a School that is on the edge of Town, and does not have adequate pedestrian/bike amenities to/from the site. There are also conservation,

⁵ <http://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/8303>

⁶ <http://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/8300>

⁷ <http://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/8302>

⁸ <http://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/8304>

parcs, and open space considerations in placing a school at this location, the parks and open space capacity would be reduced and add to already over-stressed park needs in the community.

Public Interest suggested sites not recommended for further study:

1. **Pine Manor College – Heath Street:** A private four-year liberal arts college located on 45-plus acres in South Brookline. The existing use is meeting a public need. The Town Administrator has met with the President and representatives of the board about their long term vision for the school. The existing owners/operators are committed to current use and at the time eminent domain would be hostile. The Town will continue to monitor the use given the strategic location to the Town.
2. **Bournewood Hospital – South Street:** Bournewood Hospital is an inpatient and outpatient support and treatment center for adults, adolescents and their families living with mental health and substance use conditions. The facility sits on 541,836 SF (12.44 acres) of land mainly classified as a hospital. It has 7 building(s) with a total of 50,961 square feet. There are 33 living unit(s) and 2 commercial unit(s). The existing use is meeting a public need. At this time, the existing owners/operators are committed to current use.
3. **Putterham Meadows:** In a January 21, 2016 and subsequent February 3, 2016 memorandums from Town Counsel the following was provided to the 9th Elementary School Working Group and members of the Board of Selectmen and School Committee. *"The Putterham Meadows Golf Course is comprised of several parcels of land that were acquired by the Town between 1899 and 1939. See, Exhibit A, attached. In 1899, the western third of the golf course ("lot 1") was acquired by the Town's Park Commissioners from funds expressly designated for playground and/or recreational purposes by Town Meeting. Lots 2 – 9, including the middle-south portion along West Roxbury Parkway, the northwest corner, and a large portion of the southeast corner were acquired by the Town's Park Commissioners "with a view of forming a connected area for purposes of public recreation and playgrounds..." The remaining lots, numbered 10 – 13, were acquired by the Town's Park Commissioners for playground purposes (lot 10); to improve the boundary lines between the golf course and the contiguous golf course owned by The Country Club (lot 12a and 12e), and for "a peat pit and turf nursery" presumably to service the gold course (lot 13). The Golf Course is considered to be Article 97 land." In Town Counsel Memorandum of February 3, 2016 further clarification is provided "It is our opinion that Lot #4, having been acquired by the Town's Park Commission using funds appropriated by Town Meeting "for public playgrounds" thus falls within the protective ambit of Article 97. See, Mahajan v. Department of Environmental Protection, 464 Mass. 604, 614 (2013); Board of Selectmen of Hanson v. Lindsay, 444 Mass. 502 (2005)."*

January 21, 2016 Memorandum: <http://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8632>

February 3, 2016 Memorandum: <http://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8793>

Appendix A

Ongoing Public Meetings on 9th School Site Selection

July 26, 2016

June 14, 2016

June 7, 2016

May 18, 2016

March 15, 2016

February 23, 2016

February 23, 2016

February 4, 2016

January 21, 2016

December 15, 2015

December 3, 2015

November 12, 2015

November 3, 2015

October 22, 2015