

## **Greenwich Board of Education Minutes of the GHS Front Entry Committee Meeting**

DATE: August 18, 2021

LOCATION: Virtual via Google Meet

TIME: 8:00 am

### Committee Members Present:

Stephen Walko - Chairman

Jake Allen- Vice Chairman

Maureen Bonanno-Secretary

Ashley Cole

Louis Contadino

Stephanie Cowie

Christina Downey (BOE)

Megan Galleta

Leslie Moriarty (BET)

### Ex-Officio Members Present:

Steven Swidler (BOE Staff)

Craig Amundson (RTM)

Dennis Yeskey (P&Z)

Tom Bobkowski (BOE - Central Office)

Dan Watson (BOE- Central Office)

Lauren Rabin (Board of Selectmen)

Ralph Mayo (GHS Principal)

### Others Present:

David Stein (Silver Petrucelli)

Dean Petrucelli (Silver Petrucelli)

Humza Afzal

### Not Present:

Will Schwartz (DPW)

1. Meeting was called to order by Mr. Walko at 8:01 a.m
2. Mr. Walko opened the meeting with the following question submitted to him by a committee member. "Would the new entranceway impact the way students currently enter the school at arrival time?" Mr. Mayo confirmed with Mr. Walko that the new entranceway would not impact the way that the students currently enter the school in the morning. He explained to Mr. Walko, that students arriving early and students parking in the student lot will still enter through the side doors. Mr. Walko noted that the security of additional entranceways at GHS is not the charge of this committee at this time and the focus of the Committee must be in compliance with the approved Ed Specs which only

includes updates to the front entranceway. He also noted that the focus of today's meeting is on changes to Scheme 1 and Scheme 4, however, no scheme is off of the table at this time.

### 3. Silver Petrucelli & Associates Presentation:

- Mr. Petrucelli noted that today's presentation has modifications to Scheme 1 with a modified waterfall and modifications to Scheme 4 with six different options for the columns. The shape of the security desk is the same in both schemes.
- Scheme 1 Revision:
  - Incorporates a much smaller waterfall pulled in on the right side. The circle cut out from the original design is not present. The waterfall touches down lightly, with the least amount of structure, to eliminate any potential hiding points.
  - Two options for the waterfall; Option 1 is an arc shape and Option 2 is a triangular shape.
  - The overhang/waterfall feature is a faux wood color. The glass box dominates the structure and the waterfall is skin that floats in front, 20 feet off of the glass.
  - The glass in front of the security desk is glazed and not a solid wall at the request of the committee.
  - The design also minimizes the high counter at the security desk with the thought that the monitors can be embedded in the desk.
- Scheme 4 Revision
  - Six variations of columns all with the same security desk as in Scheme 1
    - Option 1: Five Columns of 2 pieces of timber, angled, with steel bases.
    - Option 2: Five steel columns, smaller than in Option 1, which can be painted any color.
    - Option 3: Five curved/bent, steel tubes fastened to overhang and floating off of the glass by 1 foot at the bottom.
    - Option 4: Five square wooden posts similar to Option 1 but not angled.
    - Option 5: Five simple, round columns. Columns mimic existing round columns but with the slender columns giving it a more contemporary look.
    - Option 6: No columns. Silver Petrucelli confirmed with their structural engineer that this option would be structurally sound.

### 4. Questions and Comments from Committee:

- Ms. Downey asked about the mullions. Mr. Petrucelli noted that mullions can come in any color, in front or behind the glass. Patterning and glazing options are up for discussion.
- Ms. Downey noted that she prefers Scheme 1, Option 1 because there is a lightness to the roof, but not Option 2 which she stated could be a potential

visibility issue and suggested that the original design of the waterfall should still be considered.

- Ms. Cole asked if mullions were required and Mr. Petrucelli responded that some type of mullion is required for security. Cannot be just a glass wall because of the blast and ballistic glass requirement. They have the ability to minimize the look of the mullions by setting the mullions behind the glass.
- Ms. Cole noted that all of the design schemes presented are mid-century, with wood incorporated on the roof. Mr. Petrucelli responded that the roof does not need to be wood and in the next phase we will be able to hone in on colors and materials .
- Mr. Contadino noted that Scheme 4, particularly Option1, is a natural extension of the current corridor and feels that there is an educational quality to the columns. He stated that the waterfall feature in Scheme 1 didn't add anything once the circular design was eliminated and feels as if the waterfall shields the vestibule. He noted that all of the past additions to GHS have made a connection to the current architecture of the building. He also stated that the wood represents sustainability. He does not like the option with the bent columns.
- Mr. Allen prefers Scheme 4, Option 1 and feels that the wood design fits the building. He stated that he likes the columns and the option without columns may be too expensive. Discussion on the mullions and the glass can be held at a later date.
- Mr. Walko asked if the columns could be problematic for students exiting the building and Mr. Petrucelli noted that the columns are not in line with the doors but in-between the doors so they would not be in the way of the students exiting. Mr. Walko also asked if there is room to play with the location and dimension of the slanted columns. Mr. Petrucelli noted that the dimension and angle can be set to anything and will not affect the structure.
- Ms. Moriarty stated that in Scheme 4, the wood rafters make the overhang feel heavy and less inviting and she does not have a positive reaction to the connection to the rafters in the existing corridor. She also expressed her concern that the columns would block the GHS image inside the lobby. She also stated that she prefers the lighting in Scheme 1. Overall, she prefers Scheme 1.
- Ms. Cowie asked if we should eliminate Scheme 1 and focus on Scheme 4. Mr. Walko responded that there were still questions on the design and it was not yet time to eliminate a Scheme.
- Ms. Cowie also asked to see a visual of the Schemes at night time. She noted that she preferred the lighter beam options in Scheme 4. She also reminded the architects to incorporate a pass-through tray at the accessible area.
- Ms. Bonanno asked if the non-voting members could give input regarding the design to help with the voting decision today. She also asked if the column decision needed to be made at this time and Mr. Walko responded that given the columns are essential to the design, the committee should decide today on the column option as well.

- Ms. Bonanno also mentioned that she had spoken with a current GHS security guard, who noted that the glare at the current security desk is an issue while viewing monitors and would like the committee to consider the glare while designing the new security desk. Mr. Petrucelli responded that there is a lot they can do to eliminate the glare and also having the monitors embedded into the desk will also help.
- Ms. Galetta agrees with comments on Scheme 4, and from a visibility perspective, feels that Scheme 4 is better and the design is interesting, with good curb appeal and prefers the disappearing post look.
- Mr. Bobkowski noted that the mullions currently at GHS are a habitat for birds and asked if the mullions could be kept inside the building. He also would like to have vehicular bollards incorporated in the plaza given the glass facade. From a visibility standpoint, he prefers Scheme 4, Option 1 with the slanted columns. He also indicated that the glare at the security desk is an issue and would need to be addressed in the new design. Mr. Petrucelli noted that the mullions are very shallow, not deeper than ½ inch or an inch. He also agreed that there is a need for bollards in the plaza for added protection.
- Mr. Amundsen stated that he is more in line with Mr. Contadino's position. He agrees that bollards should be incorporated. He is focused less on aesthetics and more on security so prefers Scheme 4 with the columns which could be an additional deterrent.
- Mr. Swidler stated that he also is focused on security and prefers a scheme that does not have any obstructed views. He wants to see a design that is inviting, but secure with complete visibility. He asked about whether there would be new security cameras installed.
- Ms. Rabin also agrees with Mr. Contadino's feedback and the column choice.
- Mr. Bobkowski noted that the columns will not limit the security guards' views and that the security cameras will have a full view of the entire plaza. Updated cameras will take up less space but will have more visibility. There will be analytic cameras.
- Mr. Walko reminded the committee that today's vote should focus on the scheme and option and further meetings will get into more details such as mullions. This is not the final vote
- Mr. Contadino also reminded the committee that we will be creating the front entrance to the high school, something the high school has not had.
- Mr. Petrucelli noted that the columns in Scheme 4, Option 1 are slender at the base, which would make it difficult to hide behind.
- Ms. Downey stated that she does not prefer the chunkier columns and prefers the smaller column options.
- Mr. Walko asked if the committee was prepared to take a vote on a scheme and then drill down on the options.
- Ms. Moriarty asked the P&Z representative if there were any concerns from a P&Z committee. Mr. Yeskey stated that from a P&Z perspective, the concern is

square footage and a variance will be needed. They do not regulate architectural designs.

- Mr. Walko noted that he liked Scheme 1 but not the perspective from the side view and seems to cut off the view of the vestibule
- Ms. Galetta agreed with Mr. Walko on the side view which could be an obstruction, and thought that a scheme without the waterfall would be preferable. Mr. Petrucelli noted that at the last meeting they presented a design without the waterfall and that was not preferable to the committee.
- Ms. Cole prefers Scheme 4, but would like to see options other than wood.
- Mr. Walko then asked for motions to move forward.

5. Motions:

**Motion was made by Jake Allen and seconded by Stephanie Cowie to reduce the design options to Scheme 1 and Scheme 4. The motion was approved.**

*The Motion Passed 9-0*

**Motion was made by Jake Allen and seconded by Stephanie Cowie in favor of Scheme 4. The motion was approved.**

*The Motion Passed 7-2*

**Motion was made by Jake Allen and seconded by Louis Contadino in favor of Scheme 4 Option 1. The motion was approved.**

*The Motion Passed 7-2*

6. Discussions on the motions:

- Ms. Downey noted that she still prefers the more slender columns.
- Ms. Bonanno requested to see the different column options and noted that the chunkier columns in front of the glass structure makes it feel more secure.
- Ms. Galetta asked from a maintenance perspective, how do the Schemes compare? Mr. Petrucelli noted that all of the wood is protected and does not touch the ground in this Option. There will be maintenance on the wood, however there would be maintenance on the steel options as well.
- Mr. Mayo and Ms. Downey expressed concerns over the side view, which to most is the first view of the entranceway. Mr. Contadino noted that this may have to do with the mullions and the design just needs to be refined. Mr. Petrucelli agreed that there are still many details to work out which will likely improve this view.

7. Moving Forward:

- Mr. Walko will work with Silver Petrucelli to condense the presentations, including adding one design with less contrasting mullions, and will give the BOE all of the schemes to view and will also summarize committee discussions for the BOE.
- Ms. Downey confirmed that the presentation to the BOE will take place on August 23rd and the vote on the design will be on September 9th, however, neither one

will be public comments. Ms. Downey suggested that the public watch the presentation on August 23rd and send emails to the BOE in lieu of the public comment at the meetings.

- Ms. Downey would like to have a discussion regarding the executive session vs. public session for sensitive security discussions. She also would like to discuss with the BOE the security glass enclosure at the security desk.
- Ms. Cole would like to share the presentation to the BOE with the surrounding neighbors of GHS.
- Ms. Moriarty confirmed with Silver Petrucelli that Scheme 4, Option 1 is within the budget.
- The next scheduled committee meeting is on September 8th, 2021.

8. Approval of Minutes:

**Motion was made by Jake Allen and seconded by Leslie Moriarty to approve the minutes of the August 11th, 2021 meeting. The motion was approved.**

*The Motion Passed 9-0*

9. Adjourn

- The meeting was adjourned by Mr. Walko at 9:42 am.

Submitted by Maureen Bonanno August 19th, 2021