

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

DATE: December 8th, 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

Leslie Moriarty (BET)

Megan Galleta

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Tom Bobkowski (BOE - Central Office)

Craig Amundson (RTM)

Ralph Mayo (GHS Principal)

Will Schwartz (DPW)

Dan Watson (BOE- Central Office)

Steven Swidler (BOE Staff)

Others Present:

David Stein (Silver Petrucelli)

Bob Banning (Silver Petrucelli)

Not Present:

Christina Downey (BOE)

Dennis Yeskey (P&Z)

Lauren Rabin (Board of Selectmen)

- **Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order by Mr. Walko at 8:02 a.m
- **Updated on P&Z Meeting:**
 - Mr. Walko opened the meeting by thanking Silver Petrucelli for the work they did for the presentation to P&Z. He noted that the presentation went well and helped frame the issues. He also expressed appreciation to Mr. Yeskey as a P&Z representative, Ms. Cole and all of the neighbors, Ms. Cowie on behalf of the GHS PTA and Ms. Stowe, who could not be at the meeting, but has been very supportive as BOE Chair.

- Mr. Walko noted that there are still concerns over massing and the design, however, the Chairman acknowledged that the concerns of ARC however, they will not upend the design.
- Mr. Walko noted that we will still consider ARC's recommendations, but the main project is satisfactory. He stated that there still is a lot of work to do on landscaping and lighting.
- Mr. Walko added that one issue with landscaping is the cost, however, the design features need to include landscaping to the extent possible to make the project acceptable.
- Mr. Walko noted that S&P provided some preliminary numbers for the overall landscape budget, which is around \$107,000. This number includes moving the bollards and the curb. He added that this is not a lot of money for landscaping and we will either need to stretch it or find more to accommodate.
- **Silver Petrucelli Update:**
 - Mr. Stein stated that for P&Z, they tried to help them visualize the scale of the 2,000 foot addition in relation to a 465,000 square foot building. He noted that they used 2d and 3d graphics along with photography that provided panoramic views from the street. The intent was to show the overall context of the mass and the architecture and also the reasoning for the height of the structure and how that needs to balance with those existing large masses. S&P believes that the vestibule needs scale and the 28 x 70 foot floor plan is designed appropriately for means of egress and functionality of bringing the students. Regarding the height, Mr. Stein agreed that this can be subjective but they feel as though they balanced it with the objective to shield the HVAC equipment from the neighbors view with the limited space constraints.
 - Mr. Stein stated that there were comments on material choices. He noted that S&P would like direction from the committee on the latitude they are changing the overall design. He added that when dealing with historical buildings in general, when dealing with buildings that are built over time, the addition should be built for the current time period.
 - Mr. Stein noted that the mass can be decreased. He noted that timing is now a concern. The next meeting for ARC is at the beginning of January. Any adjustments made to the design would need to be approved by the committee before then and then they would need to go back to P&Z at the end of January. He noted that this timeline then challenges the June 15 start date. Mr. Stein added that the biggest challenge is getting the contractor on board and being able to order materials.
 - Mr. Stein stated that they are looking for direction to what degree this committee would like to make adjustments.
- **Discussion:**
 - Ms. Cowie stated that she believes that we should hold true to the design and move forward.
 - Ms. Cole asked what ARC is looking for and Mr. Walko responded that ARC doesn't like the height of the structure and they do not like all of the glass. Mr.

Walko noted that our main focus is on security but we need to build an entrance that needs to be a focal point. Currently, it is not clear where the entrance is.

- Mr. Walko asked S&P whether the height could be lowered modestly to address the concerns of ARC. He noted that the glass needs to remain from a security standpoint, the height of the structure hides the HVAC equipment and the material of the columns was discussed by the committee.
- Mr. Stein responded that the presentation to ARC was not as robust, but with new graphics and minor tweaks, they may be more satisfied.
- Mr. Contadino agrees with Ms. Cowie and Mr. Walko. He noted that his take away from ARC was the massing and if a gesture can be made to address this concern of ARC that would be helpful. Mr. Contadino also suggested that S&P should do a volume analysis comparing the vestibule of MISA to the proposed front vestibule, that could justify the massing.
- Mr. Contadino also noted that landscaping is going to be critical and he noted that he is concerned over getting the funds for that. He would rather that we do not change the design, rather make some small tweaks and make a stronger presentation to ARC.
- Ms. Cole offered to speak at ARC and will donate money toward landscaping. She noted that the town has a responsibility to the neighborhood.
- Mr. Walko asked about vehicular safety and the bollards and whether they can use large potted greenery as a solution instead of concrete bollards. Mr. Stein responded that it was a good idea. He added that there needs to be some physical barrier but with some access for emergency vehicles. Using planters or building up the landscaping is a great idea. They need to bring on a qualified landscape architect.
- Ms. Cowie stated that the PTA has the ability to fund school improvement and beautification, likely not the full amount, but can contribute. However, the question will be why the district is not able to pay for this.
- Ms. Moriarty stated that the committee needs to be cognizant of the time frame; The budget comes to the BET in February. If the committee wants to add this to the budget, there has to be a recommendation from the BOE. They are approving their budget on December 16th. They may want to add a budget resolution to accept gifts from outside the PTA. She also noted that the budget approval is in May and the window to increase the budget is closing.
- Ms. Moriarty also stated that Parks and Rec currently does the maintenance and she suggested that we work in advance with Parks and Rec.
- Mr. Walko New stated that with the New Lebanon project, the committee worked closely with Parks and Rec so he will reach out to them and connect with S&P
- Mr. Contadino likes the idea of the planters but expressed his concern that they will not be maintained properly.
- Ms. Galletta believes that it is a great idea to look at other ways of fundraising and suggested that we partner with nurseries in town.
- Ms. Cole suggested that we should encourage the town to carve out its own property management team for the high school given it is the biggest property.

- **Going Forward:**
 - Mr. Stein asked for clarification on the scope of the landscaping in an effort to create a budget.
 - Mr. Walko asked if we needed to do anything with HVAC and Mr. Stein noted that they came up with a solution, but now that they may be changing the massing that may adjust.
 - Mr. Walko noted that the next ARC meeting is January 8th.
 - Mr. Stein will confirm with his team whether they are able to do some minor adjustments to the design to have it ready by December 15th or the 22nd for the committee to review.
 - Mr. Walko asked the committee if they had suggestions for S&P. Mr. Contadino stated that as long as they address the concerns of P&Z and ARC, and they share with the committee the adjustments, we should be good. Mr. Stein added that it would be helpful to have a subcommittee review the presentation. Mr. Walko noted that there can be a subcommittee as long as there are no more than 5 committee members.
 - Mr. Walko noted that we still need to address the additional funds for landscaping as well as the add alternate for the a/c in the corridor. This committee should get the estimate for the project so we can start making decisions on landscaping and add alternates. There may already be money allocated for the a/c in the corridor.
 - Ms. Moriarty noted that there is \$668k in the BOE proposed budget for the glass corridor. She added that if we do go through the town process to ask for additional funds they will ask why the amount approved is not sufficient. Without bids, there is no documentation for support, so there's a timing issue. Mr. Walko agreed that getting additional funds for landscaping will be more difficult.
 - Mr. Amundson stated that the town does have a bank of trees that are owed to various sections in town that we may be able to tap into.
 - Mr. Walko noted that in addition to the design process and meetings with ARC and P&Z, we need to have cost estimates to determine whether there is sufficient money to allocate to landscaping. If we need additional funds, we would need to determine whether we go through the town process or tap into private funds. He added that the commitment to the neighborhood should be robust.
 - Mr. Walko stated that he will confirm whether we are meeting on December 15th or 22nd and Mr. Stein will send the current budget.

- **Approval of Minutes:**

Motion was made by Leslie Moriarty and seconded by Louis Contadino to approve the minutes of the November 23rd, 2021 meeting. The motion was approved.

The Motion Passed 6-0-0

- **Adjourn:**

- The meeting was adjourned by Mr. Walko at 8:58 am.

Submitted by Maureen Bonanno on December 13th, 2021