

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

DATE: December 15th, 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)

Leslie Moriarty (BET)

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Tom Bobkowski (BOE - Central Office)

Craig Amundson (RTM)

Ralph Mayo (GHS Principal)

Will Schwartz (DPW)

Dan Watson (BOE- Central Office)

Dennis Yeskey (P&Z)

Steven Swidler (BOE Staff)

Others Present:

David Stein (Silver Petrucelli)

Bob Banning (Silver Petrucelli)

Tim Nanzer (Silver Petrucelli)

Not Present:

Megan Galleta

Lauren Rabin (Board of Selectmen)

- **Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order by Mr. Walko at 8:08 a.m
- **Update by Silver Petrucelli:**
 - Mr. Stein stated that the most comments from the previous P&Z meeting revolved around the scale of the design and the reasoning behind the height.
 - In response, S&P revised the design to reflect a reduction in height which they will present today.
 - Mr. Stein stated that the current height of the entryway is 16 feet and the new height is 24 feet. The alternative solution would be to reduce the proposed 5 rows of glass down to 4 rows of glass.

- Mr. Stein shared drawings of the entire school, including elevations requested by ARC to show the scale of the vestibule compared to the overall building size.
- Mr. Stein stated that if they lower the height close to the current 16 feet, the mechanicals will not be seen from the street, however, it becomes more complex for the ductwork.
- Mr. Stein also shared with the committee some animations of the perspectives to give sense of the scale.
- Mr. Stein noted that the choice of using wood compliments the existing brick and white elements, which was also part of the MISA addition.
- Mr. Stein stated that the lighting is intended to shoot downwards and the intensity will be internally controlled by a panel which can allow just a small amount of lighting for security.
- Mr. Stein also noted that they created a photometric plan. Each dot reflects light levels and as one moves forward, the light intensity moves down to 2.5 at 30 feet away from the building. He noted that they would be replacing the pole lights with lower lighted bollards which also have downward lighting.
- Discussion:
 - Mr. Walko noted that we still need approval from P&Z. He added that the ARC is a subset and is advisory only. Mr. Walko noted that although there were concerns over lighting and landscaping, the overall issue was the massing. The adjustment made by S&P in the latest design presentation reduces the massing and addresses the number one concern.
 - Mr. Allen asked S&P if the glass sizes are standard size and could they be made smaller to help with the ductwork issue. Mr. Stein noted that they want to stay within what they can manufacture. All of the glass is custom and can be adjusted but he added that it will not help with ductwork issues. Mr. Stein suggested that we should focus on the visualization and they will make it work.
 - Ms. Cole asked about the height of the modified design and Mr. Stein responded 20 feet.
 - Mr. Stein stated that a row of windows on the side will be eliminated in the modification.
 - Ms. Cowie asked about the school name and if we lower the height, what happens to the sign. Mr. Stein stated that they can design around the signage.
 - Ms. Downey asked why we are changing the height if the committee believes that it should stay as is. Mr. Walko responded that even 2 members on P&Z were concerned about the massing, not just ARC. Mr. Walko stated that, knowing the concerns of P&Z and ARC, we are making an effort to collaboratively work together. He added that if the committee doesn't think this is a good design, we can vote it down. However, he stated his concerns regarding timing of the project if P&Z votes the project down.
 - Ms. Cole asked how far does the building juts out to Hillside from the original building? Mr. Stein responded that the vestibule would come out 30 ft. from the corridor.

- Ms. Moriarty noted that from the neighbor's perspective, lowering the vestibule seems to be a good compromise. The height of the structure still is sufficient to indicate that this is the entrance to the high school.
- Mr. Contadino stated that the Chairman mentioned the length of the vestibule and asked Mr. Stein if he was going to address that in the next meeting. Mr. Stein responded that the length of the vestibule is a byproduct of the existing doors and he will address the question in the next meeting. The existing doors are a result of the means of egress coming just to the right of the column.
- Ms. Cole noted that since lighting is the primary concern for the neighbors, she proposed a site visit to learn more about the lighting. Mr. Walko stated that we must meet lighting standards, however, the lighting can be changed as we move along as long. He noted, if the committee favors a higher elevation, there will be greater light from a height perspective and higher levels as it bleeds out and, as we lower the vestibule, the vestibule would be lighter, but as you move away, the lighting will be less. Mr. Banning agreed that lowering hurts from a uniformity standpoint, as the source is brought closer to the ground, but we can lower the intensity of the fixtures and get the same result. Mr. Banning added that a site visit with a light meter is possible to show the lighting.
- Ms. Bonanno noted that although she prefers the higher vestibule, she is concerned about timing and asked if we can go to ARC in January and present the more detailed presentation on the original design which they did not see and also show them the revised design as a backup. Mr. Yeskey responded that yes, you can present both plans to both P&Z and ARC. However, Mr. Yeskey noted that 2 of the voting members spoke against the massing, so he is not sure if they will change their opinions. He added that 2 is enough to reject the design. Mr. Walko noted that if we present the lower option, that is what they will vote for and Mr. Contadino agreed.
- Mr. Yeskey stated that given the school is in a residential neighborhood, the really want landscaping beefed up as a buffer and he hopes that the landscaping will buffer the lighting.
- Ms. Bonanno asked about the row of windows that we are losing and how that affects the natural lighting of the vestibule. She also asked if we are reducing the massing, can the cost savings go toward landscaping. Mr. Stein agreed that the cost savings could be transferred over, although it is not a significant savings. He also noted that there is still room for the signage and there will still be significant volume.
- Ms. Cowie asked from a sustainability viewpoint, if we will be bringing costs down by reducing the volume. Mr. Stein noted that lighting doesn't change, and given the radiant flooring, the heating will stay the same but he noted that there will be a small savings in cooling the vestibule.
- Mr. Yeskey confirmed that the current entranceway is 16 ft high and the original design was up to 24 feet high 28 feet out from the building. The new design remains at 28 feet out but the height goes to 20 feet.
- Ms. Cole suggested setting up a meeting with the neighbors.

- Stein stated that they now need an endorsement in either direction. He stated that the application due to ARC submission is December 20 and for a meeting on January 5th and P&Z is 2 weeks later.
- Mr. Nanzer confirmed that the current design height is 24.4 feet but would be reduced to 20.5 feet. The volume would be reduced from 46,000 cubic feet to 38,000 cubic feet.
- Ms. Bonanno asked if anyone knew the volume of the MISA building and Ms. Moriarty responded that she will look for that number.
- Ms. Downey asked S&P for assurance that if the height of the vestibule is reduced, they are still able to hide ductwork and mechanicals. Mr. Stein responded that they will be able to make it work.

- **Approval of Design Adjustment:**

Motion was made by Jake Allen and seconded by Leslie Moriarty to give the architects approval to lower the design of the vestibule by 4 feet to address the concerns of ARC and P&Z.

The motion was approved. *The Motion Passed 8-0-0*

- **Going Forward:**

- Mr. Walko stated that we will be meeting on **FRIDAY** January 21st, after the P&Z meeting on January 20th.
- Mr. Walko noted that he should have an update on landscaping in January as well.

- **Approval of Minutes:**

Motion was made by Ashely Cole and seconded by Stephanie Cowie to approve the minutes of the December 8th, 2021 meeting. The motion was approved.

The Motion Passed 7-0-1

- **Adjourn:**

- The meeting was adjourned by Mr. Walko at 9:13 am.

Submitted by Maureen Bonanno on January 10th, 2022