

**OAK PARK AND RIVER FOREST HIGH SCHOOL
201 N. Scoville
Oak Park, IL 60302**

**Pool Site Committee Meeting Minutes
November 17, 2014**

A Pool Site Committee meeting was held on November 17, 2014. Mr. Weissglass called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. in the Board Room. Committee members present were Jeff Weissglass, Tom Cofsky, Steve Gevinson, Dr. Ralph Lee, Tod Altenburg, John Stelzer, Chris Ledbetter, Paul Aeschleman, Joe Connell, Thomas Cronin, Joyce Gajda, Chris Meister, Mary Roberts, Adam Salzman, Stephen Schuler, Peter Traczyk, and Cathy Yen. Also present was Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors included Sharon Patchak-Layman, Board Member, Dr. Steve Isoye, Superintendent; Phil Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; Karin Sullivan, Director of Communications and Community Relations; Robert Zummallen, OPRFHS Director of Buildings and Grounds, Patrick Brosnan and Rob Wroble of Legat Architects, Stan Jagielski and Al Steffler of Henry Bros., Terry Dean of the *Wednesday Journal*, Lorne Golman, video expert; Kevin Peppard, Peter Ryan, Deborah Wess, Steve Shorney, Nancy Heezen, Kim Allgood, Kurt Cruver, and other community members.

Joyce Gajda, the newest member of the committee, was introduced. She is an alum of OPRFHS, an 8-year mathematics teacher and a current swimming coach.

Minutes

Mr. Weissglass moved to approve the minutes of October 27, 2014; seconded by Mr. Cofsky. A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

South Athletic Facility

Committee members had wanted to explore renovating the South Athletic Facility. Because of the fast process in this committee, it was decided to explore some options at this time as to what might be long-term needs as opposed to short term needs. Also in this presentation is Dr. Lee's desire to explore renovating the pool areas and installing a 16-lane pool, taking into account the specific limitations and load bearing walls.

Previously, discussion had ensued regarding the accuracy of cost projections for the future marketplace. A third party was invited to review the costs and it affirmed the validity of the costs prepared by Henry Bros. to date. However, no one will know the exact costs until the final project is identified, but this did provide support for the reliability of the estimates at this stage as the different options are compared.

Legat presented 4 options for the renovation/repurposing of the south athletic facility.

Option A, showed a major renovation and the inclusion of a long-course pool and pool deck, capturing the lower level for pool support area in the southeast corner of the building. The grass area was captured as well and included the demolition of entire part of the building, excavation of the basement and then building up. PE stations would be included on the third floor. This would cost approximately \$141 million.

Option B, showed the repurposing of the existing pools. Excavating the southeast corner of the building, showing the volume of the pool as two-stories with a flat balcony, movable bleachers, and office spaces. The third floor would have new gyms, locker rooms, and bleachers. Zoning variances would be required

for this option and the cost conservatively would be in excess of \$107 million. Many unknowns exist. The cost of the renovation without the full third floor would be \$82 million. All estimates include contingencies and escalations.

Option C showed the renovation of the existing pools. Repurposing the entire space, assuming exterior rooms remain in place. The yellow areas represented the areas of renovation. The dark yellow areas represented offices and locker rooms. Both the east and west pool would be extensively renovated to make them current and the necessary repairs viable. The weight room is not included in the renovations. The estimated cost would be \$83 to \$86 million, which would include \$35 million for an offsite pool. The amount of the offsite pool was based upon the three site options previously presented and in partnership with other community entities. Much of the cost is not pool related. This option would allow OPRFHS to have three pools at a lesser cost than that of just one pool. Both the east and west pools would lose a lane, making them usable for instructional purposes only.

Option D showed the stretch pool feasibility. The information was presented to give the full magnitude of renovation if everything were going to be upgraded, not just repurposing the abandon pool. The pool would be located at another location and the space on the east and west sides would be renovated. The cost ranged from \$93 to \$96 million for renovating several floors, but not the field house.

Legat stated that the cost and narrative would be available shortly. It was noted that the discussion had expanded to include gyms, locker rooms, etc., which will need to be replaced eventually.

Definitions:

Long-course pool: 50 meters x 75 foot pool

Stretch pool: 115 ft. X 60 ft., which includes diving pool, etc. with some variability in size possible

When asked why so much focus was on Scoville versus the west pool, as that was the one with the most dire situation, Legat explained that it had focused on putting a new facility into the building, noting that it would not fit on the west side but it would on the east side. The pool space cannot be moved into the mall because of electrical and emergency access requirements.

Dr. Lee's Proposal

Dr. Lee suggested an alternative proposal which was imbedded in the agenda. It included exploring the feasibility of placing a 153 foot long X 60 foot wide stretch pool in an east-west orientation in the southeast corner of the building that would accommodate a two- or three-story natatorium facility. Committee members were interested in costing this out as they felt it had potential. Mr. Brosnan understood conceptually the proposal, agreed that it did have some opportunity, and would follow up on it to determine costs. It was noted that in the Legat examples, the lanes were 8 ft. wide, rather than 7 ft. wide in Dr. Lee's proposal.

Discussion ensued about the proposals. One member stated that putting a long course in the south end of the building would be very costly. Another member concurred and suggested that finding another place on campus and renovating the south campus would gain the most in the long run.

One member reflected that the committee owes the community a clear and public session on the pluses and the minuses, including the loss of opportunity of sport programs both instructional and co-curricular. It needs to be made clear with materials and in the minutes. It was suggested that the Committee go through the proposals and vote them up and down. The discussion about the destruction of the east side, the tour, and the opportunity to ask questions was helpful. A suggestion was made to present a one or two-page summary of the use of the facilities and the cost and vote them up and down so that the public

will be clear as to what was looked at and the reasons for making a recommendation. This then would explain to the voters in a transparent way the reason for making a recommendation. The pluses and minuses were needed in addition to costs. A simplified form is needed to keep track of the many variables so that the pluses and minuses can be debated. It was suggested that the Stantec Report matrix be used to develop the pluses and minuses. It was unclear as to whether the committee was getting equal scope for and equals dollars; they need to be isolated.

One member stated that when this conversation started 2 or 3 years ago, it was about a new pool. Discussion was about building a new pool because the current ones were breaking down. The conversation had not been about recapturing, it was about building a long-course pool. The options presented that evening cost more than \$80 million. If the pool will cost \$70 to \$80 million, an effective communication plan needs to reflect that this is a new high school wing with recaptured space.

The cost for recapturing the pool space will range from \$15 to \$18 million, but it has not been determined just how that space would be used. At a minimum a process must be put in place to determine that and that conversation has to connect fully to the main facility and the Strategic Plan. One member asked if there were any acceptable scenario in which this Committee would solve the pool problem and then leave it to another group of taxpayers to pay for getting rid of the dead swimming pools.

Parking

The parking garage site has been on the table for building a pool, requiring demolition of the garage. The parking study was received by the Board of Education at its September meeting. The Board of Education had not had an opportunity to analyze it and think about what it implied. If the garage were to be demolished, what would the plan be to address the 250 to 280 cars parked there during the school day?

Mr. Werthmann of KLOA reported a parking evaluation was completed in September. This presentation is similar to that given to the Board of Education in September and imbedded in the agenda. The scope was to determine the existing occupancy on street, in the parking garage, and the impact of eliminating the parking garage. He noted that elimination of parking garage will:

- 1) Greatly increase the traffic traversing in the neighborhood, driving to find spot, motorists circling to find a spot available to them,
- 2) With the increase of parking in the neighborhood, more locations would have parking on both sides of the street.
- 3) Elimination will leave staff and visitors to walk 2 or 3 blocks further which is not as convenient.

The parking garage is located on Lake Street as such traffic does not traverse to the neighborhood. It provides covered parking adjacent to the school.

Dr. Isoye provided a spreadsheet of showing who uses the parking garage. It included sponsors, activities, Fine Art events, community, occasional school events, special events, etc. Those highlighted in blue had over 250 attendees, some occurring on the same night. Over 1200 people attended the musical. Those highlighted in orange had 20 to 100 people attending. Fine Arts has over 200 events per year, both internal and external and participation can be from 200 to 1500 people. With regard to sports, he focused on the larger events. He also noted that OPRFHS has more employees than parking spots. The high school has 526 staff members and 125 live in the district, so many people have to drive.

Dr. Isoye had reached out to faculty and staff to ensure they had the opportunity to share their thoughts. They all agreed that a new pool was necessary and they recognized that because OPRFHS is landlocked, it is a problem. Ultimately, it is the decision of the Board of Education and they were thankful to Dr. Isoye for the opportunity to voice their thoughts, which would be heard by the Board of Education. Concerns expressed were:

- What is plan B to provide parking for the staff in the building?

- Will it be possible to change the parking restrictions?
- OPRFHS has had positive relationships with the neighbors over the past few years. Previously it was difficult to find parking.
- The second shift workers arrive before the first shift leaves and that poses difficulty when they return to their cars at 11:00 p.m.
- Servers will have difficulty with parking when they arrive during the day.
- People will have difficulty navigating the distance with rain, snow, and ice.
- A fear was expressed that they will need to find parking further out.
- When there is lots of snow, it is difficult to find parking, even with perimeter parking
- The garage was the solution to many issues with having to park on the street. It provided a solution to the problems with the neighbors
- How will guests be served?
- How will OPRFHS be able to host events at the school?
- A reminder from B&G that if OPRFHS takes on the garage, it needs to be mindful of the condition of the garage before buying it.

Discussion ensued about the 50% increase in the cost of student parking permits. Those parking places are adjacent to the commuter spaces and the vehicle creates the same impact. Parking prices are set by convenience and demand.

IHSA requires that OPRFHS provide appropriate parking, not a specific number, according to the size of the school. Presently, there is adequate parking. While not perfect, if it were lost, it would significantly impact the definition of appropriate. To host an event, OPRFHS would petition IHSA as well as provide facility information every year. IHSA would then determine if OPRFHS were an appropriate host. At present, 26 sports provide opportunities for OPRFHS to host events.

It was also noted that from the business perspective, it will be challenging to get the parking restrictions lifted in the retail business near Oak Park Avenue.

Mr. Aeschleman spent 8 years on the traffic commission for the Village of Oak Park. It studied this area extensively and the business area at Oak Park & Ontario, as well as Fenwick's issues which overlaps those at OPRFHS. He has seen all of the studies, the numbers, the arguments, etc. Parking on South Blvd is generally lightly utilized and has opportunities for additional spaces. The spaces are all revenue generating—fee parking for students. His recommendation would be for 100 spaces on site. It is obligation to provide off-street, onsite parking for some events, a maximum of 300 seemed high, but 100 onsite and 60 on South Blvd and then putting 120 cars into the community into those permanently restricted spaces. Parking would be a shared responsibility and that is when it works best. Similar changes to restrictions around Fenwick had been successful. To build a covered parking space costs \$20,000. An uncovered parking space costs \$8 to \$10,000 to build. The community has already paid for the on-street parking. Many of the parking restrictions are block-to-block restrictions, meaning it would be a difficult, lengthy, negotiated process with the neighbors. If there were a way to buttress and keep 120 spaces in the pool building, then on-street parking would impact 10 blocks in the area.

Discussion ensued about the original pool study having 100 spaces below grade level at a cost of \$12 million. It is not feasible to put parking on top of the pool, and a ramp would be necessary.

Questions:

- 1) What is feasible at what cost range for incorporating parking into a new facility;

- 2) What are the thoughts about impacting the neighborhood, the staff, the school, and the process of moving parking into the neighborhood?

One member remembers the untenable situation prior to the garage being built. He bought his house knowing the high school was here, but when the staff parked on street, there was no parking anywhere. The best solution was to build the garage. Another concurred and noted that the school is growing. There is more density into the community and more events. The committee must think of the long-term. Having the parking facility is viable long-term.

Next steps

- Understand engineering and cost of Dr. Lee's suggestion
- Sort out the options discussed in broad strokes and get matrix developed.
- Process to work with the Village of Oak Park.
- Determine cost of parking garage on first level.
- Mr. Weissglass will contact a couple of members to discuss next steps.
- Votes will be taken at the next meeting to narrow down the options. Mr. Schuler is unable to attend the December 1 meeting.

Dr. Gevinson had proposed another option that was not discussed and that was the baseball field. Building on the baseball field seemed to be an option that had a good possibility of working. Three different approaches need more discussion: 1) take baseball offsite, 2) take tennis offsite and move baseball and softball sites north, and 3) moving baseball into the stadium and overlapping it. If anything is moved offsite, key constituents will be impacted. The District will have to work with the Park District and the ripple effects on other users.

A suggestion was also made to look at the inconvenience that some of the options would create.

Public Comments

Kevin Peppard, resident of 715 Thomas Avenue, Oak Park, a 1966 graduate whose father was president of the school board, inquired about Ms. Kalmerton being the conduit to distributing his analysis. He spoke about the total cost of the project for redoing the academic building and repurposing the space and how to finance that endeavor. He noted that the natural way to pay for it would be to sell bonds, or the past generation would be paying for a free pool for future people. In some cases, a referendum would be required. He provided information about when it will be possible to go for a referendum.

Adjournment

At 9:43 p.m. on November 17, 2014, Ms. Yen moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mr. Connell. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Submitted by Gail Kalmerton
Clerk of the Board