

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

Pool Site Committee Meeting Minutes
December 1, 2014

A Pool Site Committee meeting was held on December 1, 2014. Mr. Weissglass called the meeting to order at 7:04 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 Colleen 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, OPRFHS Board of Education president; Karin Sullivan, Director of Communications and Community Relations; Patrick Brosnan and Rob Wroble of Legat Architects, Al Steffeter of Henry Bros., Rebecca Bibbs of the *Oak Leaves*, Terry Dean of the *Wednesday Journal*, Joe Ruzich of the *Chicago Tribune*; Lorne Golman, video operator; Jeannie Affelder, Kim Allgood, Curtis Cruver, Nancy Heezen, Tony Nowak, Kevin Peppard, Amber Stitzel Pareja, Bill Sullivan, and Deborah Wess, community members; and Elizabeth Hennessey of William Blair & Company.

Minutes

Mr. Weissglass moved to approve the minutes of November 3, as amended; seconded by Dr. Lee. A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Mr. Weissglass noted that the reason for building a pool was to solve the long-standing problem of decaying pools. The school has worked on this issue for 20 years. The documents were developed by Legat, Mr. Altenburg, and Mr. Weissglass. The committee was encouraged to make comments.

Options

The Committee reviewed the options presented:

- Option 1.A. Full replacement of southeast Corner
- Option 1.B. East-West Stretch Pool in the Southeast Corner
- Option 1.C. North-South Stretch Pool at the East Pool
- Option 2A: Proposed Natatorium at the Garage Site with no Parking Spaces
- Option 2B: Proposed Natatorium at the Garage Site with 100 Parking Spaces
- Option 3: Proposed Natatorium at the Baseball Field
- Option 3A: Move the baseball field off-campus, conversations have begun with the Park District
- Option 3B: Move the softball field off-campus
- Option 3C: Move tennis off-campus
- Option 3D: Moving baseball infield in the stadium
- Option 4: Proposed Natatorium South of Lake Street
- Option 5: Off-Site

A Pool Site Impact Analysis was provided and included for all of the options the permanent positive and negative impacts and the temporary disruptions and challenges. In addition, a cost comparison was provided for each option.

The Committee reviewed the narratives of the different options.

Dr. Isoye spoke about his conversations with the Park District of Oak Park:

- 1) The only viable place for a varsity field was Lindberg Park, and \$1.3 million was just invested in that park, which included building a clam shell backstop. OPRFHS freshmen and sophomores already use that facility. Work would have to be done on the fence.
- 2) Tennis courts exist in several places. The largest number of courts at one park is 6, then 4, and then 3, and then 2.
- 3) Softball fields were built to be mixed use and most of the fields have agreements with a variety of organizations as the Park District works with children of a variety of ages.

Mr. Ledbetter offered some points regarding moving baseball or softball off site to Lindberg Park.

- 1) OPRFHS can only use Lindberg Park until 4:30 p.m. as that is when youth sports arrive.
- 2) While the new lower-level baseball facility is great, the mound has to accommodate the Pony League and is unacceptable for varsity baseball.
- 3) The overhanging backstop is of concern as a ball that hits into the backstop can bounce back into the players' areas.
- 4) It does not have 2 bull pens nor a practice area.
- 5) The students are fully invested in the OPRFHS facility and the last two renovations were paid for by the teams or the Alumni Association. Sharing a facility with the Park District may change that investment.
- 6) Alternative locations such as behind the CTA, the old Hines' lumber facility, Foley Cadillac, or Dominick's might be explored. It was noted that some of these properties were no longer available.
- 7) A secondary problem with varsity baseball playing at Lindberg would be that the freshman and sophomore teams would be unable to play there anymore, due to scheduling conflicts. Teams would require 2 or 3 hours per day of practice and six hours is almost impossible to make up.

It was noted that if tennis were moved off-site, there would no longer be PE tennis.

Dr. Gevinson explained that the stadium was previously a combined baseball and football field. In 1950, baseball moved to its current location, as the needs were greater. He proposed moving the baseball field back into the stadium field as depicted in Option 3D. Raised pitching mounds have been standard since the 1900's and portable pitching mounds are found easily online and can be assembled in minutes. Another disadvantage is having dirt. He explained that by moving the field in the stadium, at least one or 2 more regular fields could be captured. The one field north of site 2 overlaps with the outfield of softball field where there is not one there now. It could be additional soccer and lacrosse, so it could be used in the spring. This option would accommodate all of the sports on campus. Because of the space on the baseball field, one could move the football field north to make sure there was room off the first baseline for dugouts. Discussion ensued. Consideration would have to be given to whether someone could be hit by a ball, where would

bleachers be situated, and whether a permanent backstop could be placed in the southwest corner as well as dugouts and bull pens. The dugouts, as positioned, would be either on or adjacent to the current turf field which would not allow soccer because they were not permanent bleachers. This option would limit additional bleachers being added. Discussion ensued as well as about how practices would be limited.

The reason for situating the natatorium on the baseball field rather than the tennis court site was that less traffic would be put into the neighborhood and it would be closer to the school. Putting competitive tennis on a roof is not recommended and could cost \$5 million.

Building a natatorium south of Lake Street (Option 4) would have much impact on the neighbors and many students crossing the street for PE classes.

The Committee reviewed the projected costs. Discussion ensued. A recommendation was made to rename the third heading as “facility construction costs”. One person suggested providing a comparison timeline. Option 5 is not viable as no site has been identified and the cost is unknown.

Option 1A—southeast corner. Long-course pool with support spaces wrapped around the pool and includes an area of new construction. Program area would be 49,000 square feet, plus replacement of all the displaced spaces. The square footage cost is high because of the unknowns. The cost increased to \$136.5 million.

Option 1B—southeast corner. Pool with east west orientation, long-stretch option. Complete gut and remodel. New construction area to replace PE spaces lost. Utilities will have to be relocated while construction is occurring, as it provides utilities to this part of the building. The cost is \$75 million.

Option 1C—southeast corner. Pool is rotated north south, and does not impact 1 E gym, long-stretch option, with 10 foot decks on 3 sides and a 20 foot diving well (on all diagrams). The cost is \$82 million.

All options have 7.5 feet for each lane, as that is preferred. The total costs for each option and include the cost to repurpose the west pool are as follows:

1A-\$141,600,000

1B-\$80,100,000

1C-\$87,200,000

The difference between in the high number and the low number is the way in which architects and construction companies think about the space. Henry Bros. starts of the analysis of existing building, sheer walls and connection points between the 2 buildings. All of the power for the south side of the building would have to be relocated in Options 1a, 1b, 1c. A temporary transformer would have to be included and then removed after the demolition. Connecting and replacing systems that were temporary.

Option 2 Parking Garage Site
2A – tear down and build natatorium
2B – tear down and build 1 grade for parking.

The amount for purchasing the garage was changed to reflect the outstanding debt on the garage. Discussion ensued about the cost of put parking at ground level for 100 cars, acknowledging that was not enough parking. If parking were added underground, it would increase the cost by \$10 million. While covered parking generally costs \$20,000 per space, this equates to \$67,000, due to the weight of the pool. The cost for building a stretch pool would be approximately 10% less, as the front-end costs remain the same.

At 8:53 p.m., the committee recessed and resumed at 9:00 p.m.

Project Funding

Elizabeth Hennessey of William Blair & Associates spoke about the favorable current Treasury bond rates. The Municipal Yield Curve is very close to its low and the District has little outstanding debt. Her PowerPoint presentation showed non-referendum options, including non-referendum limited bonds. The district can issue bonds without a referendum to fund this plan, if the debt service payments fit within the District's Debt Service Extension Base. This amount increases with CPI annual. The District can issue the following types of limited bonds: Non-referendum limit bonds:

- 1) Working cash fund (capital projects or operations)
- 2) Life Safety Bonds (approved by State and Regional Superintendent)
- 3) Funding Bonds (refund debt obligations of the District such as lease or debt certificates)
Part of the tax limitation law, whatever a district was paying on outstanding bonds in 1994 it can continue to levy that amount on the types of bonds. However, an authorization process exists for working cash bonds, requiring a petition and public hearing.

She reviewed the financing options that the District would have.

Ms. Hennessey provided future dates that the District could go for a referendum:

April 7, 2015
March 15, 2016
November 8, 2016
February 28, 2017 (Consolidated Primarily Election) not realistic
April 4, 2017

The filing date for the April 7 ballot would be January 18. Ms. Hennessey reviewed referendum financing options provided in the packet.

It was noted that District 97 planned to go for a referendum April 4, 2017.

A referendum would be necessary if issuing referendum bonds and schools are required to ask permission of the taxpayers if what is being built is not an improvement to the existing building but for instructional purposes.

In the FAC's work, the Board of Education used models that allocated \$20 million to capital expenditures. The design team would not be hired to proceed until the referendum were approved as those beginning costs would be from \$500,000 to \$700,000 before the referendum.

Action Item: Options to Keep Under Consideration

At this point the committee voted on the options to keep on the table.

Mr. Connell moved to keep option 1A on the table. It was not seconded.

No motion was made to accept Option 1B.

Dr. Lee moved to keep Option 1C on the table; seconded by Dr. Gevinson. Discussion ensued. While this option satisfied most the arguments discussed, the cost of \$87 million was prohibitive and removing the support structure might endanger the rest of the building. Dr. Lee asked the committee to consider a 16-lane, north-south pool as that may be more affordable and efficient. Mr. Cofsky, Mr. Stelzer, Mr. Connell and Mr. Traczyk too felt the cost was prohibitive, and acknowledged the disruption that this would cause. A roll call vote resulted in 15 yays and one yea. Dr. Lee voted yea.

No motion was made for Option 2A.

Ms. Gajda moved to keep Option 2B on the table; seconded by Mr. Aeschleman. Discussion ensued. Members felt this was a non-referendum opportunity, it would solve the parking problem, it would be an investment in open space, and it would be the least disruptive option. Several members felt that a cost estimate for 200 parking spaces should be done. One member objected to staff having to walk 3 to 4 blocks each way every day, noting that OPRFHS should be better to its employees. One member appreciating these concerns, noted that Dr. Isoye had spoken to all of the affected faculty and staff units. One member who had originally supported building the parking garage as it had solved many neighborhood problems, felt that if 100 spaces were designed for this building, a shared-solution was sought, and rest of the staff could park on the east/west sides of the street, he/she could support this option. One member felt the biggest problem was that of diminishing the capacity for people to come to the high school for events. It was not just about the teachers; it is about those who come to see athletic events and affects OPRFHS' ability to host. A roll call vote resulted in 15 yays and one nay. Dr. Lee voted nay. Motion carried.

Mr. Traczyk moved to keep option 3A on the table; seconded by Mr. Cofsky. Mr. Traczyk amended his motion to combine 3A, 3B, and 3C and keep them on the table; seconded by Mr. Connell. Discussion ensued.

One member wanted to get the specifics in each scenario about what was achievable and the schedule to make this happen. Note: in each of the 3 options, other stakeholders are involved, i.e., the park districts, Fenwick, tennis clubs, District 90, River Forest, and Cook County Forest Preserve, etc. The building costs will be the same, but not the total project cost. A roll call vote resulted in 14 yays and 2 nays. Motion carried.

Dr. Gevinson moved to keep option 3D on the table; seconded by Dr. Lee. Discussion ensued. This option would not allow a permanent dugout to be situated in the end zone. Scheduling of practices and games would be extremely difficult based on field alignment being overlaid in the softball fields. The experts have said it will not work. It was pointed out that football could not be moved without moving the light standards. This option would limit the ability to put in more bleachers, spectator space, which would bring in the community as stated in the Strategic Plan. Putting lacrosse and soccer in the outfield of the softball fields would create too much overlap and the building would be further north than in contemplated in other places. A roll call vote resulted in 15 nays and one yea. Dr. Gevinson voted yea. Motion failed.

No motion was made for Option 4.

Mr. Cronin moved to keep Option #5 on the table; seconded by Ms. Yen. Discussion ensued. One member felt that the analysis of an offsite location was the same analysis of tennis and baseball. An attempt should be made to investigate tennis, baseball, and swimming, to see if there is a community player who could help so not to lose green space. Other members supported this suggestion and others were not.

A roll call vote resulted in 14 ayes and 2 nays. Mr. Connell and Ms. Roberts voted nay. Motion carried.

Public Comments

Bill Sullivan, 825 Home Avenue, Oak Park, immediate past president of OPYBS and current taxpayer, thanked the committee for its patience and time. At the September meeting, the parking garage consistently uses 280 spots during the day and the Village at Oak Park was amendable to relaxing 300 spots at the Avenue garage. A shuttle could be used to get people back and forth. Building a natatorium on any portion of the west side of the campus would be precedent setting as many teams are already training practicing and playing off campus, i.e., cross country, golf, etc. The District can't pick winners and losers as to what gets to stay on campus and what does not. Moving any programs off site will displace those sports who currently use those facilities.

Tony Novak, concurred with Mr. Sullivan's comments.

Mr. Weissglass reported that the committee received a letter from the president of the Hemingway Business District Association about the usage of the Avenue Garage and the parking study done in September. It was noted that the actual permits issued were much higher and the availability of the avenue garage is much lower than what was reported in the study. Because of that and the fact that the faculty and staff would have to daily travel that distance, it is not as attractive.

Adjournment

At 10:15 p.m., Mr. Traczyk moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Ms. Yen. A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Submitted by Gail Kalmerton
Clerk of the Board