

Old Greenwich School Building Committee
Fifth Quarterly Report
October 13, 2023 - January 13, 2024

The Old Greenwich School Building Committee (OGSBC) continues in-depth planning for the renovation of Old Greenwich School (OGS), a treasured community landmark dating to 1902 serving Pre K - 5th grade. The OGSBC held 9 public meetings during this last quarter and standing bi-weekly meetings are Tuesdays at 7:00 am in the Old Greenwich School Media Center and open to the public. Meeting agendas, minutes, reports, designs, and other documents can be accessed on our [website](#). The OGSBC welcomes the public to attend meetings.

The project focuses on bringing the building into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and addresses key areas of accessibility, health, safety, security, and sewage intrusion among other items as outlined in the [Educational Specifications](#) (Ed Specs) approved by the Board of Education (BOE) in October 2021. The BOE unanimously [Revised the Ed Specs](#) on June 21, 2023.

All details reference the time period of October 13, 2023 - January 13, 2024.

A. Activities

1. The OGSBC project team - including architect ([Silver Petrucelli + Associates](#), SPA), owner's representative ([Morganti Group](#)), and construction manager at risk ([Downes Construction](#)) - continued advancing Design Development (DD). This phase takes the approved Schematic Design and fleshes out details that will ultimately become construction documents. DD is expected to last through February 2024 and will be accompanied by an updated project estimate. Downes will also use these drawings to create a preliminary phasing plan with general guidelines and a particular focus on the removal of hazardous material. The draft phasing plan is expected to be complete in the first quarter of 2024. As a phased, occupied renovation, the plan is required to undergo an exhaustive review and approval process with the state, and stringent safeguards will be employed to ensure safety. As previously stated, the OGS project team collectively has extensive experience throughout Connecticut and elsewhere with this type of school renovation.
2. Detailed diligence and planning was conducted through the fall and into the winter on the sewer lines, drainage plan, playground design, technology design, building appraisal, hazardous material abatement design, environmental testing, soil characterization testing, and water characterization testing. This involved repeated site visits, meetings with town officials - to include the Fire Marshal and DPW staff - and input from neighbors. The findings are being incorporated into the architectural plans, construction phasing plan, and the Final Site Plan that will be submitted to P&Z.
3. On October 16, 2023, for the third time in six months, the BET rejected the request for construction funds though released the conditions it had placed on the \$1,086,000 of A&E funding appropriated in the FY 2023-2024 budget. The conditions had required the project to obtain Municipal Improvement (MI) and preliminary site plan from the Planning and Zoning Commission, (unanimously approved on October 3, 2023), and for the BET to hire its own independent estimator for purposes of cost comparison with the OGSBC's construction estimate provided to the BET in both June and October 2023 (the BET never completed this). The OGSBC anticipates that it has the required design funding to complete the pre-construction process.
4. On October 30, 2023, the US Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) formally approved the project design and schedule. The schedule specifies that construction funding will be received in the FY 2024-2025 budget and that construction will start no later than summer 2025. If there are any deviations from the OCR-approved design or schedule, the OGSBC and the Greenwich Public Schools are required to notify OCR in writing within 15 days and OCR will need to re-open its previous approval.
5. On November 2, 2023, potential appraisers were interviewed to conduct an appraisal of the OGS building. On November 14, 2023, the OGSBC selected Austin McGuire. Based on the guidance received from the GPS Purchasing Department, an RFP was not required as the pricing was below the established threshold. A consulting agreement was sent to Austin McGuire on December 18, 2023 and will be finalized in January/February 2024.

6. On November 20, 2023, the contract with Downes Construction Co., LLC, the project construction manager at risk, was fully executed. The contract was approved by the OGSBC on September 19, 2023.
7. On November 28, 2023, the OGSBC hosted a Safety & Phasing forum (its 8th public forum to date) with parents to discuss student safety during construction and to explain phasing plans. This was well attended in person and online with numerous questions and concerns thoroughly addressed by Downes Construction and Langan Engineering. A similar forum for OGS staff is planned for early March.
8. On December 6, 2023, the OGSBC and SPA appeared before the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) to present design plans. ARC's comments focused on the front facade, specifically the proportions of the proposed covered portico columns and signage lettering, as well as gutter color. Site plan comments centered on material choice for some rear courtyard pathway surfaces. It was agreed that the ARC's request for design adjustments would be undertaken and the OGSBC would return to the ARC in January with revisions for final review and a vote.
9. On December 11, 2023, the Representative Town Meeting (RTM) considered a referral of the Planning & Zoning Commission's (P&Z) October Municipal Improvement approval as petitioned by three Old Greenwich residents. Prior to the RTM meeting, one appellant withdrew and the remaining two did not attend the RTM meeting (or two prior RTM committee meetings) where the matter was discussed. The RTM voted overwhelmingly in favor (126-4-2), a final adjudication of the MI status of the OGS renovation.
10. On December 21, 2023, the contract with AKF Engineers, the commissioning firm who will provide both pre-construction and construction services, was fully executed. The contract was approved by the OGSBC on December 12, 2023.

B. Budget & Project Estimate

In June 2023, at the completion of the Schematic Design phase, a [project estimate](#) was produced, estimating construction costs at \$41.9 million if the project starts in Summer 2024 and \$45 million if it starts in Summer 2025. Since the BET rejected an interim appropriation for construction funds in October 2023, the OGSBC expects the project will start in Summer 2025 at an estimated cost of \$45 million. The BOE included the escalated figure in its FY 2024-2025 capital budget request to the Office of the First Selectman, less A&E funding provided to date. This was fully discussed with the BET prior to its October 2023 rejection.

Additional estimates will be provided at the end of the Design Development phase (February 2024) and the Construction Documents phase (June 2024). All estimates are an "opinion of cost" from construction professionals based on the Ed Specs, design, and recent market data. Actual costs may be higher or lower when the project is taken out to bid prior to the start of construction. As of this writing, estimated state reimbursement is 15.6%.

C. Financial

As of January 13, 2024 the OGSBC has spent or encumbered \$646,382 in A&E funding, with \$1,439,618 remaining from its FY 2022-2023 and FY 2023-2024 budget allocations. To date, despite the extensive planning and diligence conducted, the OGSBC has saved significant costs vs. its expectations in February 2023.

The OGSBC has enough funding to complete the pre-construction process by Summer 2024.

D. Project Plan & Timeline

The Design Development phase is a six-month effort that will conclude in February 2024. It will be followed by the Construction Documents phase which is expected to be complete by June 2024. After that, the pre-construction process will be complete and the project will be fully designed with all associated phasing plans finalized.

However, the OGS renovation cannot begin until construction funds are approved by the BET and the RTM. Full construction funding from the Town is required to apply for state reimbursement (school construction grant). This

process typically takes six months to complete and the next deadline is June 30, 2024, for potential inclusion in the 2025 Priority List. The project cannot be taken out to bid until completion of the state process.

When construction starts, the project is estimated to take 30-36 months to complete. As per the BOE Ed Specs, it will be a phased, occupied renovation where the pacing of work will account for keeping students and staff safe and minimizing disruption to learning. Portions of heavier construction will be conducted over the summer months and during school breaks. Phased, occupied renovations of school buildings are standard across the state and nation.

Assuming construction funds are provided in the FY 2024-2025 budget, the OGSBC anticipates the following timeline:

- Project Design*: February 2023 - June 2024
- Final Site Plan Approvals: March - May 2024
- Local Funding Approvals: March - May 2024
- State Funding Approvals: July - December 2024
- Construction Bidding / Awards: February - June 2025
- Construction: June 2025 - August 2028
- Occupancy: Continuous, consistent with phasing

**Note: design includes Schematic Design, Design Development, and Construction Documents*

E. Next Steps

1. Completion of Design Development drawings by SPA, which will include an updated and reconciled project estimate from Downes Construction and PM&C, an independent estimator. Expected completion in February 2024. All materials and reports will be posted to the OGSBC website when approved.
2. Submission of Final Site Plan to P&Z for approval, likely in March-May 2024.
3. Construction funding approval from the BET and RTM, expected in March-May 2024.
4. Submission of project application to the State of Connecticut's Office of Grants Administration for inclusion in its 2025 Priority List. This can only happen subsequent to approval of construction funding and required state resolutions by the BET and the RTM.
5. Continued outreach to stakeholders to include parents, neighbors, school staff, the townwide community, and local media. We expect to invite RTM members to tour the building prior to its May 2024 meeting; please stay tuned for additional information.

Respectfully submitted,

Old Greenwich School Building Committee
s/James Waters, Chairman

OGSBC Approved January 23, 2024

Addendum: Subsequent Events

The following event happened subsequent to this report's October 13, 2023 - January 13, 2024 time period and prior to submission to the RTM:

- On January 17, 2024 the ARC voted unanimously to approve the renovation's design plans. ARC approval is required as part of the Final Site Plan submission to P&Z.

OGS Building Committee Members

Voting Members

- James Waters, Chair, james.waters.ogsbc@gmail.com
- Jackie Welsh, Vice Chair, jackieogsbc@gmail.com
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Ex-Officio Members

- Jennifer Bencivengo (OGS Principal), Jennifer_Bencivengo@greenwich.k12.ct.us
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Liaisons

- Alan Gunzburg (First Selectman's Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities), 24fado@optonline.net
- Peter Schweinfurth (Energy Management Advisory Committee), peter.schweinfurth@greenwichct.org