

**ROUNDTABLE/WORKING MEETING  
BETWEEN THE CITY COUNCIL AND SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
MONDAY, March 28, 2016  
MEDIA CAFÉ, 459 BROADWAY**

TIME: 5:32 PM

PRESENT: Mayor Simmons, Councillor Carlone, Councillor Cheung, Councillor Devereux, Councillor Kelley, Councillor Maher, Councillor Mazen, Vice Mayor McGovern, Councillor Toomey, Richard Rossi, City Manager, Lisa Peterson, Deputy City Manager, Louis DePasquale, Assistant City Manager For Fiscal Affairs, Ellen Semonoff, Assistant City Manager for Human Service Programs, Jeana Franconi, Budget Director, Neal Alpert, Chief of Staff to Mayor Simmons, Sandra Albano, Executive Assistant to the City Council, Paula Crane, Deputy City Clerk, Donna P. Lopez, City Clerk, School Committee Member Manikka L. Bowman, School Committee Member Emily R. Dexter, School Committee Member Alfred B. Fantini, School Committee Member Richard Harding, Jr., School Committee Member Kathleen Kelly, School Committee Member Patricia Nolan, Judy Martin, Executive Secretary to the School Committee, Jeffrey Young, Superintendent of Schools, Carolyn Turk, Deputy Superintendent of Schools, James Maloney, CEO, School Department and Claire Spinner, CFO, School Department.

Also present were John Hawkinson, 84 Massachusetts Avenue, Mark Levy, Nancy Tauber and Robert Winters, 366 Broadway.

ADJOURNMENT On a motion by School Committee Member Fred Fantini the meeting adjourned at 7:38 PM.

Mayor Simmons announced that the meeting will not be publicly televised, but maybe privately recorded. There will be no public comment and no votes will be taken.

Mayor Simmons stated that chief reason for the meeting is this is an opportunity to launch this term in a way that is collaborative. How can we better foster working relationships? She stated that this will be one of several meetings to look at some of the issues that we would like to discuss over the term. She thanked City Manager Rossi and Superintendent Young for their service to the city. She stated that she looks forward to working with each over the next few months.

Mr. Rossi thanked all for many years of great collaboration and coordination. He thanked them for the respect that they have given to the city staff.

Superintendent Young stated that it has been a pleasure but there is still very important work to be done. He stated that the City staff that he has gotten to know throughout the years have gained his respect.

Mayor Simmons stated that if the group can find specific issues to discuss in the future it will aid in crafting an agenda for the future. She explained the Plan E Charter outlines the jurisdictions of the City Council and School Committee. She stated that it is important to note that the City Council really has no jurisdiction over the School Budget other than to vote the budget up or down. She asked if anyone had any questions related to the Plan E Charter.

Mayor Simmons stated that she would like an update of where we are on the Cambridge Street Upper School and the King Open Building. There will be a presentation with questions following.

Deputy City Manager Lisa Peterson explained that regarding the Cambridge Street Upper School and the King Open complex, they are completing the feasibility study and looking at whether the school administration can fit into the project. There is a 20,000 square foot facility entering off of Berkshire is a potential recommendation. The school administration with 20 parking spaces is approximately \$10 million dollars. This building will be a net zero building. It will be sourced by geothermal wells, there will be no carbon, oil or gas going into the building. She stated that originally the building would be 220,000 sq. feet, it will now be 266,000 sq. feet with school administration. She stated that there is space for a pre-school and that voting will not take place at the school but will be done at the library.

City Manager Rossi added that this would be fully supported by debt and is part of the debt program. Superintendent Young noted that thanks to the support of the city they were able to move out the buildings to their various swing spaces as the project gets underway. He acknowledged that there has been good will and cooperation of the schools staff for both of those programs.

Mr. Maloney stated that it is important to recognize that the driver of the programs are the teachers of the school who came together and offered hundreds of hours meeting with the architects.

Councillor Cheung stated that he is pleased with the vision for the school. He is happy to see the administration offices incorporated in the campus. He stated that in the future we have an ambitious school building plan and staring down the barrel of a political threat with the election of Trump. He

does not want to see the city overleveraged so he would like sensitivity analysis around the capital budget and how this could impact the operational budget.

Councillor Carlone stated that 266,000 square feet which is 100 parking spaces and does this include 20 spaces for school administration. This will add over an acre of open space at the site. Deputy City Manager Peterson stated that including school administration building the cost is about \$57 million or approximately \$500 per sq. foot. Mr. Rossi stated that this is not only a school but a library and a pool as well. Councillor Carlone asked about the cost of a net zero impact. Ms. Peterson responded about \$12 million.

Patty Nolan asked how we are ensuring flexibility in programming. She stated that this is the only site with flexibility in terms of building because of the open space. She stated that if we could hear more about ensuring that we are building flexibility in the building for early education and potential upper school classrooms. This is the only school building that is under-built. Mr. Maloney stated that there is a lot of flexibility. It was requested that the building be built flexible enough that changes in the structures would be possible. He stated that there is only so much square footage you can get. The building is being designed so there is flexibility for future use. Patty Nolan stated that it is important to make sure that this project does not end the funding for school projects. There are a number of other buildings that need overhaul and are behind code. She stated that regarding net zero, the current King building had a goal and currently is at 45%. She asked if this number will be increased. Ms. Peterson stated that if we get to 80% PV coverage on the building we will get there on renewable energy. Mr. Rossi stated that the King School on Putnam Avenue had more constraints on the site. He stated that there is concern over security in all schools and city buildings and they are working on plans that will have to be put together. He stated that much is learned whenever a new building is being constructed. Patty Nolan asked about the need for existing schools to be renovated. Mr. Rossi stated that if you look at the capital budgets, there are line items for boilers, windows, etc.

Kathleen Kelley asked about transgender families and questioned if plans include gender neutral facilities in the plans? Ms. Kelley expressed concern that the students do not know the location of these facilities. Mr. Harding noted that this needs to be common knowledge for all. Ms. Peterson stated that there is a gender neutral policy and there will be gender neutral bathrooms.

Councillor Devereux asked about the cost per student apart from the pool, library, etc. Mr. Maloney stated that the building has several components: capacity and enrollment. Right now the two schools combined have about 600 students. Some classrooms have 20 student which gives you capacity and enrollment numbers. He stated that we cannot build all potential growth on one site. There is a little growth for the lower level. They are facing a squeeze at the middle school come September. They have begun discussions about other ways to alleviate space crunches. One building with separate areas but with some common areas that will be shared with the reality that principals like interaction between facilities. Ms. Peterson stated that there will be a community meeting on March 31<sup>st</sup> at the Frisoli Youth Center.

Fred Fantini stated that Arlington built a new building and are already short and they now need modular buildings. He stated that the City needs to keep an eye on the enrollment.

Mayor Simmons asked what the enrollment numbers are five years out. Mr. Maloney stated that by 2020 there will be another 400 students. He stated that the kindergarten lottery had 603 registrants which is the most in the last 15-20 years so the growth is coming from the bottom up. Mayor Simmons

stated that primary growth is K-3 and the high school. He stated that there has been statistically significant change in the middle schools numbers.

Richard Harding stated that the enrollment for the Graham and Parks is 362. He further stated that 400 students is almost like another school. Mr. Maloney stated that is on top of 700 new students in the last eight years. They closed two buildings so the ability to absorb that is almost gone.

Vice Mayor McGovern asked if the growth of new housing was taken into account. Mr. Maloney stated that they use mostly historical trends. He stated that the housing that has gone in the periphery of the city. Vice Mayor McGovern stated that these units need to be added in.

Councillor Carlone stated that we learned at Putnam Avenue School how well architects can break up the massing to make a large building feel comfortable on the street and with its neighbors. He stated that this is tremendous. Regarding new growth, he stated that he hopes that at Alewife where there is capacity of 3,000 people, the city in its plans look at the area for a new site. There will be families in the new buildings eventually. He stated that there needs to be a communal center at Alewife. He stated that in the long-term envisioning plan that we look at that. He stated that North Point is at least near East Cambridge. Mayor Simmons stated that we need to help North Point feel part of East Cambridge but it feels very isolated. She stated that it will be interesting to see what this area looks like 5 years out.

Mayor Simmons asked if the city is on schedule with overall plans at the King School. Mr. Rossi stated that original plan was to open the school in September of 2019 and that is still the plan. Mayor Simmons stated that she is pleased about the administration offices being added into the Cambridge Street upper campus. Councillor Toomey stated that the idea of a school administration building at this site is not a "done deal." He noted that there are still community meetings that will take place. Mayor Simmons commented on the money being spent for the school administration building. Councillor Toomey stated that that property could be converted. Mr. Rossi stated that we should know that this is the plan but not a done deal.

Manikka Bowman stated that it is important to leverage that building for our own school system. Mayor Simmons stated that there have been numerous conversations about an early childhood center. She stated that if there is a way to continue to utilize this space in a smart way before being used by someone else. Mr. Rossi stated that any reuse of that building will require renovations.

Patty Nolan stated that we do not own the city administration building and she worries that it is a decade that we have subjected the administration to unhealthy conditions in that building. She stated that she is worried about safety of the building and the employees. Richard Harding stated that it is probably an act of treason that there is staff in that building. He stated that we should move forward with the intention of moving these employees out of this building. He stated that he is concerned with the enrollment trends. He stated that at North Point there may be enough people for a new zip code. He stated that we should try to focus on the forecast. He noted that we have a high school extension program that is mixed in with another school. That facility is going to be on-line at some point. He stated that if you think about the Longfellow Building, that is an interesting place to have a facility on-line.

Councillor Devereux stated that the anchor tenant is EF Education and they will be building a third building; maybe they can help the city around education.

Mr. Fantini stated that the archdiocese treated the school system very well. He stated that they proved to be a good partner with the city. Mr. Maloney stated that the lease is up the year after 2019. We want the school first.

Mayor Simmons asked is there gender neutral bathroom at MLK Jr. School. Mr. Maloney stated that they work with the principals that accommodations are made so that the rights of the children are always respected. He stated that every bathroom is not gender neutral. Dr. Turk answered in the affirmative. Kathleen Kelly stated that she wants a space where a transgender child or family member will be safe. Mayor Simmons stated that we must do this in a way that it is completely supported. Mr. Harding asked if there is a way that these facilities are named so that the kids know. Maybe some of this is about the new way of naming the facilities so that people understand what is trying to be achieved. Mr. Rossi stated that we can be more explicit so it is more widely known. Mayor Simmons stated that we need to be intentional and explicit. Councillor Cheung stated that Google bathrooms are all gender neutral.

Mayor Simmons stated that parking is a nightmare at the King School. She stated that this is a debacle and people are very unhappy. She stated that going forward, the King Open had a wonderful open house but she thinks that the City could have been better at including the community. We did not acknowledge the community from a historical perspective. She stated that we need to be respectful to the community. She stated that she wants to ensure that the school is thought of as a shared facility and not only a school facility. Lastly, she asked if there is a marked change in the socioeconomics of Cambridge students. Mr. Maloney stated that there has been a slight drift to more full-pay. At the K-5 level the socioeconomic status at the high end for full pay is 72%. He stated that the K-5 is in a gradual trend of full-pay. Mr. Maloney stated that the K-5 balancing is considerably easier because it is limited from K-5. There are issues in 6-8 program in which we need to pay attention. Vice Mayor McGovern stated that when thinking about paid lunch, the families that are free lunch are public housing families. He stated that there is a huge gap between who is financially stable and free and reduced lunch. Councillor Cheung asked why not give more kids free lunch. Vice Mayor McGovern stated that he would love the city to use a more accurate figure to Cambridge. Many families do not qualify but cannot afford to give their kids breakfast and lunch every day. He stated that no child is denied lunch but they do spend administrative time chasing a family. Mr. Harding stated that the school district is bound by federal criteria. He stated that this is a safe criteria. Vice Mayor McGovern stated that when you fill out free and reduced lunch form, you need to fill out your income. He stated that you could use the federal guideline to determine placement but by looking at income you could say that the child is eligible for school lunch. Mr. Maloney stated that currently Cambridge, unlike a great many communities, subsidizes school lunches to about \$900,000 per year. Cambridge menu includes ethnic, vegan, vegetarian. To go to a universal free lunch there would cost \$700,000 to \$1 million additional per year.

Mayor Simmons stated that wanted to look at shared agenda and what issues to talk about over the next several months. She asked how to best use the meeting opportunities and what do we want to spend the Roundtable discussing. She stated that collaboration is owed to the residents and constituents. She gave overview of some areas that she thinks may be important to discuss.

Budget	Early childhood education/universal PreK
Charter schools	Stem/steam
Mitigation funds how it affects schools	Cultural proficiency
School climate	Family engagement

After school programs/Community Schools  
World language instruction  
Office of college success  
Indigenous peoples' day

School facilities  
Poverty/homeless students  
Internet threats/"swatting"

Councillor Cheung stated that he is open to universal lunch. He stated that he is frustrated about the pace of early childhood education. He stated that STEM and STEAM is important. He stated that he is interested in world language and the expansion of same. He is interested in swatting and the idea of how to cope in this reality.

Manikka Bowman would like workforce housing added to the conversation. She wants the conversation from the perspective of the teachers.

Patty Nolan stated that all issues are worthy and appropriate, however, she thinks early childhood education and universal pre-K, afterschool and out-of-school time programs in community schools and family engagement are the issues that are most urgent to address.

Superintendent Young suggested out-of-school time and collective impact. He stated that it is something that Cambridge is on the verge of. It speaks to the idea of intentional and methodical in which schools and municipal agencies collaborate for the needs of the children. He stated that the other issue is around safety and security. There is a capital element to this issue around use of cameras, swipe cards, etc. There is an important role, particularly the Police Department. He stated that what is difficult is educating people around what kind of buildings do we want our schools to be.

Manikka Bowman stated that the list leans more towards what is happening in the school. How are we developing a city that allows each body to benefit from the other? If we can think about planning in the way of community approach, it would be a beneficial way to approach the two bodies coming together. There must be a joint approach.

Mr. Rossi stated that this is what the citywide planning is about. He urged the schools to be involved in the planning process. He stated that this will enable a better conversation.

Councillor Carlone stated that it is about building community. He stated that the opportunities are huge but urban design has to focus on community.

Vice Mayor McGovern suggested that the consultants meet specifically with representatives from the schools. It is important to make sure that there is a special opportunity for the school community. He stated that decisions by the City Council do sometimes affect schools. He asked what other ways we can share information that does not take a formal Roundtable meeting. Mayor Simmons stated that we are bound by the Open Meeting Law and quorums but we need to keep this in context. She would like suggestions. The goal is to build collegial relationships.

Mr. Harding stated that early childhood and STEM he does not know where we are. Re-engage the conversation. He stated that the perspective of complete cities is important but looking at broader issues such as affordable housing and families being squeezed out poses a threat in some ways to the families. There is a group of people in the schools that feel threatened about the affordability. He stated that mental health should be injected into the conversation as well as opioid addiction. He stated that there are many kids whose issues start when they are in high school, i.e. hockey injury, etc. He

stated that bigger issues are race, class and culture issues. He stated that oftentimes we try to do the right thing but we do not always get it right. He stated that if we are going to lead we must force the conversation. He added that we must think about the relationship between the City Council and the School Committee.

Mr. Fantini stated that the Office of College Success makes him very happy but he would like to see this made more public. He stated that he believes that many kids do not finish college for many different reasons such as being unable to afford a bus pass. He stated that the City need to do more to help kids along. He stated that after school programs and community schools progress has been made but he would like reengagement.

Emily Dexter stated that attendance and absence issues are of concern to her. Civic education and engagement is very important as well.

Kathleen Kelly stated that it is important to look at 0 through college for all students and families, all ways that city programs intersect with the schools and having those program reinforce each other. She stated that out of school time programs have better relationships with families at times. She stated that when talking about housing in the city, the way that influences our controlled choice program. She stated that we need to make sure that housing policy in the city and housing policy around controlled choice are working together.

Councillor Maher stated that many times there are people who have old information. You may have to pause to catch people up. He stated that challenges around security is a big issue. He stated that making taking a “year in review” could be beneficial. He stated that social and emotional issues effect every aspect of a student’s life. He stated that before we can tackle the list, people need to catch up.

Councillor Kelley suggested that the Mayor plan social events where personal relationships can be built.

Mr. Rossi stated that this has been one of the best discussions between the School Committee and the City Council in a long time. He stated that understanding the issues and going through a prioritization is a good idea. He stated that Ms. Semonoff and Ms. Turk have worked together for years. The message is an important one. Tackling one at a time is the way to go.

Councillor Mazen stated that the prime and most important issue is the race/class issue. It is blatantly obvious that if you are of a certain class you will not have the same opportunities. This must be discussed. He stated that there are ways to attack the problem. He stated that when thinking about the future of education on a 10 or 20 year time scale, will education exist in the same way in buildings or structures. He asked how we imagine how to budget, plan and invest for the longer term. He stated that real engagement is really hard. He stated that budget in general, a zero-based budgeting approach – incremental budgeting leaves policy makers to plan in the long term.

Councillor Toomey stated that the issues that teachers deal with is massive. He stated that teachers need support. He stated that the marijuana use is an issue among students. He stated that race/class issue is a topic that must be discussed when thinking about engagement. He stated that bullying is an issue and it is something that needs to be looked at. He stated that teachers are dealing with all of these issues.

Patty Nolan asked about successful examples of the joint task forces. If we could look to our own examples for effective ways to move forward on many of the issues. She would like research done and incorporate those lessons.

Mr. Harding stated that it is important for the City Council to keep the School Committee abreast of the developments in the City Manager search. He stated that the community is interested in who the next City Manager will be. He stated that he is very concerned that there may be a thought that in doing an international search the most important thing is that the person understand the city and its people. He stated that it is important for the person to know that they are inheriting a great thing and not to lose sight of the fact that we are one of the best run cities in America. He stated that it would be good if the City Council is intentional about keeping the School Committee abreast on how the process is going.

Councillor Devereux would like to see focus on early childhood programming issues. She stated that City Council committee hearings are open to the public.

Vice Mayor McGovern stated that even when each body is having a Roundtable conversation, maybe the Vice Chair from the School Committee could sit in on City Council a Roundtable and vice versa. He stated that the schools are doing an incredible job around poverty but if kids are still going home to situations where they are not being fed consistently, no heat, etc., the schools are putting band-aids on larger social issues.

Councillor Maher stated that the City Council is looking at the process that will be used in the selection of a City Manager. They are looking at the process used by the School Committee to hire the Superintendent. He stated that there is no perfect search. He stated that there will be another meeting on April 6<sup>th</sup>. He stated that he can assure people that we have been lucky in having Robert W. Healy and Richard Rossi for as long as we did and who were committed to public education. A major priority of the City Council is finding a new City Manager that is equally committed to public education.

Emily Dexter stated that the schools need to have a district plan for goals but she would like that done jointly with the City Council.

Councillor Carlone stated that the Harrington School had its issues but the program followed the kids through school and after and they were remarkable. A high percentage of students went on and graduated. He stated that early childhood education is very important.

Mayor Simmons stated that when thinking about cultural proficiency, it should be a city-wide conversation and it should start with the School Committee and City Council first. She will work to increase better communication between both bodies. She stated that we do not tell our story well at all. She stated that social/emotional/bullying – the city did not have a position on it. She stated that it is not a conversation that takes place in schools alone. It must be a city-wide conversation.

Mayor Simmons thanked all for their attendance. The meeting adjourned at 7:38 on the motion of Fred Fantini.

A communication was received from Hasson Rashid, 820 Massachusetts Avenue attached **(ATTACHMENT A)**. *The attachments are on file in the City Clerk's Office and can be viewed.*