

**WILDWOOD SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT
ABUTTERS MEETING**

Tuesday, May 13, 2025 @ 6:00 PM

NORTH INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

Wildwood School Building Committee Chair, Judy O'Connell, called the meeting to order, noting that Dr. Brand would be moving out of the district, and that she had been nominated as Chair of the Wildwood School Building Committee. Ms. O'Connell explained that this is an informal meeting, specifically an abutters meeting, with the goal of providing individualized attention to direct abutters. Ms. O'Connell introduced Eric Slagle, Town Manager, Paul Ruggiero, Assistant Superintendent of Administration and Finance, Dennis Kelley, Superintendent of Public Schools, Lee Dore, Principal of Dore and Whittier, Rani Phillips, Project Manager of Dore and Whittier, Bryce Taft of Dore and Whittier, and Mark Abdella, Vice President of Construction services for Fontaine Brothers, who will be the Construction Manager at Risk for the project.

Ms. O'Connell turned the room over to Rani Philips and Lee Dore, who presented project updates. Ms. Philips noted that feedback from the community had been considered, and incorporated into a revised site plan, which she would walk the group through. Ms. Philips compared prior plans to current plans. She noted the main feedback being the buffer of the property line and to increase the distance from the building and site amenities, such as playgrounds and basketball courts. The firm had revisited the plans and moved the playgrounds and fields to center them more on the site to move them further from the property lines. Ms. Philips explained where the entrances, building, emergency road, pick-up and drop-off, playgrounds, fields and courts would be placed and provided a visual revised site plan.

Mr. Dore added that the revised plans include buffer enhancements such as a 6–8-foot berm, stockade fencing, and plantings added to provide as much of a buffer to the property abutters as possible. Mr. Dore reassured the group that the committee is still listening to all community concerns.

Ms. Philips explained that a traffic study had been completed to look at both morning and evening conditions, projecting trends into the future as far as 2035. Ms. Philips explained that certain existing intersections, High St. and Middlesex Ave, and Middlesex Ave and Salem St. would need to be changed to improve the traffic. Ms. Philips also added that by bringing pick-up and drop-off traffic and buses onto the school site it would also contribute to the efficiency of the traffic flow. Mr. Dore added that if the project passes at the Town Meeting, the traffic study would be revisited further, and on a deeper level. Ms. Philips added that in the next phase of the project, traffic related to the Cares Program would be evaluated, in addition to the current predicted number of 12 buses and 4 vans.

Ms. Philips walked the group through the layout of the site plan in relation to individuals' specific properties. Group members expressed their concerns with the placement of the drop

offline, specifically the emissions from cars and buses. Ms. Philips explained the layout would continue to be developed and may result in the drop offline being further away from the property lines.

Q: Mr. Kenney asked what the minimum required distance was for the drop-off line to be constructed from the property line.

A: Ms. Phillips noted that the minimum distance was 10ft, however the current site plan has a distance of 16ft from the drop offline to the property line. Ms. Phillips also added that the road goes around the entire property for emergency services.

Q: Ms. Feeney asked if there would ever be a situation in the traffic study that would deter the project from being constructed on the site, and if that were the case, what would happen, and what was the process of changing a project site with an MSBA project?

A: Mr. Dore confirmed that the results of a traffic study, if undesirable enough, could stop a project from happening. Mr. Dore clarified that another proposed site would have been considered, and that the current site location had been chosen based on the information the group had, and that the MSBA had required prerequisites such as soil testing, water tables analysis, current infrastructure for sewer, water, and electricity, as well as traffic implications.

Q: Mr. Kenney added that he believes the placement of the school project had been a rushed decision, as the soccer field had just been dedicated in September.

A: Ms. O'Connell explained that the project had been discussed for at least 3-4 years, and when the dedication for Mr. Lentini was proposed, it was proactively explained to the family that the field may change with the project, and they still wished to proceed with the dedication. There is potential for the dedicated field to be moved, or rededicated onsite. Ms. O'Connell noted Mr. Lentini's contributions to the community, and the importance of dedicating another field, or new field, in his name.

Q: Ms. Feeney asked if the enrollment numbers had changed, as she had previously seen 755 students listed leading up to the number.

A: Ms. Philips noted that the 855 students included the potential pre-k students.

Q: Ms. Feeney asked why the building's size had increased 3x in size since the first drawings were proposed.

A: Ms. Phillips clarified that initially there were 18 building options, including 3 different enrollment options, and 4 different project sites. Mr. Dore also added that the gym being on the first floor was the most efficient option, which increased the ground space of the building.

Q: Ms. Feeney asked what the cost of the project was without MSBA contributions.

A: Mr. Dore noted that the project cost is estimated at \$173,000,000.00

Q: Ms. Feeney asked what would happen if the project was passed, construction began, and change orders came in, and what would happen to things that were promised to the abutters such as berms and plantings, how could it be ensured that these were not cut from the project.

A: Mr. Dore added that hearing priorities at this stage in the project would allow the priorities to be built within the project. Mr. Dore also added that there are contingencies within the budget. Mr. Slagle also added that the committee had chosen the Chapter 149 CMR procurement process had been chosen to help offset unexpected costs. Fontaine has been brought onboard early in the process to be involved in the actual budgeting process.

Q: Ms. Lee asked if the traffic study had been conducted with the consideration of the new Amazon facility located on Rt. 62.

A: Mr. Dore stated that the traffic study was completed in late October, and when the traffic study had been completed, they were provided with a copy of Amazon's individual traffic study. This information was provided to the project's traffic consultant to be able to include. The study had not been an issue, and when the traffic study is revisited, development projects and the Amazon projects will be factored in.

Q: A gentleman asked what would happen to the tree line, a stormwater protected area.

A: Mr. Dore clarified that the area would be changed, and stormwater would be captured onsite to improve drainage. Mr. Dore noted that the area is non-jurisdictional, with no restrictions. Mr. Slagle added that there have been recent changes, at the state level, regarding vernal pools and wetlands.

Q: The resident of 314 Salem Street asked if the trees would be removed along the property line.

A: Ms. Phillips noted that the trees would not be removed, and fields or courts would not be placed in the area.

Q: A resident questioned the lighting on the property.

A: Mr. Dore added that a lighting plan would need to be drafted, but it would be minimal and required for safety.

Q: A resident questioned the road going around the property, abutting Arlene Ave.

A: Mr. Slagle clarified that the section of road in question would only be used for emergency access, and there would not be regular use of the road as it would be blocked off. Ms. Philips

showed the group where gates would be installed to stop non-emergency traffic. Mr. Slagle added that this unused road would also add to the buffer of noise and sound to the Arlene Ave. side of the property.

Q: A resident asked if the view from the resident's property is something that could be created.

A: Mr. Dore noted that one of the first projects would be for the design team to show specific views of each of the resident's properties.

Q: Ms. Feeney asked how the town would handle any insurance claims related to construction such as foundation cracks and dust.

A: Mr. Abdulla introduced himself to the group, providing an overview of Fontaine's work history and their commitment to providing options and balance to their projects. Mr. Abdella explained that safety onsite and offsite is a priority, and existing conditions surveys can be completed on abutters' homes if they'd like to monitor things such as foundations cracks. Mr. Abdella also added that Fontaine had worked in neighborhoods and prioritized minimizing outside impact.

Q: A resident asked why the school was being placed on the back of the property instead of the front.

A: Ms. Philips explained that this would allow the school to continue during construction of the new school, otherwise current students would need to be relocated. Ms. O'Connell added that a cost-benefit analysis had been conducted, and relocating the students to another location was not feasible.

Q: Ms. Feeney stated that she heard that the Wildwood School had been closed because the town entered the MSBA project, and not because it was unsafe for students to attend after the oil spill.

A: Ms. O'Connell noted that she had been a joint meeting with herself as chair of the Select Board, Jennifer Bryson, Chair of the School Committee, former Town Manager, Jeffrey Hull, and Dr. Brand, and the collective decision had been reached to close the Wildwood School, as students, staff, and parents had deemed the school not to be a satisfactory environment. The decision was made to better the community and the students. Ms. O'Connell added that the Wildwood School had reached the end of its useful life. Ms. O'Connell added that age-appropriate restroom facilities and a temporary playscape had been established at the Wilmington Middle School for the students of the Wildwood to be able to attend school there.

Q: A resident asked if the current fence surrounding the property would be replaced.

A: Mr. Dore clarified that the property survey would determine where fences would be placed and or replaced. Mr. Dore added that the survey was accessible and downloadable to the public.

Q: Ms. Kenney asked what would happen to the existing schools.

A: Ms. O'Connell stated that the life of the buildings would be determined by the Building Reuse Committee. Ms. Feeney added that she is a member of the Building Reuse Committee and shared her experience and expectations of how decisions would be reached.

Q: A resident asked how long ago the windows and doors had been replaced at the North Intermediate School. And if the renovations have been considered.

A: Ms. O'Connell informed the group that the windows and doors were replaced in 2003. Ms. O'Connell also added that renovations had been considered, however the time frame to complete a substantial renovation in phases would take years, and the cost of renovations would continue to increase overtime. Renovations could also trip building codes.

Q: Mr. Feeney asked about the origin of Woburn Street School, and that he had heard the land was donated by a family in town.

A: Ms. O'Connell noted that the family had not donated the land entirely, and the Town Engineer had pulled the history of the property.

Q: Ms. Kenney asked what meetings she needed to attend to learn as much as she could about the project.

A: Ms. O'Connell informed the group that the next community Forum would be held on June 3, 2025. Dr. Brand explained where the upcoming meetings would be posted, the town website, school website, town crier, community board, and the Wilmington Apple. Ms. O'Connell informed the group on the sign-in sheet where residents would provide their contact information to provide future updates and communications.

Ms. O'Connell stated it is a goal to keep the lines of communication open. Ms. O'Connell added that the project is still a potential project, and every resident has the right to vote at the Town Meeting or the ballot box. Ms. O'Connell added that it was the goal of the committee to bring the preferred design to the town meeting, which was voted on at the previous town meeting. Ms. O'Connell stated that the goal of this meeting and future meetings is to include the group, the direct abutters, and allow a seat at the table. Ms. O'Connell added that there had been over 60 meetings prior to today, and a lot of people had participated to reach the current proposed project.

Mr. Dore informed the group that Fontaine would be reachable by phone, and that they would develop a relationship with the construction crew. Mr. Abdella added that another meeting

would be held to introduce the construction team, establishing contact, and would be available to take calls concerning things such as dust and noise if there were to be any.

Ms. O'Connell thanked the group for their attendance and participation in the meeting.

The Meeting was concluded at 7:24 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Thomas F. Donahue
Recording Secretary