

GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
AD HOC LONG-TERM SPACE PLANNING COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 8, 2026 @ 4:00 P.M.
GROTON MIDDLE SCHOOL, MEDIA CENTER

MEMBERS PRESENT: Adrian Johnson (remote-arrived in-person @ 4:20 p.m.), Mitch Shinbrot, Ian Thomas, Jennifer White, Adam Puccino

ALSO PRESENT: Susan Austin, Sam Kilpatrick, Anne Marie Mancini, Denise Doolittle, Shannon Weigle, Chris Jenkins, Sherri Facas, Frank Herrick, Samantha Singleton, Peter Bass, Clare DePETER Powers, Victoria Patrick, Eva Papathanasiou

1. Call to Order – Ian Thomas called the meeting to order at 4:14 p.m.
2. Review August 24, 2026 Minutes - The committee reviewed the minutes; no corrections were submitted.
3. Middle School Needs, Facility Review, Options and Available District Spaces – Peter Bass stated that space at the middle school has been an issue since its opening. There is a need for an additional gym, an auditorium, and 10 or 11 additional classrooms. Science spaces are limited; we have more science teachers than science classrooms. The instructional spaces in the library were designed with the intention of being used as workspaces for students for media center purposes; however, they are used as classrooms for the entirety of A Day and B Day. Special Education resource rooms are shared by three to four teachers. Stairways are narrow, which increases the time it takes to evacuate the building. Mrs. Singleton stated that breakout rooms, such as the two smaller rooms on each side of the media center, have had to be utilized as the school has run out of space. The school has one elevator being used by “on cart” teachers, injured students, and students with disabilities. This creates issues, especially when the one elevator breaks down. Superintendent Austin stated that the cafetorium cannot be used due to the number of lunch waves. It is also used as a walkthrough from the music and STEM area to other places in the school and would not be conducive for learning. The Committee discussed possible long-term and short-term options – build an addition to the school, move eighth grade to the high school, utilize Claude Chester or S.B. Butler, portable classrooms or modular construction out of shipping containers.

The Committee took a short recess and resumed the meeting at 5:41 p.m.

4. Robotics Field – Chris Jenkins found a company that uses shipping containers to form buildings and shared that company’s plans with the Committee. Building off of the high school is less expensive than building a free-standing structure. Mitch Shinbrot reminded the Committee that Robotics is not the only club in the district, and we need to be fair to the other clubs. He suggested the use of grants and fundraising to help with costs that the Robotics team incurs. Superintendent Austin will reach out to the architect for a consultation estimate for building off of the school versus building a permanent structure.
5. Identify Date of Next Meeting – October 27, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. at Central Office.
6. Adjournment - The meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.