

To: Members of the Lexington School Committee
From: Ad Hoc Facilities Committee (AHFC)
Re: Final Report to the School Committee
Date: October 16, 2009

The Ad Hoc Facilities Committee is pleased to make its report to the School Committee.

Background

This past June, the Lexington School Committee established the Ad Hoc Facilities Committee (AHFC) to advise it concerning the Design Partnership Facilities Master Plan. The School Committee charge asked the AHFC to include, but not be limited to, the following areas:

1. Review the Design Partnership Master Plan and its recommendations;
2. Assess the impact of the deficiencies identified in the Master Plan on the educational process and then prioritize the recommendations;
3. Propose options for addressing the deficiencies, including timing;
4. Make a Final Report to the School Committee.

The membership of the Ad Hoc Facilities Committee included two members appointed by the School Committee, two members appointed by the Board of Selectmen, and three members appointed by the Permanent Building Committee. Also in attendance were liaisons from the Appropriation Committee and the Capital Expenditures Committee. Individual School Committee members attended some meetings. Please refer to the end of this report for a list of participants. The Ad Hoc Facilities Committee met seven times from June through September.

Considerations

The AHFC evaluated the Design Partnership Master Plan and deemed it to be a commendable analysis of the current condition of the high school and elementary schools, complete with recommendations for further maintenance, renovation, and new construction. The Committee spoke about a number of issues. Here are the most important ones:

- The AHFC viewed the report as a snapshot in time and realizes that the Master Plan will be provided to the Architectural/Engineering firms hired for the various projects as a starting point. The Committee further realizes that the costs presented in the Master Plan are 1) provisional, 2) inextricably tied to the scope embodied in the Master Plan, and 3) possibly subject to escalation outside the bounds anticipated in the Master Plan. The Committee wants to warn all who extract costs from the Master Plan to extract the costs along with all “markups” and “qualifiers” contained in the Master Plan.
- The Committee reflected on the former Commonwealth school construction reimbursement program (known simply as "School Building Assistance" or "SBA") that favored new construction and provided the Town of Lexington reimbursement values just below 60% for the parts of the Fiske, Harrington, Diamond, Clarke and Lexington High School projects that met SBA criteria. Under the auspices of the former SBA program,

Town committees had anticipated that all of the schools would eventually be replaced with new buildings. The current Commonwealth school construction reimbursement program (the "Massachusetts School Building Authority" or "MSBA") applies criteria for participation that are much harder to meet than were those of the former SBA program. If a Lexington project *were* able to meet the more stringent criteria, the Town could expect reimbursements just above the 30% range. It is with this observation that the AHFC recommends that Bowman and Bridge be renovated due to the low likelihood of either school being approved to receive MSBA funds for either renovation or a total replacement.

- While the AHFC presents recommendations below, these recommendations may be reprioritized due to other realities and the political pressures of “overrides.”
- In responding to item 2, above, of the School Committee charge, the AHFC notes that less than acceptable building conditions are tantamount to “deficiencies having an effect on the educational process.” Thus the Committee focused on attending to the renovations at the elementary schools in the same light as the proposed renovations and new construction at the high school.
- The AHFC recommended that the School Committee submit to the MSBA a “Statement of Interest” (SOI) for the High School, because the High School project seems more likely to be approved than the other projects in the Master Plan. Having said that, the Committee also believes that the proposed building program needs to be fully vetted. The AHFC notes that some aspects of the work at Lexington High School may need to precede the SOI acceptance because of existing conditions, but recommends that as much of the full scope of work be in stride with the main renovation and new construction project as the SOI process and its timing allow.

Recommendations

With a quorum present, the Ad Hoc School Facilities Committee unanimously voted the following recommendations. (Note that the recommendations are not listed in priority order.)

1. High School: Prepare and submit the Statement of Interest for the full project as described in the Design Partnership Master Plan. Thereafter, write Warrant Articles for design and then construction. Go through the necessary selection processes.
2. High School roofing and mechanical systems scope requiring immediate attention: Write a Warrant Article to cover the bid documents and construction related to the High School roof and mechanical systems scope requiring immediate attention. Go through the necessary selection processes.
3. Bowman and Bridge: Write an Article to cover the preparation of Bid Documents for Priority 1 and 2 + HC-1 and HC-2 scopes of work as contained in the Design Partnership Master Plan. Solicit designer interest and select the designer. Thereafter, prepare an Article for construction. Go through the necessary selection processes.

4. Estabrook: The Estabrook School stands a chance of securing state funds for reconstruction. Thus, submit an SOI for Estabrook once the high school SOI clears the Commonwealth evaluation process. When the Estabrook SOI disposition is known, write an Article for the preparation of bid documents followed by an Article for new construction. Go through the necessary selection processes. In the meantime, maintain the school so it does not further deteriorate.
5. Hastings: Maintain Hastings so it does not further deteriorate. Monitor enrollment statistics to determine future disposition.
6. Prepare a Technology plan for the schools.
7. Budget sufficient operating funds to keep the schools, as well as other town buildings, in proper repair commencing in FY2011. These "sufficient" operating funds are in addition to the funds needed to accomplish all that is listed above.

Members of the Ad Hoc Facilities Committee:

- Eric Brown, Permanent Building Committee representative
- Jon Himmel, Permanent Building Committee representative
- Peter Johnson, Permanent Building Committee representative
- Tom Griffiths, School Committee representative
- Phil Poinelli, School Committee representative
- George Burnell, Board of Selectmen representative
- Peter Kelley, Board of Selectmen representative

Liaisons who regularly attended the meetings of the Ad Hoc Facilities Committee:

- Richard Eurich, Appropriation Committee representative
- Pam Hoffman, Appropriation Committee representative
- Bill Hurley, Capital Expenditures Committee representative

Staff in attendance:

- Dr. Paul Ash, Superintendent of Schools
- Mark Barrett, Project Manager
- Natalie Cohen, Principal, Lexington High School
- Pat Goddard, Director of Public Facilities

