

Town Meeting

11-20-14

TOWN MEETING

11/20/14

Precursors

- SAB - none
- none

Announcements

- Earthquake drill will take place sometime soon, probably after the Thanksgiving holidays. Teachers will go over instructions with classes.
- Students Against Sexual Violence is holding a meeting today, during H block in Jennifer's room, to discuss the "Rolling Stone" article about sexual assault at UVA.
- Bake sale going on today during Town Meeting.
- "Lizzie Strata" going up this weekend and tickets are going fast. See Eleanor.

Consent Items - none

Motions - none

Discussions

- CIP Update: Frank announced that while a final decision will not be announced until Dec. 18, the superintendent gave his official recommendation on Tuesday night. He turned the discussion/explanations over to PAC leaders Laura Saul Edwards and Kristen Colston.
- o Superintendent recommended the SWE3 plan which provides for the H-B program, including Stratford, HILT and the autism programs, to move to a new building at the Wilson site where we would be co-located with a pre-k program in a 900 seat facility (current 705 + 10% increase + pre-k). H-B's current site will become a 1000 seat neighborhood middle school and additional funding will be reserved for additions to other middle schools (primarily Kenmore) in the district to meet overcrowding needs.
- o The new H-B building, which would cost approximately \$85 million, would be a multi-story facility (4-6?) with underground parking (including space for student parking) with the ground floor reserved for the pre-k and Stratford programs.
- o A BLPC will be formed (Building Level Planning Committee) and will be the first in Arlington to include student representatives. Architects from the firm BIG (a European firm) will include a lot of open space and are eager and determined to make sure the building reflects H-B's unique needs.
- Question about wall paintings: Answer: Details will be worked out later, but architects are aware of their importance to the HB community.
- Eleanor spoke about how a year of hard work had changed the prospect of a catastrophe into a promising opportunity.
- Bennett questioned about how construction will affect current occupants. Answer: All possible care will be taken to ensure minimal disruption during school hours. Other schools have continued regular classes during construction with minimal bother. Laura added that some building improvements may be put in place for us to benefit from before we leave.
- Question about increased traffic in H-B neighborhood: Answer: School Board is working with county and VDOT to create ingress/egress from Old Dominion Drive.
- Daniel Bowler asked what the process would be from here out. Answer: A Building Level Planning Commission will be formed (BLPC) comprising students, parents, architects, community residents, etc., and then a board called a PFRC (?) will meet to work out zoning, etc. After that the actual construction will begin with a planned move-in date of September 2019.
- Frank spoke and explained that the H-B administrators had been asked to remain neutral during all ongoing discussions. They will be quite active once the BLPC convenes when there will be ample time and

attention given to student and faculty input.

- Lizzie asked about future Frisbee space. Answer: the School Board is aware that Frisbee is an H-B priority, and there will definitely be AT LEAST one Frisbee field. A WRAP (Western Rosslyn Area Planning) committee is in favor of bringing more green space to the Rosslyn area, and with their assistance, we may have access to additional field space. However, space wise, our current land is 12 acres and the Wilson site is 2.5 acres, so there are no guarantees. But our new school would be a centerpiece of the neighborhood in the Rosslyn area, so it would behoove the community to make it as inviting as possible to the community at large.
- Question about the possibility of H-B not moving after all: Answer: Very unlikely. School board sees APS student population growing to over 32,000, and given the acreage here, it is inevitable that the space will be used for more students sooner or later. Moving now ensures the integrity of our program, and given that we will be in a building with no room for additional growth, we should be left alone in the future.
- Nancy spoke about how the move will hugely benefit the Stratford program which has had to operate in sub-standard facilities for years.
- Ben recommended a crosswalk on Old Dominion near the proposed entrance for the renovated building here.
- Casey questioned the inevitable growth in H-B's size and brought up power point descriptions of other proposals, but Kristen answered that in ALL options given serious consideration, an increase of 10% was seen as a given.
- Ganzorig asked if the architects who would design our building are the same as did Washington-Lee and Wakefield? Answer: No. The BIG architects have very different ideas and their plans (see online) are beautiful.
- Carl said it was important to assure the alumni community that we here now are okay with this. The move is most likely going to happen, so it would be better for the alumni to be on board and not maintain a resistant stance.
- Question about which would be the last class to graduate from this building? Answer: the class of 2019 - current 8th graders. Current 7th graders will be the first to graduate from the new building.
- Dave Soles expressed his ongoing unhappiness with the seemingly inevitability of this decision and reminded all that the school board members are our elected officials. He feels that the pain of moving should be enough: "Why are we swallowing growth as well as swallowing a move?" He also said that a reduction in fields from four to one was not acceptable, since activities like the Turkey Bowl are a vital part of H-B.
- Kris pointed out that the mathematics projected showed a large price for conducting renovations while we're still here and asked if there were any plans to move us to temporary quarters? Answer: no, because usually the Wilson site is used for temporary arrangements and it, obviously, would not be available.
- Maya asked about any potential changes to the off-campus privileges at the new site. Frank answered that none are planned at this stage.
- [Jeff Fishbein interjected with the important reminder to notify the ice cream truck of our impending move]
- Eleanor mentioned the ongoing disagreement in the greater H-B community about some aspects of this whole matter and urged all to stay away from social media as much as possible and avoid getting bogged down in nasty arguments.
- Someone questioned whether pieces of the old H-B would be available as souvenirs like pieces of the Berlin Wall? Answer: Walls aren't going to come down!
- Tom Mallan spoke about how our new building will be our legacy in that we have succeeded in preserving what is most integral to our identity. He added that we have to now turn our attention to the County Board so that they understand how important green/field space is to us and urged community members to remain motivated.
- Jeff Fishbein thanked the PAC representatives for all they had done, and TM gave Laura and Kristen a round of applause.
- Dave Soles spoke about the disadvantages to increasing H-B's size and suggested we urge the board to consider plan SWE2 instead of SWE3, the option that does not include an added Pre-K. Kristen reminded him, however, that the actual H-B population would still increase by 10% under SWE2 and reminded everyone that at the Wilson site there would be no room to put trailers, so our size could not increase further in the future.
- Daniel Bowler asked about potential staff growth when our size increases. Casey answered that there would be staff added, but that the difficulties would lie in a 6th grade, for example, of 87 kids. There would still be four sections of each class, but they would be bigger than they are now.
- Zoe asked what our relationship to the added pre-school would be? Answer: a successful model for this is already in place at Yorktown and it will probably offer advantages to students wishing to study child development, etc.

- Kendall asked if it is still possible to lobby the school board for a smaller enrollment increase, maybe to 5 or 7%? Answer: anyone can try, but success is unlikely. The PAC informally agreed last spring that a 10% increase would be the most H-B could bear, and the school board set that figure in stone. Important to remember that all of Arlington is being impacted by population growth and that in the new building, any additional growth to our program will be impossible, unlike what will happen inevitably in other schools.
- Emma spoke as someone who got into H-B off the waiting list later than others, and said how wonderful it had been to be able to come here. Increasing our classes by 7 kids per grade would allow more of Arlington to benefit from H-B and earn us favor in any future disputes with the School Board or greater community.
- Question about provisions for students with disabilities: Answer: the new building will be up to modern standards and regulations and therefore far more accommodating than our current facilities.
- Question about the possibility of sibling preferences. Answer: It won't happen. We could fill our classes with siblings alone and not have room for anyone else.

As the meeting ended, Laura announced that anyone interested in continuing the discussion should come to the PAC meeting next Monday, Nov. 24, from 7-9pm in the library. School board member Abby Raphael will be attending and the entire meeting will be devoted to the CIP issue.

Chair: Margaret Gorman

Co-Chair: Niles Ayer

Secretary: Amanda Hayes