

Town Meeting

1-29-15

TOWN MEETING

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Precursors

- SAB - none
- Staff meeting- none

Announcements

- Frank announced that today's meeting was taking place in the auditorium in order to allow a presentation by BIG (the Bjarke Ingels Group), the Danish architectural design team chosen to design the new H-B Woodlawn building at the Wilson site. He added that we were meeting on the site of the "Footloose" set which opens tonight! Tickets available from Eleanor throughout Town Meeting and later during the day.
- Casey then spoke again about the soon to be convened BLPC (Building Level Planning Committee) which will be comprised of 1 high school student, 1 middle school student, 5 parents, 6 faculty/staff representatives and community civic association members. Students interested in serving on the committee should let Casey, Frank, Graham, or Vanessa know as soon as possible. She added that as of now they have more faculty volunteers that they need, so they will be working on narrowing the list.
 - o Eliza (11th) asked if it might be possible to switch the numbers to allow more student representation and less parent representation.
 - o Casey and Frank agreed that they would note the suggestion and see if anything might be done.
- The Stratford Auditorium dedication will take place on February 10.
- "Footloose" opens tonight!!
- Frank then introduced Scott Prisco, the Director of Design and Construction for Arlington Public Schools.

Scott Prisco introduced himself as an architect and said how truly excited he is to be working on the plans for the new H-B Woodlawn building. He spoke of how important it will be to capture the unique spirit of HB and bring it to life in the new building and how vital student input will be to that process. He mentioned the last game the Pittsburgh Panthers played in their old stadium and the effort that had been made to "jar up" the spirit from the old venue and bring it to the new one. He then introduced the other speakers attending: Sean Franklin, BIG's presenter, Steven Wright, from the Leo Daly construction architectural firm, and John Chadwick, Assistant Superintendent for Facilities and Operations for APS.

Scott began the presentation by reminding us of the basic parameters: a school for 775 students built within a budget of \$8.2 million. He briefly outlined the process: Programming → Concept Design→ Schematic Design→ Design Development→ Construction Documents→ Construction, culminating in an opening in September of 2019.

- Paul asked the difference between concept design and schematic design, and Scott answered that in broad terms the concept design addresses the overall structure, including parking, drop-off sites, etc., and the schematic design concentrates on the inside specifications (classroom design and arrangement, etc.), as well as the details of the outside appearance.

Scott then turned the mike over to Sean Franklin, a project designer and architect from BIG. Sean spoke a bit about BIG, a Danish firm founded in 2005 with offices in Copenhagen and New York. In order to help us understand how the firm works, he showed a series of photos from various projects they had finished which showcased the firm's ability to work within major space constrictions:

- A Danish maritime museum was built on a small, constricted parcel of land near a historic castle.
- An auditorium/gymnasium was built under an existing courtyard in a Danish middle school and the domed ceiling/floor provided greatly improved accessibility/comfort for all.
- The mostly underground Sackler Gallery on the Mall in DC was redesigned to allow for natural lighting within and better visibility to the public.

A common theme in all of these projects was an ability to work within major physical constraints and limitations and to use them to their advantage rather than fight against them. For now they know that the new building site is small, it is located between the Rosslyn and Courthouse metros, and it may or may not be

adjacent to a 7/11. Also still unknown is how much of the current historic Wilson School will need to be preserved. BIG presented several design plans during the CIP process (including plans with outdoor terraces on every level, a cut-through building with a main atrium and access to all levels, and an underground gym with ceiling windows), but they are now ready to start from scratch and work with the BLPC to design the building that HB wants. To that end they intend to speak to as many members of the HB community as possible. Their motto is “Knowledge Driven Design” - meaning they want to KNOW as much as possible before making plans and to stay in constant touch throughout the design period to get as much feedback as they can. They are willing and eager to see/hear as many ideas as possible, including ones that may start out as a joke.

- John Chadwick then spoke, saying that the choice of BIG as a design firm indicated how excited and committed APS is to our new building. To a great extent, it was BIG’s innovative design plans presented during the CIP process that helped convince the community at large that a new building for HB was both possible and advantageous.

- Frank then asked anyone with questions or comments to form a speaker’s line.

- o Amir (6th) said he hoped there would be a small, warm, room that could be used for relaxation or quiet study.

- o John (6th) asked if BIG was creating a new design or using ones already made. Sean answered that they were planning on creating new designs 5X cooler than the ones they had already made.

- o Neal (6th) asked if our current building was going to be knocked down. Answer = no.

- o Bennett (12th) said that the Black Box was an important part of HB now. Would there be a Black Box in the new school? Sean said that whatever was important to us would be there.

- o Margaret (12th) asked how the plans would incorporate the historic Wilson School. Sean answered that as soon as a final decision is made, they will adjust their plans accordingly. His understanding is that even if some preservation is required, it will only be the 1910 portion of the building which isn’t very large.

- o Eleanor said that she had read the entire school board report and had learned that the pressed tin ceiling in the Wilson School was of particular historical significance. She also said that she was greatly looking forward to having her own terrace (!) but was worried about getting the classroom sufficiently dark when necessary. Sean answered that the terrace ideas were not a promise (!) and said that means would be incorporated to ensure darkness when needed.

- o Maya (9th) asked about the new field sizes. Sean answered that the WRAPS group (Western Rosslyn Area Planning Study) was considering a variety of field proposals, but that BIG considered them a high priority and had assigned a special team to work on them.

- o Miranda (8th) asked what the definite plans were for this building while we’re still here. Scott (APS) answered that a different architectural team was working on those plans and affirmed that they would be sensitive to our needs during the process.

- o Amir (6th) said that a lot of 6th graders were worried about losing the wall paintings that are such a big part of HB. Sean answered that they were learning how important those paintings were and would make sure satisfactory plans were made.

- o John (6th) said that many APS schools look the same. He wondered if the new HB would be the same color as all the rest of the schools. Sean answered that he could absolutely guarantee that the new building would not look like any other Arlington school!

- o Leo (6th) asked about water getting trapped in the fields making them end up muddy like everywhere else. Sean answered that proper drainage would be a priority.

- o Dave Soles wondered about the necessity of surrounding the field(s) with a chain link fence to prevent balls and Frisbees from falling onto the street and asked about the proposed positioning of the fields. Scott (APS) answered that the fields would work regardless of which street they faced, and that no balls would escape onto Wilson Blvd.

- o Miles (10th) asked about student and teacher parking. Sean answered that sufficient parking would be provided under the school.

A **motion** was proposed and passed to close the speaker’s list.

- o Lizzie (12th) asked how eco-friendly the new building would be. Sean answered that the goal was to build a net zero building, but budget constraints might prevent that. However, it would be as eco-friendly as possible as this was a main priority.

- o Bill Podolski first reminded everyone (again!) that “Footloose” was opening and encouraged the presenters to attend, assuring them that Eleanor would see to their tickets. He then asked about plans for the new auditorium, given the importance of good acoustics, etc. Sean answered that the BIG firm was assigning about 20 different teams to the HB project, and experts would be included or consulted for all such important

matters.

o Duncan (7th) said that we now have really good music and chorus rooms - will we have them in the new building? Sean answered that we will get whatever is important to us because it is their job to build the building we want.

o Mark Dodge spoke about the perhaps conflicting challenges of building a school building and respecting our school's unique culture. Our students want and need free flowing space for small clusters - these are critical for maintaining our culture. As a physics teacher, however, he said he was very excited about the opportunity for dropping things from a great height in a new, vertical building and envisioned a several-story-high Foucault Pendulum greeting him when he entered.

(Below is a link to BIG's website where some of their past work can be seen.

<http://www.big.dk/#projects>)

Consent Items

- Human trafficking documentary to be shown in the auditorium on Feb 12 - tabled.

Motions - none

Chair: Amanda Hayes

Co-Chair: Adam Sherinian

Secretary: Amanda Hayes