

**Official Minutes of the
Oak Park Board of Education District 97
260 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois
July 10, 2018 Meeting**

**This is a special meeting of the Board of Education with members of the
Facilities Advisory Committee. The meeting was held at
Longfellow Elementary School, located at 715 N. Highland Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois.**

President Spurlock called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Spurlock, Spatz, Liebl, Broy, Breymaier, and Datta
Absent: O'Connor
Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Carol Kelley, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations Paul Starck-King, Assistant Superintendent for HR Laurie Campbell, Senior Director of Buildings and Grounds Jeanne Keane, and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier

SPECIAL
REPORTS

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LINCOLN/LONGFELLOW ADDITIONS DISCUSSION

President Spurlock welcomed Facilities Advisory Committee (FAC) members Paul May (chairperson) and Dirk Danker to share an update on the Longfellow addition plans. May started by explaining the purpose of the FAC committee.

LONGFELLOW SCHOOL ADDITION OPTIONS

Cost \$11,102,545 excluding Life-Safety and Temperature Control, or exterior (green space) needs.

Jennifer Costanzo from STR Architects reported that the demographics study indicated that roughly five classrooms would be needed over time at Longfellow. The architects performed an analysis of the space and were able to identify some repurposing of space. They are recommending modification to the northwest side of the building to include a Kindergarten and increasing the size of the multipurpose room. At the southwest end of the building they recommended reworking some of the space to help with Special Education and storage needs. An elevator would be included toward the south central part of the building that would access all floors.

A hallway would be created along the second floor POD area to access the new space. The second floor addition would include five new classrooms, the learning center would be updated much like it was at Holmes School. The art room would be able to open up and be used for multi-purpose when needed. The third floor would need an additional chairlift from the elevator space to access the southeast side of the floor, and acoustics would be added to the music room.

Costanzo explained that other locations were considered for the addition, but the other locations were all more challenging spaces to work with and would be more costly.

Jeanne Keane reported that a meeting was held today about the scope of the site, and she reported that the team is looking at ways to relocate the outdoor play structure.

Costanzo reported that another accessibility study will be completed to assure that all toilets are ADA accessible. Many staircases will be replaced with ramps, and areas of rescue will be identified. Additionally, the construction will include rightsizing some of the Special Education classrooms, moving the band room to the third floor and repurposing some of the current spaces. Costanzo reported that all of the principal's concerns were met except enlarging the auditorium, as that cannot be accomplished.

The public was invited to comment and ask questions at this time. Interest was expressed in knowing the full cost of the project. President Spurlock explained that the cost is estimated at \$11,100,000, not including the Life Safety

LONGFELLOW SCHOOL ADDITION OPTIONS (Continued)

work or HVAC upgrades. She explained that the budget for the complete job is difficult to determine because there are incremental costs included.

Peter Kuhn from Bully and Andrews joined Costanzo at the table.

Another public comment noted that the multipurpose room taking up a lot of playground space. Concern was expressed about where kids will play if the space is utilized for the building. Interest was expressed at considering the use of the garden area for greenspace; however, further discussion determined that using the garden area could have supervision issues as it is not located in the same general area as the playground. Concern was expressed about the loss of the trees in the playground area and the kids playing in the hot afternoon sun, and if a warming area might be considered. Costanzo assured the community that consideration will be given to the green space.

Some community members express concern about the location of the addition and asked if the Board gave consideration to building in the parking lot area or around the dome. One community member asked if the Board considered purchasing other properties to gain addition space. President Spurlock responded by sharing that the only other option would be to not expend the building at all. May explained why the northeast corner of the building was chosen as the location for the addition.

Interest was expressed in understanding where the additional HVAC equipment will be housed. Costanzo explained that upright Uni-Vents will be installed in the classrooms and there may be a rooftop unit above the multipurpose room.

Interest was expressed in knowing if an additional floor above the current gymnasium was considered, as this would free up the playground space. Kuhn explained that from a schedule standpoint and timeline, an addition above the gymnasium is not feasible. He explained that additional foundation support would be required and would be costly. He also explained that a second floor addition on top of the existing structures, because of their age, would be challenging.

Interest was expressed in knowing how the addition will effect capacity and if the district could look at a longer range demographics study. It was noted that a long-term demographics study would be difficult to prepare because if the district looks out more than five years, the children are not even born yet; however, the construction will meet the current needs.

A community member suggested shutting down Jackson Boulevard so the children could have access to the field on the other side of the street. President Spurlock explained that closing a street may take years to coordinate.

Interest was expressed in knowing who is looking at the long-term plans for the schools and if an additional school might be needed. It was explained that enrollment is at the highest it has been in 30 years and some of the studies indicate that this is a blip.

A safety concern was expressed, suggesting that children will have to walk around the addition to access the playground. Costanzo explained that the drawings for the addition are not final and doors can still be included as needed.

Interest was expressed in knowing if the Board gave consideration to relocating the Pre-Kindergarten Program (PKP). It was explained that the PKP program only uses three very small rooms that have toilets and counters installed to meet the needs of the very young students. Relocating the program would be costly and would only free up about 1.5 classrooms.

Interest was expressed in seeing a concept drawing for a fourth floor addition. President Spurlock explained that the foundation was not built to support a fourth floor, but STR agreed to price out the option.

Concern was expressed that the Longfellow community only had one option to consider while Lincoln had several. May explained that FAC reviewed other concepts and held an initial discussion on both projects. The committee felt

LONGFELLOW SCHOOL ADDITION OPTIONS (Continued)

that the square footage and scope of the project dictated this option. He explained that the Lincoln options all came about because the first option was not cost efficient and the committee was looking for less expensive options.

Costanzo noted that some of the work could be started before the Board makes a decision on the location of the addition, but she reminded the Board that the school is already overpopulated. She noted that the size and shape of the multipurpose room has changed slightly, but the size is dictated by the number of classrooms on the second floor.

Concern was expressed that the playground faces the hot afternoon sun and the concept drawing indicates the loss of trees in that area. Interest was expressed in thoughts about an extra space for a warming area.

A community member expressed interest in seeing a breakdown of the budget lines, and the Board was asked to consider making the foundation of the addition strong enough to support additional floors.

LINCOLN SCHOOL ADDITION OPTIONS

The options for the Lincoln addition were reviewed, noting the following;

Option B

\$17,436,110 excluding Life-Safety and Temperature Control

First Floor

- Expand multipurpose room to the west
- Recapture kindergarten room for music or PE
- Every grade would have six sections
- Two story addition would be added on the northwest side of the existing structure
- The auditorium is not ADA accessible from the inside. The addition will fix that and include an area for an elevator

Second floor

- STEAM lab added
- Get rid of stairs

Third floor

- Two classrooms and elevator

Option C

\$10,905,475 excluding Life-Safety and Temperature Control

- No north addition
- Same addition to the west
- Library will be made smaller
- STEAM added
- Third floor same as option B
- Total of 32 classrooms
- Makes room for specials that currently do not have a room available to them

May reported that FAC asked the architects to consider another option, so option B1 was created.

Option B1

\$15,336,110 excluding Life-Safety and Temperature Control

- Two story addition on the northwest side
- Could add on at a later date
- Keep larger library
- Fifth floor would remain the same

LINCOLN SCHOOL ADDITION OPTIONS (Continued)

Dr. Kelley shared that the assumption for options B1 and C is that the class sizes will be a bit larger. Costanzo reported that the anticipated enrollment for 2018 is 695 for Lincoln, and 572 for Longfellow. The Board was reminded that the costs will increase by about 20 percent due to soft costs.

President Spurlock summarized noting that;

- Options B, B1 and C are still on the table at Lincoln
- Option B adds the west side addition fully
- Option B1 is more in line with the need
- Option C is pushing the need
- The cost difference between options C to B is about \$7,000,000

It was noted that if the Board chooses to go with any option other than B, there would be future expansion needed, noting that the cost of construction typically increases three to four percent each year. Additionally it was noted that the demography study shows that Lincoln would need one more classroom for next year and option C meets that need.

President Spurlock reported that she recently toured Longfellow and found several classrooms that are odd sized, and May noted that the band and art programs currently do not have rooms available for them.

Discussion took place regarding the timing of the groundbreaking. Kuhn noted that the district has two options; breaking ground in November (preferred) or March. Changing the groundbreaking date would also increase the bottom line as the figures would increase. Although one community member indicated that the best time to break ground is in the dead of winter, Danker noted that it does not apply to school projects because they rely on a specific schedule.

Community comments expressed concern about the number of questions being raised, suggesting that the district should take more time to vet the process.

It was noted that during the June 10, 2018 meeting option C included the cost of 18 teacher assistants. It was reported that this cost would only be necessary if enrollment hits the high end of the demographic number.

The Board was asked to consider changing the school boundaries to eliminate the population overage. President Spurlock shared that all the neighboring schools are over capacity, so changing the boundaries would not be a viable solution. She noted that changing the boundaries would take a lot of community conversations and a lot of thought. It was shared that boundaries are drawn purposely and intentionally to consider diversity, and changing the boundaries would not make a big enough difference to eliminate the construction need. It was suggested that grade level centers could also be considered.

Concern was expressed that the Lincoln teachers get the support they need during the coming school year.

Concern was expressed about the needs of the middle schools. It was explained that the middle schools are balancing out right now. They have some flexibility with their scheduling which allows them to utilize the classrooms differently.

Concern was expressed about construction being delayed because Lincoln currently does not have a Principal.

Interest was expressed in the use of mobile units. It was noted that mobile units have not been considered at this time.

Dr. Kelley shared that the average class size for Kindergarten – second grades is 20 students, and for third – fifth is 22 students. She noted that if there are only five section for these grades, the district would need to increase the class sizes.

LINCOLN SCHOOL ADDITION OPTIONS (Continued)

Board comments included the need to figure out how the operating dollars can be stretched to serve the extra children. It was noted that increased enrollment hurts the district more now than in the past, because the district is capped by CPI due to changes in the law.

Interest was expressed in knowing if the decision on Longfellow could be delayed allowing due diligence on other options, and if there might be a temporary solution to get over the blip for this year. President Spurlock reported that when Principal Dolezal met with the Board she indicated the need to fast track this process. It was reported that the process for Longfellow has already been delayed by a year due to the construction issues at Holmes School.

NEXT STEPS

On July 17, 2018, the Board will be asked to make a decision on how to move forward with both projects. It was noted that FAC recommended option B for Lincoln, noting that option B1 was not available in time for review by the committee.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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Lisa Reed, an Oak Park resident, thanked the Board for their service and for trying to be fiscally responsible in their decision making. She asked them to stick to it and not spend the entire amount of referendum dollars on these projects. Reed shared that she believes in the diversity of Oak Park, but expressed concern that the tax burden could be a threat to that. She suggested that the Board not sell any more bonds.

Jesse Gallagher, an Oak Park resident, thanked the Board, committee members, and PTO. He asked the Board to make sure that the outside needs for Longfellow are considered. He shared that the PKP numbers are not included in the total school population, but those children use the outside spaces too. Gallagher supported the design and suggested that the addition would be a net gain for the community. He asked the Board to be cautious of anything called “multipurpose”, as it is nothing more than a cafeteria. He suggested that STEAM rooms, instead of STEM just means that people are taking the art rooms away and squeezing them into another space. He asked the Board to stay on track and stay on schedule.

Matt Carmichael, an Oak Park resident expressed appreciation for the opening discussion. He expressed a bit of frustration because the community did not hear about the plan until recently and the Board is scheduled to vote on the plans next week. He noted that the outdoor space is key and critical, and asked for more due diligence in the next few weeks. He understands why some plans never came to fruition, but asked that the Board follow through and get the job done.

Rachel Maddox, an Oak Park resident read a letter from Sara Fuller, also an Oak Park resident. Fuller asked the Board to seek solutions that support the whole child. Fuller noted that she is a dancer and asked the Board to consider increasing the space to include room for the arts. She shared that the arts increase the ability to learn and combats obesity. She suggested that arts should be on par with the academics. Fuller noted that accessibility is important. She indicated that nothing has been done at Longfellow School since she was a student there back in the 1980’s. She shared that her father, who was in a wheelchair, was unable to visit her classrooms when she was there and the same problem still exists.

Josh Crisman, an Oak Park resident, shared that he has had a wonderful experience as a Longfellow parent. He has watched in amazement each year as classrooms have been created out of thin air. He shared examples of ways the building has been reconfigured throughout the years to meet the current needs.

President Spurlock thanked Paul May and Dirk Danker for attending this evening’s meeting and sharing the Facilities Advisory Committee’s recommendations.

ACTION ITEMS

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4.2 APPROVAL OF PERSONNEL ACTION

Spatz moved, seconded by Breymaier, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the Personnel Report as presented.

Ayes: Spatz, Breymaier, Spurlock, Datta, Liebl, and Broy

Nays: None
Absent: O'Connor
Motion passed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

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SESSION

Spatz moved, seconded by Datta, that the Board of Education move into Executive Session at 9:45 p.m. to discuss (Appointment, Employment, Compensation, Discipline, Performance, or Dismissal of Specific Employees or Legal Counsel 5 ILCS 120/2(C)(1)

Ayes: Spatz, Datta, Breymaier, Spurlock, Liebl, and Broy
Nays: None
Absent: O'Connor
Motion passed.

OPEN SESSION

OPEN SESSION

Breymaier moved, seconded by Broy, that the Board of Education move into Open Session at 10:48 p.m. All members of the Board were in agreement.

ADJOURNMENT

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There being no further business to conduct, President Spurlock declared the meeting adjourned at 10:48 p.m.

Board President

Board Secretary