

PICKERING MIDDLE SCHOOL PROJECT – Lynn, MA		MEETING MINUTES
PUBLIC FORUM NO. 1		May 18, 2016
	Location:	Pickering Middle School Auditorium
	Time:	7:00 PM

Attendees:

(Refer to the attached Sign-In List for Attendees of the Forum.)

I. Opening Remarks

1. Mayor Kennedy welcomed everyone to the Pickering Middle School Public Forum and expressed the City and School District’s appreciation for everyone’s interest in the Pickering Middle School Project and the time commitment required to be in attendance to share in and comment on the process. Mayor Kennedy introduced Dr. Latham, Superintendent of Schools.

II. Introduction of Public Official, School Building Committee Members and Project Team

2. Dr. Latham recognized elected City Officials and members of the School Committee, City Council and Project Team that were present at the Forum. She briefly explained the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) process and indicated that the Pickering Middle School Project was always part of the City/District’s Master Plan explaining that the Thurgood Marshall Middle School is now completed and is wonderful and functioning beautifully and that Pickering is now in the beginning stages of the MSBA process

III. Educational Programming

3. Dr. Latham discussed the current enrollment of the Pickering Middle School at approximately 650 students, the rapid growth in middle school enrollment needs in the District and the agreed to MSBA design enrollment of 1,660 students.
4. Dr. Latham noted that during the design process for the Thurgood Marshall MS project, there were many meetings with School Departments, staff and individuals within the School District and it was decided that for the City’s middle schools a “Cluster system” would be implemented as opposed to the ‘Junior High system”. This decision effects the teaching philosophy and the layout /design of the school. A “Cluster system” groups student in 120-student clusters meaning that all the classes for that group of student are located together. Student travel in a limited area except for specialty subjects. The “Cluster system” will therefore be utilized for the Pickering Middle School. A typical Cluster floor plan from Thurgood Marshall was presented. Clusters are individually color-coded and Project Rooms are between every two clusters along with Teacher Planning Rooms, Administrative Staff Office and restrooms. Photographs of the Thurgood Marshall clusters were shown. The thought is to transition students from the substantially separate elementary classroom structure to the limited interaction/movement of the middle school “cluster system” to the independent interaction/movement of the high school structure.
5. Specialties that make students excited about attending school will be included in the Pickering project as in the Thurgood Marshall. These include Cooking, Sewing, Band, Chorus, Woodshop, Drafting/CAD, Tech Lab, Art, Graphic Arts, TV Studio, Film Editing, Digital Composing, Drama, etc. Photographs of these spaces and others in the Thurgood Marshall were shown.
6. The next Public Forum will be held at the new Thurgood Marshall and tours will be conducted so that everyone can see firsthand the similar programs and spaces that will be provided for the Pickering School.
7. Life Skills programs will be provided for the Pickering School.

IV. MSBA Process and Project Schedule

8. Lynn Stapleton, Owner's Project Manager for the Pickering Project, explained that the goals of the project were to provide adequate enrollment capacity for the middle school level for all of the City of Lynn, to address the inadequacies of the existing Pickering School and to provide parity among all the District's middle schools.
9. It was explained that the MSBA process was an in-depth process to ensure that the final solution for a project is fully vet and is the most appropriate educational program and the most cost-efficient. The Pickering School is currently in the Preliminary Design Program phase which is the beginning stage. Milestone dates for the various project phases were outlined and a general overview of the overall schedule was presented.
10. The requirements of the Preliminary Design Program were outlined as follows: establish direction of the educational program; development of the educational plan; identification of viable sites; and in-depth analysis of those sites. The purpose is to fully evaluate all the options and to select the most comprehensively viable solution which will be further pursued in the Preferred Schematic Report that follows. Likewise, all the ensuing phases of the process were explained: Schematic Design; MSBA Board Approval; City Approval of Costs; Design Development; Early and Main Construction; and Project completion
11. The MSBA has required that we explore six project options. Each option was explained and included the following:
 - a. Repair and Renovation of the existing building.
 - b. Addition and Renovation to the existing building to accommodate a total of no more than 1,660 students.
 - c. Renovation to the existing building and construction of One New Middle School with both projects accommodating no more than 1,660 students.
 - d. Construction of One New School and an Addition to the Existing Breed Middle School with both projects accommodating a total of no more than 1,660 students.
 - e. Construction of One New School with a design enrollment of no more than 1,660 students.
 - f. Construction of Two New Middle Schools with both projects accommodating a total of no more than 1,660 students.
12. It was noted that the MSBA's reimbursement rate for the Pickering Project is 80%.
13. The two school option appears to be the most appropriate at this time as it would allow the District to put school where the students allowing one school to replace the existing Pickering School and one school to be placed in the West Lynn area where the majority of the students are located.

V. Demographics and Enrollment

14. The existing Pickering School is a 1917 building structured in a Junior High system. This makes a repair or renovation project to achieve a cluster system layout virtually impossible. Additions to the existing Pickering also does not make sense from an educational or cost impact.
15. The agreed upon design enrollment of 1,660 students is a District-wide need at the middle school level. The current Pickering School only has an enrollment of 650 and is likely to not need more than 720 in the next 10 years. Therefore, the remaining design enrollment needs to accommodate the remaining District-wide needs.

16. Need to decrease the enrollment at Breed School as it is currently at 1300+ students and was designed to accommodate approximately 960 students.
17. Putting all 1,660 students into one school requires a site large enough and one that is centrally located to where the students are. This would really stress any of the neighborhoods with available sites.
18. A 1,660 middle school would be one of the largest middle schools in the Commonwealth. It is not ideal from an education perspective and currently there is no ideal location to accommodate a school this size.
19. The growth in the City is in the West Lynn area. A map indicating the three middle school districts was presented which indicated the student populations in each district. The Pickering district is expected to decrease in student population while the Marshall district and Breed district is expected to significantly increase in student population. The West Lynn area which is directly situated between the Marshall and Breed districts is the most heavily populated.
20. These facts were the genius of the two school option which would locate a smaller school in the Pickering district and a larger school in the West Lynn area thus creating a fourth middle school district. This would allow the Breed School enrollment to be reduced to the design enrollment that the building was originally constructed to accommodate.

VI. Potential Site Options

21. Gene Raymond informed that twelve sites throughout the City were identified as potential site options. A map indicating the locations of these twelve sites was presented.
22. Sites were identified in the Pickering, Breed and West Lynn districts. There were no sites identified in the Marshall district.
23. Out of the twelve sites that were analyzed and vetted, there are three or four viable sites from a comprehensive criteria perspective.
24. The twelve sites were individually presented. Potential school building and site layouts were presented on each site as well as all permitting, environmental, geotechnical, flood plain or hazardous material implications at each site. The twelve sites include the following four sites in the Pickering District, two sites in the Breed District and six sites in the West Lynn District:
 - a. Site 1a – Existing Pickering School Site; Site 1b – Adjacent Magnolia Park Site (Pickering District)
 - b. Site 2 – Breed School Site (Breed District)
 - c. Site 3 – Parkland Avenue/Reservoir Site (Pickering District)
 - d. Site 4 – Union Hospital Site (Pickering District)
 - e. Site 5 – Federal Street Lot (West Lynn District)
 - f. Site 6 – Elmwood Avenue/GE Site 1 (West Lynn District)
 - g. Site 7 – Bennett Street/GE Site 2 (West Lynn District)
 - h. Site 8 – Summer Street/GE Field (West Lynn District)
 - i. Site 9 – Barry Park (West Lynn District)
 - j. Site 10 – McManus Field (West Lynn District)
 - k. Site 11 – Gallagher Park (Breed District)
 - l. Site 12 – Rockdale Avenue (Pickering District)
25. Permitting timelines for each site was discussed and range from three months (typical for sites) to twelve months at the Parkland Avenue and Magnolia Park sites.
26. Any sites that take parkland must get legislative approval and must replace the parkland taken elsewhere. Four sites require parkland replacement.

27. Flood plain issues exist on five of the sites: Pickering School/Magnolia Park site; Elmwood Avenue/GE 1 site; Bennett Street/GE 2 site; Summer Street/GE Field site; Barry Park site. The Federal Street site and the Bennett Street/GE 2 site have significant hazardous materials issues. Environmental/wetlands issue exist on three sites; Parkland Avenue/Reservoir site; Breed School site; and Rockdale Avenue site. Subsurface conditions exist at the Gallagher Park site.
28. Traffic impacts for each site was discussed along with the availability of bus routes for students to get to each site.
29. Impacts to the neighborhoods surrounding each site were discussed. Many of the sites were in tight neighborhoods.
30. Seven sites require eminent domain.
31. The two most appropriate sites identified were the McManus Field site in the West Lynn District and the Parkland Avenue/Reservoir site in the Pickering Districts. These two sites provide for the needs of the Pickering district and the West Lynn District most effectively.

VII. Public Comment

32. Peter Capano, Ward Six Councilor (101 Alley Street)

Mr. Capano noted that the McManus Field site had significant storm drainage issue surrounding the site. He indicated that there are City Water and Sewer Department has plans to mitigate the drainage issues and that the project if located at McManus Field would need to coordinate with the plans of the City Water and Sewer Department so that the drainage improvements could be done first.

Gene Raymond indicated that because the McManus Field site was in a tidal zone there was more flexibility on how to deal with the water issue. The site and building can be raised without having to replace floor plain area. He indicated the end of the site closest to the Lynn Votech School did not have drainage issue and the school and access to the school could potentially move more toward that end of the site. It was also noted that the access to the site for student was good.

Mr. Capano indicated that there were 600 apartments in the area so it is also a neighborhood and has some of the same neighborhood issues.

33. Joe

Joe indicated that the ballfields and McManus field are used heavily and have been for years.

Lynn Stapleton indicate that there was flexibility regarding the school siting and the surround space available around the site to replace the numbers of fields that currently exist at the site.

34. John (Magnolia Avenue)

John asked what the plans for the current Pickering School were.

Dr. Latham indicated that the District was looking at possibly using the school for Elementary or Preschool space. However, she did indicate that the Pickering School was not in good condition. Sisson Elementary School attached to Pickering would like to have the gym and space for other academic support space.

35. Jennifer Mancaniello

Ms. Mancaniello asked if both school would be completed at the same time.

Gene Raymond indicated that permitting timelines could cause one school to be able to start earlier than the other. Lynn Stapleton indicated that it would probably not be more than a four to six month head start. There are some advantages to phasing the starts. Both schools could be awarded to one Construction Manager and subcontractors could start on one site and transition to the second providing efficiencies with the construction process.

36. Joe Scanlon (236 Parkland Avenue)

Traffic is a concern at the Parkland Avenue/Reservoir site. How do you plan to deal with the traffic?

Gene Raymond indicated that cars/300-350 students coming from the northwest Pickering District would enter the site from Lynnfield Street/Averill Street and the remaining cars/300-350 students from the southeast Pickering District would enter the site from Richardson Road avoiding Wyoma Square and reducing traffic in that area. An in-depth traffic study will be conducted prior to making final site selection decisions.

Mr. Scanlon also noted that the Reservoir site was cemetery property. Mr. Scanlon also stated that the site was under the Cemetery Commission's jurisdiction.

Mike Dono Annvan stated that the Reservoir site was not designated as cemetery property and that it was designated for City purposes as confirmed by the City Solicitor. He also stated that the site was not under the Cemetery Commission's jurisdiction.

Mr. Scanlon noted that there were areas on the site plan of the Reservoir site that was noted as cemetery expansion.

Gene Raymond indicated that it was known that the cemetery was looking to possibly expand onto the Reservoir site so the available site area around the proposed school was shown as cemetery expansion. However, the site has significant ledge and it may be costly to use for burial plots.

37. Brian

Brian's understanding was that the Parkland Avenue/Reservoir site was to be used for cemetery expansion. He noted that within 5-10 years the current cemetery across Parkland Avenue would be full which means that burial within the City limits would no longer be possible without some provisions for expansion of the existing cemetery. He encourages the Committee to review this issue. He indicated in the 1980's the Cemetery commission sold the Reservoir site land along Averill Street.

Mike Donovan indicated that the property while sold by the Cemetery Commission belongs to the City and should not have been sold by the Cemetery Commission. In the 1980's, a title search may not have been performed. The City Solicitor did an extensive title search and confirmed the land belongs to the City.

38. Marianne Duncan (100 Commonwealth Road)

Given the correction that construction will start May of 2017 instead of the May 2016 shown, does this change the completion date of construction?

It is anticipated that the construction completion date would be in August 2019.

VIII. Closing

39. Dr. Latham indicated the next Public Forum will be June in the new Thurgood Marshall School so that everyone will get a chance to tour the building and see what is planned for the new school(s). The proposed date is June 22, 2016 but will be confirmed and advertised. Dr. Latham thanked everyone for their participation.