

**HOPKINTON SCHOOL DISTRICT  
FACILITY PLANNING COMMITTEE  
Meeting minutes January 25, 2006**

Present: Bob Gerseny, Joy Bloomfield, Marshall Rowe, Cindy Dobe, Curt Martin, Phil Wallingford, Bill Carozza, Michael Bessette, Dr. Val Aubry, Michelle Clark, Steve Chamberlin, Dr. Richard Ayers, Arnold Coda, Charlie Head, Katie Merrow, Byron Carr, Mark Stock and Marcy Bauers.

Bob began the meeting by relating a recent experience with his daughter who is a student at Hopkinton High School. Bob explained that she recently participated in a school project which required a “mock” presentation to the federal government recommending an increase or decrease in the Federal Reserve rate. He pointed out the many benefits of the course and stated that offerings of this caliber were not available when he was in high school. Thus highlighting the quality of educational programs and opportunities afforded students in Hopkinton.

Bob said he was recently asked what Dr. Ayers’ leaving would do to the facility planning process. While the original idea of doing a review of the buildings did come from Dr. Ayers, Bob continued, the individual efforts of the many people involved must be acknowledged. The collective efforts of all involved are what make the difference. The focus is currently on the work of the sub-committees. One sub-committee has discussed breaking into smaller, more specific groups. Sharing information between sub-committees would be beneficial to avoid overlapping or doubling of efforts. The purpose of this meeting is to allow groups to share information and address their individual charges. This occurred at the last meeting where it was decided to postpone the presentation to voters until March 2007. Sub-committee chairs are asked to give updates and characterize what the conversations have been.

Data Analysis and Planning - Katie Merrow began by saying that one concern discussed by her group was approaching the town at the annual meeting without prior discussion and perhaps having four voices heard. Katie continued that the enrollment and migration numbers can be hypothesized for the next five years, but beyond that it is supposition. To date the group has reviewed available data from Doug Brown and Russ Thibault as well as standard projection methods to gain an accurate understanding. Their research has resulted in a projection of enrollment declining slightly, which is also evident throughout the state. Katie noted however, that migration into Hopkinton may be a factor. Currently, the team is looking at employment data for Concord to see what impact that might have. The general demographic shift is caused by the baby boomers children growing up. The migration rates do not seem to counteract the baby boomer issue. Special education data was requested by the district to determine the needs and use of space. The percentage of special education students in our population may change our space needs. Marshall asked if, within the projected numbers, a variance exists in the K-12 demographic. He also asked about potential challenges developing from surges and dips in particular grades. Katie responded that all of the information compiled was an educated guess but, an even smaller snapshot would be unreliable. It was questioned whether there appears to be a higher decline in the lower grades. Katie answered that there does. Higher priced housing generally results in the children from those homes being older. Steve asked about the “build it and they will come” responses citing what has happened in other communities after building projects have been completed. Since July, Hopkinton Middle High School has had 32 new students. There are more new students this year than there have been in the past. Charlie asked if the population increase was looked

at overall, beyond the number of children. Katie said it was. Marshall pointed out that Concord Hospital is a large employer in the area and is growing. Phil asked if the aging population could be translated into the tax base and how it might be affected. Katie said that the population is aging and that older persons will be at town meetings and voting. Kim asked if the planning board had been contacted regarding developments. Katie said the group was looking at growth. Katie mentioned her concern about capacity, as it can be defined differently. The state may have one way of determining capacity, i.e. square footage, while the District policy may use a different measure. Arnold pointed out that it seemed to be the programs that are driving the need for more space. He continued that Governor Lynch has a proposal to require students to remain in high school until age 18 which, if passed, would probably have a financial impact. Bob suggested that the data analysis group keep going forward with their research acknowledging that there may not be a concrete answer.

Educational Specifications – Charlie said his sub-committee is looking at educational objectives to determine where they are being met or falling short. His sub-committee has received valuable input from educators, administrators, Marinace Architects and building principals, from which a list of potential projects will be assembled. Next week his sub-committee will divide into smaller groups. They will be reviewing the compiled list to determine which of them apply to this sub-committee. After consideration, the group feels that the following needs do not fall under the ‘educational specifications’ sub-committee: 1) Window replacement, 2) Parking/traffic flow at HMS and MSS, 3) Future needs – server rooms are not ventilated, are overcrowded, and are subject to system disruptions and the potential for the equipment heating up and damaging itself, 4) Handicapped issues at both MSS and HMHS. These items will be looked at but may be deemed an issue for another sub-committee. It was also mentioned that the HVAC system in the art room is inadequate causing the temperature to rise to over 100 degrees.

Community Partnership – Bob shared information from Gayle Kimball which noted that her sub-committee has been reviewing the task force charge and the initial planning idea. The four main areas of focus have been the full-size gymnasium, multi-purpose room, track and combined town and school district offices. Attention has also been given to how to involve the community at large in the discussion. The group plans on asking the FPC for recommendations about circulating the initial planning/ideas document and asking people to call in-email feed-back to task force members. They would like to develop a list of those who currently use or are interested in using school facilities and send them a letter to receive feedback. Potential groups on the list would be: HYSA, Hopkinton Recreation Department, Hopkinton Community Center, The Boys and Girls Club of Hopkinton, etc. It was also mentioned that information could be disbursed through the Town Lines. Bob pointed out that it is difficult to embrace the community before we have a concrete direction because a conceptual process can be hard to grasp. Michael suggested sitting with people and asking if their individual needs are being met. Arnold asked if a definition of what community means has been determined. He continued by asking if it included the economic community, business community, Rotary, Lion’s Club, etc.

Finance – Katie asked Michelle if state funding is available for projects. Michelle replied that funding alternatives have been looked at including Capital Improvement Bonds and regular bonds. Impact fees are also of great interest and she has been trying to obtain more information. The town has a meeting scheduled on February 8, 2006, where impact fees will be presented. State funding amounts to 30% of the project amount. Bob said that eventually the group would need to go through ideas on finance and also gauge the ability of the community to finance projects.

Construction/Life Safety – Mark said that a few of the glaring issues are: the wheelchair lift, gym, and asbestos tile at MSS, and the HMHS entrance. He continued that the HVAC and windows at HMS may not be a life safety issue. However, he will add the traffic flow/parking concerns along with the server rooms overheating issues to his current list. Michelle shared that disability expert, Cheryl Killan, had recently toured the high school facility. Cheryl will write a report on findings at the high school and will also come back on February 20, 2006 to tour another Hopkinton school. Byron mentioned the practicality of reviewing school parking lot traffic issues in the evening and on weekends. He also suggested there be a separate parking area and entrance for the elderly to eliminate potential problems.

Bob thanked the group for their input and looks forward to further opportunities to share information. He stated the importance of having a credible presentation for the community at the meeting in March. This presentation would not include a recommendation, but would primarily be a status/update of issues for the purpose of providing meaningful information to the community. Bob pointed out that it is important to finalize recommendations before May or June. He feels that in order to engage the community in the fall, we need to show forward progress. Arnold pointed out that moving forward in May or June may not give the new Superintendent an opportunity to provide his or her input. Katie asked Bob for specifics regarding the presentation in March. Bob replied that the presentation in March would not be a report out, but more of an integrated piece to get the six or seven major issues before the community.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Submitted by Marcy Bauers