

Overview

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. by Mr. Jonathan Dennehy, Selectman and member of the Study Committee. Jonathan stated that the purpose of the public forum was to identify community building needs that potentially could be incorporated into the JR Briggs renovation study. Mr. Dennehy then introduced Mr. Dave Christianson, Chairman of the School Committee, who gave an overview of a four (4) year process that is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2010 with a final recommendation on the JR Briggs renovation. Mr. Christianson then introduced Mr. Mike Zapantis, Superintendent of Schools, who outlined a five phase process governing school renovations as defined by the Mass School Building Authority (MSBA). The process has 31 discrete steps and to date twelve (12) steps have been completed. The next eight (8) steps cover the feasibility study through the town meeting vote which could be held in the first quarter of calendar year 2010. The remaining eleven (11) steps cover the construction phase.

Per Superintendent Zapantis, based upon discussions with the MSBA, if the town proceeds with either a renovation or replacement of the JR Briggs School without any community functionality incorporated into the design, the town can expect the state to cover 53.53% of the project cost. At the discretion of the MSBA*, that reimbursement percentage could be increased if community functions are incorporated into the design. The purpose of this Public Forum was to determine if communities needs exist and if said needs could be incorporated.

Overview

A community need could be incorporated into the project in two fashions as shown in Figure 1 below.

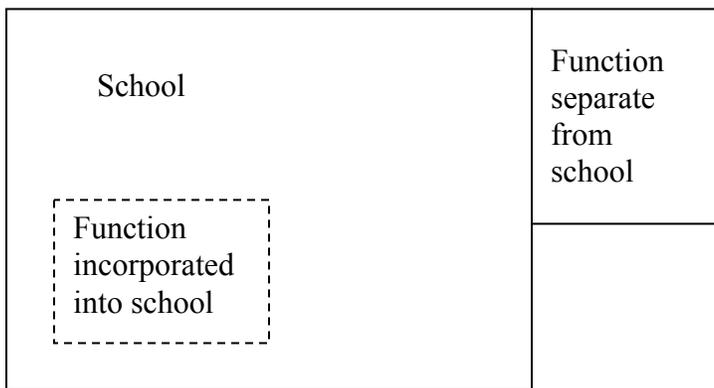


Figure 1

*See Note 1 from Superintendent Zapantis (Page 3)

Notes from Public Forum on JR Briggs Renovation
June 29, 2009

The large rectangle in Figure 1 represents the school without any community functions.

The dashed rectangle within the School denotes a community function that is synergistic with a school function. In this case the school function is expanded beyond a “school only” design to include the community need. Incorporating a pre-school through Grade 8 children’s library within the school library is one such example.

The smaller solid rectangle denotes a community function that separate from any school function. In this case the community need is included with the school project to leverage the school infrastructure such as heat, fire protection, etc. with the net effect of lowering the construction and operating cost of the community function when compared to a standalone solution. Including a Senior Center within the school project is one such example.

Two of the main drivers to integrate community function within the school project are:

1. Leverage the town’s investment in the building by expanding the use of the facility.
2. Assuming that the MSBA reimbursement percentage for the school is increased by integrating community needs into the combined project*, the higher reimbursement percentage can be used to help fund the community need. The following hypothetical example explains this opportunity.
 - a. Assume a “school only” project cost is \$23 million. With MSBA covering 53.53% of the cost, the town’s share would be \$10.7 million.
 - b. If community needs were incorporated into the school project sufficient to bring the MSBA share to 60%, the town’s share of the “school” portion of the project would be reduce to \$9.2 million. The savings of \$1.5 million would be used to fund all or part of the cost for the community need.

The following general questions were posed during the Public Forum:

- How is the first cost of shared infrastructure such as heat, electrical, plumbing, etc. apportioned between school cost and community cost?
- How is the operating cost of shared infrastructure such as heat, electrical, plumbing, etc. apportioned between school cost and community cost?
- What if any are the constraints on access for community use areas that are:
 1. Integrated within school (dashed rectangle in Figure 1)
 2. Separate from school (small solid rectangle in Figure 1)

It was stated during the Public Forum that “off-ramps” are included as part of the feasibility study process to exclude from consideration any community need from further consideration.

The following three community needs were explored during the Public Forum:

1. Dedicated Senior Center separate from school
2. Children’s Library integrated within school library
3. Multi-use community space

The notes from the discussion of each of these needs are presented below.

*See Note 1 from Superintendent Zapantis (Page 3)

Notes from Public Forum on JR Briggs Renovation
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*Note 1 (Received from Superintendent Zapantis subsequent to meeting)

“With respect to the discussion regarding the John R. Briggs Feasibility Study and the potential design to include a senior center, children’s library or multi-use community space, the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) has not established firm guidelines for percentage reimbursement points. It remains uncertain at this time if the MSBA will reimburse dollars for these expenses or increase our reimbursement rate. Early on, the MSBA was encouraging a community approach and now they seem to be encouraging consolidation of schools into a regionalization model. The **agreed upon** solution (Phase IV) which includes project scope and budget agreement will be the determining factor as to whether the MSBA will include the cost of these community ideas as reimbursable or whether the MSBA will increase percentage points for community use. Therefore regardless of what the MSBA decides, if town dollars, matching grants, or other means of revenue were to become available, it would seem that there would be an economy of scale while renovating or rebuilding Briggs to include other potential community uses of the building. We have no exact answer in terms of what the MSBA will say or do with respect to community use. The Authority is an organization that is evolving every day and a very different bureaucracy from the previous Department of Education building program. The best we can do is make our case and attempt to convince the MSBA that community inclusion into the design of Briggs is an important part of the education program.”

Dedicated Senior Center Separate from School

Pros

- Interaction between seniors and children
- New facility
- Potential access to school gymnasium & fields
- Continued learning experience
- Access to technology (computers, audio/visual aids, etc.)
- Lower operating costs
- Avoids costly improvements to VMS (roof, heating system, etc.)

Cons

- Safety concern for school children
- Disposition of VMS

Needs (partial)

- Kitchen separate from school cafeteria
- Feeling that it is “their” space

Precedents

- Swampscott High School and Senior Center
- Joint COA/School visit to Swampscott is planned
 - A Trip Report will be published and distributed

Grant Opportunities

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) may be available
 - Requires that COA maintains control of senior center
 - “Bid Ready” drawing package required prior to grant application

Children's Library Integrated within School

Pros

- Need exists
- Might foster greater parental involvement at library if library integrated in school vs. at current site
- Library space might be more developmentally appropriate for pre-school children through Grade 8 than exists at current site.

Cons

- Cost of operating two community libraries

Needs

- Not developed in this Public forum

Precedents

- Unknown at this time

Grant Opportunities

- Unknown at this time

Multi-Use Community Space

Candidate Uses

- General meetings for town government boards and committees
- Voting
- Civic Groups (Lions, Rotary, etc.)
- PTO
- Scouts
- Community Access TV
- Emergency shelter for town citizens (for December ice storm-like events)
- Youth sports
- Senior Center

Pros

- Reduced operating costs
- Availability of technology and presentation aids
- Community use of fields & gymnasium

Cons

- Who is in charge of facility
- Scheduling of facility
- Higher facility maintenance costs
- Higher traffic in school zone
- Construction and operating costs

Needs (partial)

- Kitchen facilities

Precedents

- Unknown at this time

Grant Opportunities

- Unknown at this time