

CLIENT: HUNTINGTON UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
PROJECT: LONG RANGE BUILDING PLANNING COMMITTEE
BBS FILE NO.: 07-161

COMMITTEE MEETING – HELD AT HUNTINGTON HIGH SCHOOL
AUDITORIUM 7PM

DATE: July 13, 2010 (Meeting #2)
SUBJECT: LONG RANGE BUILDING PLANNING
MTG. INITIATED BY: BBS & B.O.E.
PURPOSE: TO BEGIN COMMITTEE DISCUSSION OF LONG TERM . . .
BUILDING PLANNING
PREVIOUS MEETING DATE: *Not Applicable*

PREVIOUS SUBJECT: *See Meeting #1 Minutes*
PREVIOUS PURPOSE: *See General Notes below*
DETERMINATIONS MADE: *N/A*

GENERAL NOTES:

Analyze long term needs and solutions for (K-6) including discussions of availability, functionality & costs of various building options including existing, previously owned and potentially new school buildings, additions & alterations. Ascertain option with highest potential level of public support that also meets the needs of Huntington UFSD students.

LONG RANGE BUILDING PLANNING COMMITTEE

John J. Finello- Superintendent
David Grackin- Assistant Superintendent
Joe Giani-Assistant Superintendent
Ken Card- Assistant Superintendent
Shelly Marino- Principal, Southdown Primary
Margaret Evers- Principal, Jefferson Primary
Marlon Small- Principal, Flower Hill Primary
Marsha Neville- Principal, Washington Primary
Mary Stokkers- Principal, Jack Abrams Intermediate
Jarrett Stein- Principal, Woodhull Intermediate
John Amato- Principal, Finley Middle
Carmela Leonardi- Principal, Huntington High
Julissa Garris-Shade- Teacher, Flower Hill Primary
Karen Fischer- Teacher, Jefferson Primary
Joanne Cicio- Teacher, Southdown Primary
Georganne White- Teacher, Washington Primary
Laraine Schirripa- Teacher, Jack Abrams Intermediate
Diane Grassi- Teacher, Woodhull Intermediate
Michele Kustera- Parent, Flower Hill Primary
Cathy Ribando- Parent, Washington Primary
Jeanine Mulroy- Parent, Southdown Primary
Jennifer Hebert- Parent, Jefferson Primary
Patrick Giles- Parent, Jack Abrams Intermediate
Paul Eidle- Parent, Woodhull Intermediate
Carrie Nicodem- Parent, Finley Middle
Kevin Thourborne- Parent, Huntington High
Don Kiley- Parent, SEPTA
Jennifer Casey- District Resident
Crystal White- District Resident
Christian Wenk- District Resident
Barbara Wanamaker- District Resident
Richard Oehmler- District Resident
Paul Rispoli- Director of Facilities
Georgia McCarthy- Health, PE, & Athletics
Chris Bene- Trustee
John Paci- Trustee

R. Smith, AIA, LEED AP - BBS

K. Walsh, AIA, LEED AP - BBS

Jason Lee – BBS

Sandra Ehle – BBS

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BBS Principal, Roger Smith, AIA, LEED AP

- Reiterated “ground rules,” This is the “Long Range Building Planning Committee. We are having a meeting. The conversation is for committee members only.
- We have an agenda for tonight which has been changing everyday and almost every hour during the past week due to things happening in the community.
- At first we were going to tell you all that happened at the Board of Education (BOE) meeting a week ago based on our last committee meeting. That involved Woodhull as housing 4th and 5th graders and making JA a 6th grade center. But over the past 72 hours there have been many discussions.
- What we believe makes the most sense for you tonight as a group is to make decisions. Is Jack Abrams in or out of the long term equation?
- The floor is now open for you to say what you think and how you feel about where the process is and how you see the future of the district moving.

General Discussion:

Committee member stated that the safety issues in Huntington Station need to be fixed. Closing Abrams will destroy the community. If we lose one school it will be down hill from there.

Roger Smith stated that he has spoken with the Suffolk County Police Department and the County Executive. Information has been provided from that meeting.

Committee member stated that the violence has gotten out of control. Abrams needs to be safe before children return.

Roger Smith stated that we are here to decide on a long term solution and give it to the Board of Education.

Committee member stated that the community will feel abandoned if Abrams is closed. However, Abrams is an unsafe environment for our children. The Town needs to take action.

Committee member stated that the problems are safety issues. A long term solution can not be decided on unless a short term solution is given. We can't decide to close Abrams without taking into consideration other factors. Abrams is one of the best facilities we have. There will be a ½ mile zone that will be effected by down zoning the area.

Roger Smith stated that BOE voted to do an updated demographic study. It will only recognize the current zoning. School buildings are not built all at once; they were built as they were needed. This is the process if Avalon Bay comes to fruition.

Committee member stated that the town needs to make a decision on whether or not Avalon Bay is being built so we can plan accordingly.

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Roger Smith stated there are two reports that have come out publicly that describe the number of children that will come out of Avalon Bay, if it happens. One report was prepared by an Environmental engineering firm for the applicant. The other was prepared by the Long Island Housing Partnership that took 80% of all the housing projects across long island. They found out what school district the kids were going to and where they were coming from. What they came up with was the average child per household was 0.17 that equals 82 new students for Avalon Bay.

Committee member stated that this is a police and law enforcement issue. The committee can not decide on a long range plan until law enforcement decides what they are going to do.

Committee member stated that we are deciding on a long term solution as a community to better inform the BOE's ultimate decision. If Abrams is closed for September where do we house the students and how do you utilize Abrams are the questions as a committee we need to answer.

Roger Smith stated that from a meeting with Steve Levy, Jay Finello, and Mr. Dwyer on July 12, 2010. What was discussed is how the police department was going to implement there services in and around the Abrams property. A memorandum entitled "Huntington Station Initiative" was proposed which stated as following:

- The 2ND precinct would monitor media sites to watch for violent events before they occur.
- 4 police officers would be assigned to the area; never less than 2 will be in the area.
- If funding is made available, then another class of police officers will be implemented.

Mr. Smith further stated, per Mr. Levy's memorandum, that the funding that will allow for another class of police officers is dependant on if the John J. Foley Nursing facility is sold.

Committee member stated they have a hard time believing Mr. Petrone and Steve Israel. Mr. Petrone has stated that more resources than ever have been implemented, such as cameras and a Police changing stations in Abrams. And the violence continues.

Committee member stated that Northport had the same issues and their resolution was to utilize the school as offices for a source of revenue.

Committee (BOE) member asked Roger Smith to explain to what is actually going to be housed at Abrams in the fall? How much office is freed up at the High School? How many directors will be housed at Abrams?

Roger Smith showed a PowerPoint slide that illustrated Abrams housing the 6TH grade and administration. He stated, if Abrams closes as a school it will more than likely house administration, then we need to decide where 6th grade will be housed.

Committee member stated that knowing if Abrams is open or closed will enable us to make a long term planning decision.

Committee member stated that Violence has decreased during the day due to known police presence. Police presence is not recognized at night. We need the same police presence in the day as at night. If violence is not removed from the community all schools are at risk of being unsafe.

Committee member stated that we need to remove the children from the unsafe area temporarily until it is made safer. In order to make the township safer we need to come together as a community. Removing the school is abandoning those students that go home to that area at night

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Committee member stated that there was a block party without a permit. There was no police presence to say its time for these kids to go home. They were out until 2AM with no police presence.

Committee member stated that we need to make it known that there is a constant and consistent police presence throughout the school year and recesses during the day and at night.

Committee member stated closing Abrams feels like we would just be abandoning the community. We need to do what ever we can as a community to fix the community.

Committee member stated we can't use our children to shield the community. We need to all fight together to get piece of mind that our children are safe going to this school. Shield the community with adults in Abrams not children.

Committee member stated she sent out an e-mail before the recent events at Abram, with a question saying "Would you float a hypothetical \$20 billion dollar bond to add a 6th grade wing to Woodhull if it added \$100 on to your taxes". Every single person that responded (325) said yes they will support.

Committee member responded the e-mail went only to the people that that committee member knew and that they did not receive this e-mail.

Another committee member replied it was sent out to several schools with similar responses. Admittedly it was not a diverse group of people. It was sent out to members of the PTA that already had some knowledge of the situation due to coming to BOE meetings. It did not go out to a lot of people but it did go out to people that vote.

Committee member stated the e-mail did go out to 3 of the primary schools. It did not get as much of a response. Nor did it go out to as many people but they received the same responses. They also have been a supporter of Abrams staying open. The event of the other night has really got them thinking. Not that they are saying to close the school, but there are other options. Statistically when you get a response like this you can figure out what the vote will be. The vote is to get the kids out like it or not. We have to ask the question what we will do 8 weeks from now. We can say all we want, but then where do we put them? Are there options? If the kids aren't going to be in Abrams in September, where are the students going to be?

Roger Smith responded saying that he would like to address the statistics that were being thrown around. Historically when bond referendums are going out, independent companies do polls to see where the vote is heading. There was a bond vote last spring that everyone felt had a 50/50 chance of moving along, it failed by 1,000 votes. What is the best solution long term? The bond was defeated on the internet. It had nothing to do with what was being proposed. There was a completely different political event happening in the community that 1,000 people wrapped there arms around and so defeated the referendum. And now they are stuck with the question, what do we do now that we voted that down. You need the majority to support the issue. You as a committee need to have the majority agree and go to the community so they see that.

Committee member stated that we know there are crucial space problems. If we make the decision to close Abrams. We need a place for these children to go. We need to know if there is a flexible plan that will allow us to preserve our space which will also help us if there are more students in the future and allow us to protect our space for the time being.

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Roger Smith stated that if a decision is made to either keep Abrams open or closed then as the designer we can then say we have "X" number of buildings to move the students around in. But we are making this decision for the long term. If these decisions are not made now then it will just take longer for them to be completed.

Committee member asked if Abrams is used the first floor for administration and the second floor offices rental space. Could we then take back the space as a school again over a period of time?

Roger Smith responded yes.

Committee member stated that the committee should vote in order to advise the BOE, since they have the ultimate decision.

Committee member stated that if Abrams is closed the Town will not feel that they need to keep as much of a police presence in the community and the community will suffer.

Committee member responded that the children can not shield the community. It is not fair.

Committee member asked what about the children who go home to that community at night? If you remove the school from the area the police presence will go.

Committee member stated we need to come together as a community and make sure the police presence stays consistent no matter the time of day or season.

Committee member stated we can not make a decision on the long term without a decision being made on the short term.

Committee member asked if kids will be in Abrams how do we make it safer? Can we build a wall around it? Can we do that?

Roger Smith responds you don't have the money right now nor could you get the approval in time.

Committee (BOE) member we have spoken with Steve Levy and Mr. Petrone and everybody points fingers and nothing is getting done. This is unacceptable. We should be able to feel safe. The BOE should call an emergency meeting to discuss whether Abrams stays open or closes.

Committee (BOE) member further states if the primary schools are made into K-4 then the class sizes get bigger and the programs will suffer. Abrams needs to be utilized, possibly as an alternative high school. A plan needs to come to fruition. The BOE needs to meet first.

Committee member stated that what happens in September affects the long term plan.

Committee member stated that we have Long term options. Abrams stays on the table and becomes a 6th grade center, 4th grade pushed out of Woodhull, 6th grade at Finley. The committee needs to decide what the best options are and give them to the BOE so they see what the committee at least wants and can take it into consideration.

Committee member asks for class sizes for September.

Roger Smith responded there is no space if you take them out of Abrams to keep to the class size policy you have now.

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Roger Smith stated we need to realize whenever 14 classrooms are added to a building, a gym station must be added while auditorium and cafeteria spaces must comply as well.

Committee member asked if Finley could be expanded.

Roger Smith responded yes. We have drawings that were done 2 years ago that show an addition on Finley to add a 6th grade.

Committee member stated that it would be more beneficial to see plans of possible configurations.

Committee member stated that we need to make a decision and go forward. We can't make a decision and then decide to go back again.

Roger Smith stated that the options that have been presented if Abrams closes are:

- Primary schools house K-4 and Woodhull houses 5 -6 however class size will get bigger.
- Finley becomes 6-8 and Woodhull 4-5 which involves a costly addition at Finley.

Roger Smith further stated based upon the committee's discussion tonight it appears a long term decision can not be made until a short term one is decided on by the BOE.

Committee member stated that although there have been options either utilizing or not utilizing Abrams as a school. The primary schools are very diverse for a reason and that needs to be considered when rearranging students at schools. The district was court ordered in 1972 that its primaries needed to be diverse.