

CLIENT: HUNTINGTON UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
PROJECT: LONG RANGE BUILDING PLANNING COMMITTEE
BBS FILE NO.: 10-252

COMMITTEE MEETING – HELD AT HUNTINGTON HIGH SCHOOL
AUDITORIUM 7PM

DATE:	August 10, 2010
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:	<i>Not Applicable</i>

PREVIOUS SUBJECT:	<i>See Meeting #3 Minutes</i>
PREVIOUS PURPOSE:	<i>See General Notes below</i>
DETERMINATIONS MADE:	<i>N/A</i>

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

- Roger Smith stated that the BOE has decided to allow the committee a more relaxed schedule. If the committee can not reach a decision by September then more time will be allowed.
- The next meeting is set for August 24th, 2010. At that time the committee will focus on choosing a voting method to determine final configurations and also a timeline of when they should present the final configuration(s) plan to the BOE.
- 41 options were presented at the last committee meeting on July 13, 2010. The committee has removed 5 configurations leaving 36 remaining. Kevin Walsh developed a matrix to aid in narrowing down the remaining configurations.
- Tonight's meeting is about continuing to narrowing down the configurations to decide the best educational plan to bring to the BOE.

Superintendent of Huntington UFSD. Jay Finello

- Jay Finello stated that he has not voiced his opinion as a district administrator at previous meetings in an effort to not be seen as influencing the committee's decisions.
- In September 2008 the school principals and central administration designed an educational program that met the needs of the district and the school buildings. That was presented to the BOE but, not pursued.
- Using that educational program he gave feedback on the remaining configurations. There are configurations on the table with a kindergarten center. Central office believes that this is not a good idea educationally. The kindergarten experience has changed from a socialization program to more of an academic based program. Having students enter into a school that they will get use for ten months and then place them in a new setting is not their best interest. Having the students in one school for an extended period of time allows them to get to know the faculty and administration and then the school becomes more of a home based environment. To remove them from that environment too soon both educationally and socially in their development would not be the best for the children.
- A lot of time was spent developing the educational program to fit within the buildings and in fact the district is ahead of the game due to designing the primaries as K-3 buildings. State legislated changes to primary level schools have demanded small instructional spaces which was already designed into the K-3 buildings, recognizing that it was already needed through speaking with the school principals.
- When looking at the 4 primary schools and making them K-4 we will be pushing our student count to 450. One principal without administrative support will not be enough for that many students. By adding more administrative staff these primary schools begin to lose the closeness they currently feel with their current administration.
- The Administration has looked at building onto Finley to make it a 6-8 school with a 6th grade center. That 6th grade center was a middle school concept program. Administration used this to develop the program at Abrams as a 6th grade center.

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- Looking at Finley as a 6-8 school is not financially feasible. Increasing the numbers of students at Finley will require a site variance that would have to be acquired from the state to allow the district to build due to site restrictions.
- In his opinion this committee should be making a decision based on what the BOE has recommended which is that Abrams stays closed to students. The number one recommendation from this committee should be Abrams not housing any students only administration. It is fine for there to be a second or third option with Abrams open to students if the BOE decides to re-open the school to students.
- We need to decide what to do with the 4th, 5th and 6th grades. We have available to us around 20 acres at the Woodhull site. The site is centrally located. It allows us to bring the district together at 4th grade. We can build a structure that will be educationally appropriate for today as well as the future. Kevin Walsh and Roger Smith have developed it further and will present it to you in one of the options tonight.
- Educationally do we distinguish between the 4th, 5th and 6th grades? One thing that we have learned since 2008 is that grade 6 at a middle school level is a good one. At that educational level it makes for a good transition between elementary and middle school years. So why not build onto Woodhull and allow for a section of that school to be available for a 6th grade center. It will be appropriate in the requirements of Part 100 of the Commissioner's regulations for the middle school regulations. What was planned for Abrams educationally as a grade 6 center should be done at Woodhull.
- We believe building onto Woodhull provides the best solution in terms of facilities and education for the district right now. Although it may make Woodhull a bigger school spatially than Finley, we have the space to build on and fit students. We do not have that same available space at Finley.
- With building onto Woodhull we will need the administration to grow to suit what the school will be housing.
- Looking forward, if the BOE changes their minds and decides to put students back at Abrams the district is in a different political position than in 2008. In 2008 we had four K-3 grade schools and two 5 -6 grade schools. Many changes have occurred since then which are mainly more political than educational in nature. He believes that it will be difficult to split the district between Woodhull and Abrams. We should use the 6th grade center concept that was already developed and healthy for Abrams at Woodhull. Moving administration out of Abrams would politically not be a wise decision. Administration needs to be housed there to keep some presence at the school.

General Discussion:

Committee member stated that placing administration and grade 6 at Woodhull and 4- 5 at Abrams, from a fiscal point of view, is a better option.

Committee member stated that he believes that the professional committee members seem to be unable to discuss controversial issues. He believes there should be some way to delineate between parents, community members, BOE members, and principals and consultant committee members.

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Committee member stated that he hopes the closing of Abrams is temporary. He is a parent to a special education student and she will be going into a 30 plus student classroom come September and she will not thrive in that environment. He recognizes that the administration is trying its best to accommodate for a school being closed but, these class sizes are not appropriate. There are several options tonight that do not include Abrams and along with several other committee members they represent a large portion of the community and that any plan that does not include Abrams will be opposed. They based that decision on \$20 million dollars of the community's money would have to be spent in order to avoid a functioning school. Any option that does not include Abrams is saying that the community will never heal and it should be forgotten. Placing an alternative High School or Community Center in Abrams sends the message that Abrams is safe for certain children but, not others. Any plan going forward that deliberately forgoes state building aid because it is leaving a functioning building wide open will be opposed by that community opposed to the closing of Abrams. He thinks it is important that this committee recognizes that there is a group of people that have a very clear opinion of Abrams.

Jay Finello stated that as a committee they are charged with bringing to the BOE a recommendation. The BOE will ultimately make the decision. The committee just needs to understand and be respectful of the decision they made.

Committee member stated that if as a committee it is decided that if one or more options are presented to the BOE that do not include Abrams as a school that people will be calling foul.

Committee member stated that the consensus is that there can not be just one option presented to the BOE there needs to be at least two options-one with Abrams open and one with Abrams closed.

Committee member stated that he believes it will be hard to make a recommendation to the BOE that the community will not accept. He believes that if money is spent while leaving a school building unused will bring community members out of the woodwork that will oppose a bond to spend the money on another building.

Roger Smith stated that this committee is charged with planning for the District for the next 10 or more years. Most building plans were for 10 yr demographic and often last 10 or 15 years. For example what he did at Harborfields 10 years ago is still in place and has not changed. The committee will vote on bringing an option before the BOE, and then the BOE will vote on a bond referendum. That vote on the bond referendum is at least two years away from seeing building occupancy for any proposed building.

Committee member stated that there was a capacity issue back in 2008 and there are still issues with capacity. So we still needed some building of some kind to help with that issue.

Roger Smith stated that there are currently capacity issues at the K-3 level. However, you would not want to keep moving over and over so you are building this space for where you will be moving to in 2013.

Committee member stated we are conceding state building aid money to avoid a questionable building or even spending 20 million dollars of the community's money to avoid a building. This is what will bring people out of the woodwork to oppose it.

Committee member stated that she as well as teachers as a whole do not feel it is educationally sound to separate kindergarten into a separate building. K-centers should not be considered as an option.

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Jay Finello stated that we need to focus more on the plan and moving forward with the best options however many it may be.

Roger Smith posed the question to the committee members of whether or not kindergarten centers should stay options.

Committee member stated that Touro/ Toaz should also be removed from any options since the buildings are not owned by the district and the amount of money needed to occupy those buildings and renovate them to become a school is uncertain.

(Committee agrees to remove all configurations with a K-center and Touro/ Toaz as options)

Kevin Walsh stated that when looking at the configurations keep in mind that when a grade is added on at the primaries it alleviates some of the stress on the intermediates and visa versa. In the same respect if there are more buildings housing grade levels it will alleviate the stress on both the primaries and intermediate schools. However, there is a cost impact associated with all of those situations.

Many of the concerns with housing grades separately or at different schools were taken off before cost was even looked at. This was decided on because those options didn't work conceptually. Many of those options were the higher priced options.

(Kevin Walsh discussed the "Top Nine" configuration chart that was handed out to committee members.)

Kevin Walsh stated that these "Top Nine" configurations were decided upon from what was narrowed down from last meeting as well as discussions with the Superintendent on what works best educationally.

Committee member stated that considering any option that has Abrams open the district needs to be conscious of not splitting the districts grade levels. All students of the same grades at those intermediate levels should be housed in the same building not split amongst two buildings. She believes that is the way to keep the community from being torn apart even more. Politically this is the best option.

Committee member stated that either Woodhull or Abrams needs to house a 6th grade center.

Roger Smith stated that he had called the State asking in a general way to discuss whether the district would be able to get State Aid if Woodhull is a 4-5 school and Abrams is a 6th grade center and Administration center. And they have said they probably would. If Abrams is empty of students then State Aid will probably go away.

In order to get the State Aid for Woodhull as a 4-5 center, a statement by the district would be attached explaining where the administration intended on going with their educational plan.

Committee member stated that the State does not favor or reject the idea of a 6th grade center. The State looks at what is the best educational program the district can offer given the facilities in the districts. It has shown for the past few years that the middle school philosophy has emerged as the best way to educate students at the 5-8 grade levels. Many school districts changed their middle schools to house those grades but have since backed off of that philosophy. For example Harborfields once housed 4-8 in their middle school but, changed it because the age ranges at that level were to far apart in terms of development. However, middle schools housing 6, 7 and 8 work. We have surrounding school districts such as Half Hollow Hills, Harborfields, Elwood, and South Huntington that house 6-8 at the middle school level and it works.

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Committee members stated that two 4-6 schools should stay a possible option if the area around Abrams gets safe. However, the cost needs to be looked at as well in considering it further.

Committee member stated that Abrams houses grades 4-6 comfortably and should still be looked at.

Jay Finello stated that Abrams was built to house K-6.

Committee member stated that as a teacher she viewed the flow of the four primary schools into two intermediate schools as good educationally. At a third grade level the children are too young to be joining in to a large student pool. However, in this case we can't make a perfect decision because of how the schools are currently set up. There are circumstances outside of education that are influencing the plan for the school buildings.

Committee member stated that students coming from one elementary level school into a middle school had a better outcome than students coming from multiple elementary schools into a middle school. This occurs because the children are not only changing educationally but, physically and socially as well.

Committee member stated that she believes children are very resilient with coming together at a later age rather than a younger age. However, with the current issues politically that surrounds the district there can not be two 4-6 grade schools.

Committee member stated that she went back to the school district she grew up in to see if it had changed and it had not. The school district of North Bellmore has five K-6th grade schools feeding into two junior high schools and then two high schools. That has been the same since 1970. Several elementary schools feeding into one middle school works.

Roger Smith stated he feels there is a consensus among the committee that there should only be one 4th-6th grade school. The idea of two 4th-6th grade schools is not to be thrown out but, just put on the back burner for that moment

Kevin Walsh stated that one option has the primaries as a k-3 and Woodhull as a 4-6 school allowing the 6th grade center to be in a separate middle school environment.

Jay Finello stated that K-4 should be left out of the discussion because when a school houses that many students' numbers are upwards of 450-500 students. This becomes more straining on the administrative staff so more help would be needed. It becomes challenging on the sites to be able to add on to the schools as well as the room for extra buses and faculty parking.

Kevin Walsh stated that there are certain thresholds that need to be known to the committee. If the primaries have more than 375 students then more space will be needed at those schools. Another threshold is at 475 even more space will be needed as well as certain grade levels require music space. These sites can only handle so much expansion. The figures that are given on the chart "Top Nine" are from soup to nuts. However, these options can be chipped away to bring them down to a lower cost.

Roger Smith stated that if Woodhull is to house 4-5 then it needs to be built on in order to house the appropriate amount of sections and supports. If Abrams is to house 4-5 it fits and Woodhull housing 6 and administration would have a few rooms left over. Keep this in mind, if the vote to add space on to Woodhull on August 24th, 2010 is okayed then 2 or 3 of the "Top Nine" configurations would benefit from that space.

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Committee member stated that if we want to make the schools community schools then we should have five K-3rd grade schools as an option. If we are going to use Abrams we should use all of Abrams to its potential as a 1,100 student school. However, no one wants to say this because of the political ramifications of saying they do not want to do this because of the area around Abrams. If we were to put that many students in the building, of which it was built to hold, then we would not have a space issue or a need for this committee. The history of Abrams has been that it has gone from a 1,100 student school to a 750 students to 520 students to a 6th grade center at 375 to nothing because of the political ramifications of the surrounding area.

Committee member stated that it is a town problem to clean up the area. A decision can not be made on utilizing that building for 12 months or 2 years down the road if the area hasn't been cleaned up.

Committee member stated that the committee needs to choose the two most responsible plans to bring to the BOE because that is what we have been charged to do.

Roger Smith stated that in the condition Woodhull is currently in as a 4-5 school is why the BOE voted to add the \$2 million dollar addition. The reason why that route was chosen is because in most cases that extra space will be needed. If Woodhull became a 5-6 school the space would still be needed.

Committee member stated that if Woodhull became the 6th grade center and administration center then that addition would give them extra space.

Roger Smith stated yes. There will be extra rooms if Woodhull became a 6th grade center. However, those rooms would be there if you wanted to enrich the 6th grade program.

Committee member stated that the committee does need to take this possibility into consideration because adding that addition to Woodhull cost money which the community will probably not want to spend on extra space if it's not necessarily needed.

Committee member stated that if Woodhull were to become a 6th grade center with the addition, you could possibly bring back special education classrooms to those spaces. It could be used as a separate space that could be closed off from the school for BOCES. The space would not be unused.

(PPT presentation of four K-3, 4-5 at Woodhull 6 grade at Abrams)

Kevin Walsh stated that these plans are showing the best possible configuration that houses all the sections needed and the supports.

Roger Smith stated that these plans can be taken and looked at and changed to the bare minimum we can have at these buildings to save on cost without sacrificing too much. However, that is not to say that it's one or the other plan if the committee likes specialist spaces or support spaces they can be added in. Things can be taken off or put on depending on what the committee decides is the best plan.

(PPT presentation of four K-3, 4-5 at Woodhull, and grade 6 at Abrams with the bare minimums.)

Roger Smith stated that everything that is represented as new work both renovation and an addition is all done "out of house". So no cost takes into account anything that may be done "in house" or by the District.

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Kevin Walsh stated that the reduction of the four primaries retains as much of the existing school as possible and the addition would only be the spaces that could not fit within the original plan. Overall \$15.7 million dollars would be saved if the plan goes from best possible plan to minimal plan at all 4 primaries.

Roger Smith stated that this reduction has only been done by the Architects. Neither the principals nor anyone on the committee has made any decisions on the reductions. Kevin was just showing what could be done.

Committee member stated that the committee needs to know from the principals what programs are really needed and what programs could be cut out as far as reducing plans.

Jay Finello stated that for the next meeting he would like the principals to be able to sit down with the plans as well as the new state regulations and determine what is or is not needed. One of the problems that will be faced is the amount of students that will now qualify for AIS which will require small instructional support space.

Kevin Walsh stated that on the handout "Reductions," what is shown is a breakdown of each group of items that can be removed. The cost that is then associated with that group being removed and what the cost becomes.

Roger Smith stated that the addition could probably start being built while the children are still in school in the summer time. However, he does not think he will be able to get as quick of an approval as he was able to get on the Modulars going in at Woodhull. The addition is going to take approximately 12-15 months before you can occupy.

Kevin Walsh stated that the modular classrooms as of right now are assumed to be temporary. Currently they are planned to be leased for 3 years.

Roger Smith stated that there is an option available to buy the modular classrooms or keep leasing them. The modular classrooms are being bid. The bid proposal asks how much the district will be charged per month for the modulars and how much it will cost at the end of the 3 year lease to buy them.

One way to reduce the cost of Woodhull would be to not build the Auditorium which would save the district \$4.9 million dollars. The PE stations could be reduced to elementary school size which would save \$1.4 million dollars.

Committee member stated if a cafetorium or gymatorium was built an auditorium would not be needed.

Kevin Walsh stated the amount of PE stations that would be needed is depending on how many classrooms there are. Every 14 classrooms require a PE station.

Roger Smith stated that he has spoken with the State Education Department regarding the PE station issue. What they have said that is if the district is just over the requirements, and in need of a third PE station they may not require it as long as the school can provide that the PE program can be delivered appropriately.

Committee member stated that there have been multiple conflicts with music, art and physical education programs trying to use the same space. An auditorium at a 4-5 school is educationally sound.

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Jay Finello stated that this issue will occur when outside programs that need to be held in the gymnasium for part of that day are introduced. This conflict needs to be resolved so the students do not suffer. PE classes may get doubled up or hope for good weather on those days but these are problems the administration must face if a gymnasium is decided on.

Roger Smith stated that a cafeteria works better than a gymnasium because it doesn't interfere with the programs as much. It is also easily transformed from a cafeteria to an auditorium.

Jay Finello stated that if an auditorium is built there will be a lot of down time where that auditorium is not being used. The auditorium can be used as a source of revenue. However, it has been the BOE's philosophy that when there are local groups wanting to use either interior or exterior space that the BOE does not charge an unreasonable rate. The feeling has been that the District's property should be available to youth leagues with out any other costs besides maintenance of the spaces. Not much revenue if at all has been gained.

Committee member stated that Harborfields Washington Drive School has a wonderful cafeteria which works well.(Note: designed by BBS)

Committee member stated that the draw back to a cafeteria is that any events or programs that need the auditorium space need to be held either really early or after all the kids have eaten.

(PPT presentation of Finley as 6-8 school)

Kevin Walsh stated that there will be no field reduction with the proposed additions. They fit within the boundaries of unused grass space as far as playing fields are concerned.

Committee member stated that the committee has begun to go through all the configurations and set up criteria as to why certain options should be removed. A list of all these criteria would be useful to go back and decide why certain options were taken out.

Roger Smith stated that he would like one or two of the committee members to be elected or chosen to make the presentation to the BOE, in the future. He believes that at this time the committee can begin to start saying that as a group they have decided on a particular plan or plans.

Kevin Walsh stated that the committee members should bring criteria to start removing more options from the list.