



Kevin J. Murphy
City Manager
Michael McGovern
Assistant City Manager

February 8, 2018

Mayor William Samaras
and
Members of the City Council

REFERENCE: **2/6/17 7.5 C. Leahy** - Req. City Mgr. Provide Update Regarding Latest Meeting With The Massachusetts School Building Authority.

Dear Mayor Samaras and City Councilors:

Representatives from the City of Lowell met with officials from the Massachusetts School Building Authority on Friday, February 2, 2018. The scheduled meeting was a result of a letter submitted to MSBA on Friday, January 5, 2018 of the City's request to explore changing Lowell's Preferred Project Option for the Lowell High School building project. Below is the agenda from that meeting. The MSBA requested the City send the last iterations of downtown options for a purpose of starting discussions on moving forward.

- I. Options to be investigated: Options 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7
 - A. Add/Reno Option 2
 - B. Add/Reno Option 3 - Expanded Site
 - C. Add/Reno Option 4
 - D. Add/Reno Option 5 – Expanded Site
 - E. New Building Revised – Expanded Site
- II. Pool
- III. Schedule
- IV. Update on the consultant costs necessary to complete the feasibility study for the options to be investigated
- V. Confirmation of the communication plan between MSBA, the City, and its consultant team for correspondence purposes.

Options to be investigated/Pool

Deputy Chief Executive Officer/Executive Officer Jack McCarthy began the meeting by stating the options related to downtown will not be considered with a new pool included. MSBA dismissed the five design options the city submitted, as they all have a new swimming pool in them and a new pool is not permissible. MSBA stated that if the City wants a new pool; it would have to be a separate distinct building and project. MSBA stated 5 presented options can move forward as long as pool is removed. MSBA will not pay for any project that includes a new swimming pool. MSBA will allow

renovation of existing pool, but all construction related to the pool is non-reimbursable. Renovation of a pool lead the group down the path of discussing potential options involving one scenario of renovating the pool and renovating the fieldhouse. The other scenario was renovating the pool and constructing a new athletic space above the pool. If either scenario is explored, all costs associated with any matter related to a pool must be parsed out of the overall costs. MSBA stated it may not be desirable to have a renovation of the current pool location driving the configuration of all other spaces of a \$350 million project.

Perkins Eastman stated the pool exists in the current field house on campus and is included as part of The Educational Plan and Adaptive Physical Education (PE) space. If pool was eliminated the school would need to determine where those students would be reassigned. The Education Plan will need to be revised for no pool scenario. The designer is responsible to meet the needs outlined in the Educational Plan. Perkins Eastman noted that the current pool is in a difficult place to build around and design went with a new pool because of the extensive phasing that would be required and the impact to adding the Freshman Academy wing. Perkins Eastman stated there is precedence for pools in the past (West Springfield pool renovation). MSBA distinguished West Springfield case by making it clear that the project had separate cost estimates, separate façade, and mechanicals. MSBA suggested utilizing the current 5 options without a pool, but leaving space for a standalone pool building under separate project.

Perkins Eastman stated they can explore options that reserve/identify space for a future pool if so desired by the City.

Perkins Eastman stated that the current gymnasium designed in the presented options is 27,000 sf with nine stations. MSBA noted that contiguous gymnasium policy only allows for up to 18,000 sf. Perkins Eastman noted that the existing gymnasium is 28,400 sf and is fully utilized given the large student population. MSBA stated two gyms or stacking is possible as MSBA will be looking for efficiencies where programs can be co-located, achieve maximum uses and are flexible spaces also acknowledging that the size of Lowell High School -- it will be built for 3,500 students -- renders some of the MSBA's rules impractical. Mayor Samaras noted that Lowell High School has never "Fit a Model," and that as the former Headmaster of Lowell High School deemed two gyms a management nightmare. Perkins Eastman noted the total square footage is justifiable given the number of stations and that leaving them contiguous allows flexibility. MSBA does agree that nine stations are needed. A question was raised about the difference between of gym vs. fieldhouse, at the time MSBA Director of Capital Planning Mary Pichetti did not define the difference between the two. In a later follow-up discussion, she said there really is no difference; it is more a term-of-art rather than distinctive qualities that separate the two.

City asked what type of review of the options is expected by the MSBA for the revised PSR. MSBA stated to look at the 5 options presented today without a pool as well as the above mentioned comparison to options leaving pool in place and building or renovating around the existing pool.

MSBA was asked what their requirements were in regard to Eminent Domain. MSBA explained Full control, use and ownership of the property must be accomplished before Scope and Budget approval. MSBA stated conditional approval could be provided, however MSBA participation will be withheld so the District could proceed at own risk to keep on schedule. MSBA initially stated that Eminent Doman needs to take place by May 1, 2019. However, MSBA Director of Project Management John Jumpe suggested the City target January 2019 because there could be a "stay" that can take up to 4 months. One additional item mentioned by Perkins Eastman after the meeting was that while a date of



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January 2019 was discussed, that any investigation, i.e. geotechnical and environmental testing relating to the expanded site, the dentist office parcel needs to occur not later than July 2018.

MSBA made clear that Lowell is not the first district to struggle at this phase of a project and funding is not in jeopardy.

Schedule

Below is the new schedule put forth by Skanska and Perkins Eastman.

Revised PSR Submission to MSBA July 11, 2018
MSBA Board Meeting PSR Approval August 29, 2018
SD Submission to MSBA July 2019
MSBA Board Meeting SD Approval August 2019

The City submitted a request for a Feasibility Study extension coinciding with the above dates. The request was submitted on Monday, February 5, 2018.

Consultant Costs

Skanska submitted proposal last week and Perkins Eastman submitted yesterday. City needs to review. MSBA requests that consultant fee information be submitted on or before Friday February 9, 2018. The Council will be informed of any updates regarding new Feasibility Study budget changes.

Communication

Plan between MSBA, the City, and its consultant team is required from City. The City agreed to submit the plan by Friday, February 9, 2018. The plan refers to an updated email distribution list for the MSBA to send communication to the district.

Sincerely,

Kevin J. Murphy
City Manager