

## DeValles School Building Committee (SBC) Meeting Minutes <sup>1</sup>

Meeting Date: February 15, 2024

Location: Paul Rodrigues Administration Building, 455 County Street, Room 224, New Bedford, MA 02740

Also remote via New Bedford Public Schools website

Reported: Laura K. Neves, Executive Assistant for Finance & Operations, New Bedford Public Schools (NBPS)

### Attendees:

Molly Gilfeather Rodrigues, Purchasing Director, City of New Bedford (City)

Janet Barbosa, Director of Special Projects & Programs, Designee of Mayor Jonathan Mitchell, City

Bruce Oliveira, School Committee Member/Chair, NBPS

Andrew O'Leary, Interim Superintendent, NBPS

Douglas Brites, Director of Facilities, NBPS

Mario Pires, John B. DeValles Elementary School Principal, NBPS (remote)

Emily Arpke, Auditor, City

Barry Rabinovitch, Interim Asst. Supt. of Finance & Ops, NBPS

Jennifer Carloni, Director of City Planning, City

Jonathan Carvalho, Neighborhood Resident (remote)

Jillian Zangao, President, New Bedford Federation of Paraprofessionals

Daniel Pallotta, Owner's Project Manager, P-Three, Inc. (P3)

Peter Turowski, Principal Architect/Owner, Turowski2 Architecture, Inc. (T2)

Elizabeth Turowski, Principal Designer/Owner, T2

Timothy Brennan, Associate Architect, T2

Alison Paiva, Architectural Associate, T2

Brian Fitch, Project Manager, T2

Logan Middleton, Designer, T2

Suresh Bhatia, President, Atlantic Construction & Management, Inc. (remote)

Jack Spillane, Journalist, The New Bedford Light

Mr. Bruce Oliveira called the meeting to order at 4:12 PM. A roll call of attendance was taken. Mr. Oliveira declared there was a quorum of at least 10 out of 19 Committee members present. Mr. Oliveira asked the School Building Committee to introduce themselves for Journalist Jack Spillane of The New Bedford Light. Minutes from the October 17, 2023 meeting were reviewed. A roll call vote was taken to approve the minutes. Voted unanimously on a motion by Ms. Molly Gilfeather Rodrigues and seconded by Mr. Doug Brites to approve. A roll call vote was taken.

Mr. Timothy Brennan presented and discussed Updates from the Owner's Project Manager and Designer. He indicated that T2 is currently working on design development. Mr. Daniel Pallotta indicated that we will have to submit Design Development, 60% and then 90% construction documents to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) and that we will have an updated estimate by the next School Building Committee meeting. Mr. Brennan indicated that site procurement is now complete, with the former Goodyear site being the future home of the DeValles-Congdon School. Mr. Brennan also presented that funding was secured. City Council approved 10 to 0. The next step in the Project Funding Agreement (PFA) from the MSBA is coming as soon as P3 delivers the Certificate of Vote from the City Clerk, which includes a 20-day period after it is passed, which we are currently in. Mr. Pallotta indicated that the MSBA has been notified. The MSBA requested that we look into MEPA, however, the School Department's attorney reviewed this and determined that we do not qualify and approved our response letter to the MSBA.

Mr. Brennan presented and discussed the Geotechnical Update. On January 4, 2024, additional test pits were performed and the following week, testing of borings occurred. The results of the testing are consistent with the initial investigation. There are still demolition debris and unsuitable soil, meaning the soil is not suitable for structural bearing. T2 is designing to address these issues but always knew about them. The opinion of the City's Licensed Site Professional (LSP) has not changed. Mr. Pallotta indicated that we want to get the area of removal as close as possible to where we want it to be classified to get a better bid for the City.

Mr. Brennan presented and discussed Community Outreach. On December 6, 2023, parent-teacher conferences were held at both Congdon and DeValles Schools which T2 attended and interfaced with parents. On November 15, 2023 and February 9, 2024, T2 gave student presentations at both schools, and on December 13, 2023, T2 gave a teacher presentation at Congdon. At the student presentations, students were asked to submit drawings or writings of their ideas for what their school should have or what it should look like. T2 is working to integrate some of the ideas.

Mr. Brennan presented and discussed Working Group Update. The Site Amenities and Landscape Working Group met on February 5, 2024 wherein they worked to develop the site more. They reworked the playground with a flexible open space and added shade structure. They also added a Yak-Trak, a maintenance shed near the turf field, and an outdoor amphitheater to accommodate one grade level gathering. A traffic study was done which revealed no changes for the neighborhood but recommended switching the bus and parent drop off areas. The southern entrance would now be for buses and the parent drop-off would be at the main entrance to minimize traffic and maximize use of one-way bus area. The driveway would be expanded to serve for open space, such as for a farmer's market, basketball hoop, or outside school events. It is flush so that surfaces are even to have flexibility. The area we can give to the public for community use allows for neighborhood connections. Mr. Oliveira inquired as to the proximity of the trees to the school building, to which Mr. Brennan answers

<sup>1</sup> The Open Meeting Law requires public bodies to create and approve minutes in a timely manner. A "timely manner" is considered to be within the next three public body meetings or 30 days from the date of the meeting, whichever is later, unless the public body can show good cause for further delay.

that they are true-to-size in the drawings which translates to about 20 feet away from the building. The trees have been taken into consideration by the landscape architect. The trees are high enough for buses to pass through. It does not need to go through the Planning Board.

Mr. Brennan presented and discussed the Design Update. At the February 7, 2024 School Committee meeting, the Chair challenged T2 to take advantage of the water views. T2 used a drone to capture the views from the third-floor perspective. The eastern end is optimal for water views. Design changes were made to the end of the building with spaces on each floor for large windows and seating. A “viewpoint” to the water at the end of each classroom hallway that angles out to the bay has been incorporated in the design. T2 is working with energy consultants on the windows to minimize thermal bridging at the openings; There was too much window perimeter in the original design so it has now been combined into triple in order to be more energy efficient. The window changes now conform with sustainable design objectives. The overall building plan has not changed much such as in structure, piping, ductwork. T2 is working on the main and lower entrance canopies, in terms of materials, structure, signage, plants, colors. Interior work includes: colors, wainscoting, ceilings, skylights, translucent stairs, millwork layout, waiting room seating, cafeteria booths, columns, developing flex spaces in hallways, and lighting. Mr. Oliveira asked how do the lighting controls relate to the Irwin M. Jacobs Elementary School (Jacobs School). Mr. Brennan responded that the type we are required to use in order to meet the energy code is low voltage. He explained that they are looking at different options for switches. He suggested industrial, heavy-duty and simplistic switches with minimal buttons that are situated in places not easily accessible to students. Mr. Douglas Brites indicated that there are both software and button issues for the switches at the Jacobs School. Mr. Brennan suggested that the electrical engineer and the NBPS Facilities Department may need to meet to discuss. A reliable, longstanding vendor to reduce the likelihood of going out of business and then being unable to obtain parts. Mr. Brennan expounded that the current design work also includes displays, casework, bubbles for seating in hallways, book nooks at the gathering hub, guardrails, chair rail, porcelain wall tile, millwork bench, acoustic tiles, and terrazzo flooring. The themes for grade levels are: Kindergarten to Grade 1 is water; Grades 2 to 3 is wind; Grades 4 to 5 is sun; and the main level/cafeteria is earth. Brick samples were obtained from multiple vendors to correspond to the neighborhood brick buildings and were taken to Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church for comparison. Also included in the design work is incorporating metal panels, glass reinforced fiber concrete panels, PVC roofing, and the consideration of a flat vs. sloped roof. Also to be considered soon is the building name and mascot, which is important for design purposes in terms of colors and signage. The final decision is with the School Committee.

Mr. Brennan reviewed the upcoming project schedule as follows:

- **January 2024** – City funding approval done
- **March 2024** – Design Development submission to MSBA
- **April 2024** – Site prep package out to bid
- **June 2024** – Site prep work begins
- **July 2024** – 60% Construction Document submission to MSBA
- **November 2024** – 90% Construction Document submission to MSBA
- **December 2024** – 100% bid documents ready
- **January 2025** – Project out to bid
- **Spring 2025** – Construction start
- **Fall 2026** – Construction complete
- **January 2027** – School opens to students

Dr. Rabinovitch asked if we still need to work with the MSBA Board of Directors to which Mr. Pallotta responded no and that they do not need to vote again. The PFA will not be issued until the MSBA receives proof of funds, which could occur in March 2024. Ms. Emily Arpke asked if there would be a reason for concern of the timeframe from now to bid. Mr. Pallotta answered no, explaining that the schedule is generous, so there should be no delay. Ms. Arpke also asked if it is realistic to open the school mid-school year. Mr. Pallotta answered that it is a management decision, but it is done quite often in school building projects, such as done with the Jacobs School. Mr. Brennan indicated that virtual reality viewings of the design walkthroughs in the T2 office will be offered soon. Mr. Brites suggested water bottle stations be incorporated throughout the building, especially in the gymnasium and cafeteria. Mr. Brennan responded that water bottle stations are required by code and will be stationed outside of every gang bathroom with 2 per floor and one next to the cafeteria and will be filtered. Mr. Brites indicated that the current NBHS water bottle stations are filtered and refrigerated to provide cold water.

Mr. Oliveira moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:02 PM, seconded by Ms. Jillian Zangao, and approved unanimously by roll call vote.



Dr. Barry Rabinovitch, Interim Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations