

East Lyme Board of Education
East Lyme Elementary Schools Design Steering Committee Meeting
November 30, 2015
4:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Members Present: Dr. Tim Hagen, Mr. Jeffrey Newton, Linda Anania, John Arnold, Melissa DeLoreto, John Rhodes, Dr. John Whritner, Al Jacunski from Jacunski Humes Architects, LLC

Members Absent: Candice Carlson, Dr. David Miko, Gil Gallant, Linda Johansen, Rob Kupis, Ray O'Connor, Marc Salerno, Maria Whalen

Guests Presents: Grace DeGroot, First Selectman Mark Nickerson, Ken Biega (O & G Construction)

The meeting began at 4:00 p.m.

Community Forum Review

Mr. Jeffrey Newton distributed the minutes from the November 18, 2015 Community Forum and a list of questions generated from the community in attendance, the minutes from the November 18, 2015 Ad Hoc Value Engineering Committee Meeting, the November 5, 2015 NESDEC Historical Enrollment Report for East Lyme, and the Connecticut School District Demographic Changes Report for current enrollment trends and projections from 1970-2025.

Discussion followed on the concerns raised from the community which will be addressed during the second community forum scheduled for December 14, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. at East Lyme High School:

- Reinforce that the Elementary Schools Design Committee considered eight different building concepts and selected the adopted BOE project (build new Flanders and renovate as new Niantic Center) because of its educational value to the students, the least disruptive during construction, and the least expensive to the Town because both buildings can be completed simultaneously.
- Address that no matter what option was selected, there would always be a fraction of the community that would not agree.
- Clarify that there is a “town assumption” that Lillie B. Haynes was going to be renovated instead of Niantic School and that the Design Committee and the Board of Education reviewed all options before making a final decision. The Design Committee and Board of Education never changed a decision that was previously adopted.
- The long-term costs to the taxpayers is less costly if Lillie B. Haynes is returned to the town for community use.
- Explain how and why the Town of East Lyme can afford to do this project at this time.
- The community is hearing misleading information. It is important to inform the 75% of the community who do not have school-age children.
- Inform the community of the “entire” package, including Town options for using Lillie B. Haynes.
- It would cost substantially more to renovate Niantic Center for Town offices and community use than to renovate Lillie B. Haynes. It is also more cost effective to renovate Lillie B. Haynes for Town usage than to build an entirely new Town Hall complex.
- The current bond issued on Lillie B. Haynes was for the window project. If we petition to the State of Connecticut that the Town of East Lyme plans to reuse the building, it would be unlikely the the State would mandate payment of the unused portion of the bond.
- Have clear and concise slides pertaining to:
 - How this proposal affects the Town debt ratio.
 - The mill rate increase will affect individual taxes over time, not a one-time increase.

- The net difference of the proposed project versus the Town of East Lyme building a new building to house their needs if they are unable to use Lillie B. Haynes.
- The State reimbursement will be approximately 10% less if we build Flanders School now and remodel or build another school later.
- Construction cost escalation per year.
- The additional cost to the Town and individual taxpayer if we wait another 10 years.
- Highlight the value of the project and how it will benefit the entire community and individual homeowners.
- Need endorsement from the Board of Selectman and Board of Finance before specific costs and tax increases can be brought forward to the community.
- Need to inform the entire community various ways before the “quiet period” preceding the referendum:
 - Newspapers and publications
 - Channel 22
 - PTA groups
 - Political action group to send out a town-wide mailing and advertise using digital media
 - Engage the senior citizens and civic organizations
- Responses to some of the specific questions from the community:
 - Question 4: A two campus complex was the message at the time (late 1990’s) but vision, requirements, and town needs have changed since then.
 - Question 5: Putting two schools on the current Lillie B. Haynes site was considered, but not feasible due to the amount of land available and buildings being too close together.
 - Question 6: The square footage is actually decreasing with the proposed project, not increasing.
 - Question 9: The projected Pre-K enrollment is 50 students.
 - Question 10: A police study was conducted and Niantic Center School was found to be the safest and most contained of all three elementary school locations.
 - Question 13: Misconception of preschool classes. ELPS has a State mandated integrated preschool program that is currently located at Lillie B. Haynes School. Flanders School has a “child care” program for ages 3-4, not a preschool program. If preschool does become mandated by the State of Connecticut, there is room to add additional classrooms. It is not cost efficient to add additional rooms now that are not required.
 - Question 13: Creative will have other space opportunities available to them.
 - Question 14: LEARN will need to decide if they want to stay in East Lyme or relocate to another district.

Next Steps

- Request to present the Board of Educations’ adopted elementary schools design recommendation to the Board of Selectman at their meeting the first week in January.
- If receive endorsement from the Board of Selectman, request to present the proposal to the Board of Finance at their meeting the second week in January.
- Once the Board of Finance brings their recommendation back to the Board of Selectman, a call for a March referendum can be made by the Board of Selectman.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. Timothy Hagen
 Timothy Hagen, Ph.D.
 Steering Committee Chair

Mr. Jeffrey Newton
 Mr. Jeffrey R. Newton
 Superintendent of Schools