

MUHLENBERG SCHOOL DISTRICT
Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes
October 4, 2023
Lecture Hall, Muhlenberg High School
www.muhsdk12.org

Call to Order

The Committee of the Whole Meeting of the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District was called to order on Wednesday, October 4, 2023 at 6:29 PM by Board President, Mr. Garrett E. Hyneman. Mr. Nelson arrived at the meeting at 6:39 PM.

Members Present

President – Mr. Garrett E. Hyneman
Vice President – Mr. Otto W. Voit, III
Treasurer - Mr. Richard E. Hoffmaster
Secretary – Mrs. Cindy L. Mengle
Assistant Secretary – Ms. Janet Howard
Member – Mrs. Kristyna Eagle
Member – Mr. J. Tony Lupia, Jr.
Member – Mr. Mark J. Nelson
Recording Secretary – Ms. Tara L. Flowers

Members Absent

Member – Mr. Miguel Vasquez

Administration Present

Superintendent – Dr. Joseph E. Macharola
Assistant Superintendent – Dr. Alan S. Futrick
Business Manager- Shane M. Mathias, CPA
Assistant Business Manager - Susan Hawkins
Director of Physical Plant - Mr. Ken Patterson
Director of Special Education - Nicole Huntbach
Supervisor of Special Education - Ms. Lori Morris
Supervisor of Special Education - Dr. Janet Heilman
Director of Technology - Mr. Daniel Houck
Director of Food Services - Mr. Carey Kline
Director of Pupil Services - Mr. Michael J. Mish
Data Administrator – Mr. Kevin Vanino
Athletic Director – Dr. Tim Moyer
High School Principal - Mr. Haniff Skeete
High School Assistant Principal - Mr. Aaron Kopetsky
Junior High School Assistant Principal - Mr. Daniel Kramer
Elementary Principal - Mr. Kyle Crater
Elementary Assistant Principal - Ms. Ginny Hornberger
Elementary Assistant Principal - Ms. Leila McGill

Social Worker - Ms. Amanda Foulds

Visitors

Diane Benson
Don Main- Marotta/Main Architects

Marc Wolfe
Scott Eldridge- Marotta/Main Architects

Educational Presentations

A. Building Projects - Marotta/ Main Architects- Mr. Don Main and Mr. Scott Eldridge

Dr. Macharola talked about the District comprising its team of administrators, teachers, staff having multiple meetings all focusing on phase one of the building projects. He spoke about passing the Parameter Bond Agreement at last month's meeting and how the District has an outstanding "next step" in moving forward with the building projects. Dr. Macharola advised everything the District has done with the architects, surrounds safety for the children, staff and faculty. He advised that the Board will be happy with what they are seeing in tonight's presentation with the building projects that will be coming in January, 2024.

Marotta/ Main Architects presented:

Review of Agenda

Process since last presentation to the Board in May:

- Bi-weekly design meetings have been held with the District Administrative Team.
- On the opposite weeks, bi-weekly coordination meetings have been held with the engineering team to advance their respective design work.
- Input meetings have been held with District Stakeholders which include:
 - Faculty and Administration for the new elementary building
 - Transportation
 - Athletics
 - District Administration
- All project design work is focused on current and future conditions with a focus on overall campus safety and to address the growth anticipated and identified in the District Master Plan.

Project A- Campus Wide Traffic Improvements

This project must be completed prior to introducing the new building to the campus to ensure safe routes for buses and drop/pickup locations.

Overview of the District Wide added vehicle routes:

- These are intended for District maintenance vehicles and buses only.
- Traffic control gates will be installed to deter parents and public from using these routes.

Overview of the Elementary Bus Routes

- A bus drop is being added between the new 5-6 building and the high school to service the 5-6 building. This provide direct access to the cafeteria as a gathering space for students prior to pick up and after drop off.
- The bus route for the MEC and Cole remain.

By creating the new Campus Bus and Maintenance Vehicle Loop, a dedicated pedestrian path can be created through the center of campus.

This route is connected to the elementary buildings and future 5-6 building with existing or proposed new sidewalks.

This project also addresses the existing traffic congestion associated with the elementary buildings now and at the completion of the project.

- The parent drop routes are expanded to bring those vehicles on site with the goal of limiting congestion on the adjacent streets.
- Ultimately with the completion of the new 5-6 building, a one-way traffic pattern is introduced where parents enter from Kutztown Road and exit the campus at Sharp Avenue.
 - This provides efficient traffic flow throughout the campus.
 - This addresses parents that may have students in multiple elementary buildings.
 - The one-way traffic pattern will limit back-ups with parents exiting the campus.

These improvements, in concert with one another, segregate:

- Bus Traffic
- Parent Vehicular Traffic
- Pedestrian Routes

Separated traffic patterns are provided at all entries, exits and routes within the campus.

Questions/Comments/Concerns:

Mr. Lupia questioned if there could be a parking lot located where the new 5-6 building and the current retention pond is located. Mr. Main advised all of these plans will go through a land development process reviewed by the township engineer; which is the

typical approach to stormwater management to be located below parking. Mr. Lupia also asked about the widening of the road to accommodate the buses. Mr. Main advised the will assure they have the appropriate width the whole way and assuring all the appropriate traffic patterns. Mr. Lupia asked if the roadway will be one-way. Mr. Main responded yes. Ms. Howard questioned whether they were not changing at the opposite location. Mr. Main advised they were not. Mr. Main advised the engineers are recommending an 18 foot parkway for safety.

Mr. Lupia asked about the buses driving behind the building and behind the football field bleachers, if this would be wide enough. Dr. Futrick advised this is what the District is currently doing now. Dr. Futrick advised it is tight, however they are able to maneuver. Mr. Lupia asked about any concerns with snow in the winter months going up the hill and down. Mr. Main explained that everything is being graded; all being engineered to the appropriate grade.

Mr. Lupia also discussed the possibility of widening the back roadway behind the school for when students are coming back from sporting events, the roadway becomes cluttered. He discussed the possibility of considering a larger parking area there as well so parents can park to wait for their children. Mr. Main advised that this could be part of the high school phase. Mr. Hoffmaster pointed out that the javelin area was relocated there for track and field which would be an issue.

Mrs. Mengle asked about the safety of students walking down the path, having to cross the buses that are coming around. Mr. Main advised they are assuring they have the right crosswalks in those areas. Mr. Patterson advised that those walking paths are not crossing over any bus pathways. Mr. Lupia discussed considering some signs along the pathways.

Project B - Parking and Parent Drop-off/ Pickup Improvements

A second project, which we touched base on somewhat with the previous slides, that must be completed prior to breaking ground on the new school is improvements to the current parking and parent drop at the MEC and Cole buildings.

- Parking is expanded to provide additional spaces for parents and staff:
 - 52 new spaces are provided for MEC and Cole with the added parking for the new 5-6 building.
 - 68 additional parking spaces are provided on the Kutztown Road side of MEC.

Parent parking is provided on the Kutztown Road side of MEC and Cole - providing spaces for drop and more importantly afternoon pick-up

With faculty parking expanded on the high school side of MEC and Cole, there will be no overlap of parents and buses at this part of the campus.

Questions/Comments/Concerns:

Mr. Voit questioned if there will be a canopy over the walkway where the kids will be getting picked up and dropped off. Mr. Main advised this is something that they can look at doing.

Project C - Turf Fields

A third project that must be completed prior to breaking ground on the new 5-6 school building are improvements to the athletic fields due to the loss of the field where the new school is proposed. The following designs were developed with the goals of:

- These facilities are needed to ensure there are no disruptions to students due to population expansion, future facilities and construction.
- By addressing these outdoor facilities in the first phase future athletic projects are not required with subsequent projects.
- The athletic project provides space for all student activities that require fields including PE/ recess/ practices of athletic teams and the band.
- The athletic project provides adequate field facilities so that all District competitions (Jr High/ JV) can take place on the District's Campus.
- This project provides space for community leagues use.

The first portion of this scope includes installation of turf at the high school stadium.

This multi-purpose field provides outdoor space for practice and competition for the following:

- Recess
- Baseball
- Softball-Boys and Girls
- Football
- Lacrosse- Boys and Girls
- Soccer
- Field Hockey
- Band Practice (with field lines- instead of current parking lot location)
- AFJROTC (outside physical activities)
- All other District Wide activities
- MTAA- Youth League

Project D - New Grades 5-6 School

Overview of school layout:

- The first floor of the school contains shared spaces and classrooms that all students access including the gymnasium, cafeteria, main office/ counselors/ nurse, art, music and choral, library, and special education classrooms where close proximity to entering and exiting the building is important.
- The second and third floor of the school houses 5th and 6th grade classrooms and support spaces respectively.

The gymnasium in this building has been designed so that it can be used as a district wide facility in addition to an elementary gymnasium.

- The current seating design which includes bleachers for 1,400 allows for use as an additional competition space as well as dedicated evacuation space.
- This facility allows for the District to house the entire student body any of the buildings on this side of the campus in the event the District must engage in safety protocols.

Questions/Comments/Concerns:

Mr. Voit asked if there were canopies for the parent pickup/drop off area. Mr. Main responded there were. Mrs. Eagle asked about locker rooms. Mr. Main advised there are.

The second floor houses the 5th grade classrooms and support spaces. The floor plan includes a multi-function LGI space which serves both student groupings and faculty/ team meetings.

The third floor houses the 5th grade classrooms and support spaces. The layout of this floor plan is similar to the second floor layout.

The exterior design concepts for the building are intended to align with the balance of buildings on the campus. Design features include:

- Sloped roofs to enclose mechanicals
- Brick masonry veneer for long-term durability, maintenance, and performance.
- Ample glazing to ensure the interior of the building has good daylighting.

Play areas are provided at the rear of the building and outdoor spaces to support the cafeteria and library.

The Phase One Projects Schedule targets construction starting:

- Traffic and Athletics Projects targeted for summer of 2024.
- Following completion of the Traffic and Athletics Projects, start of school construction.

Corresponding anticipated Board actions/ approvals:

- Traffic /Parking project
 - Bids-Feb/March 2024
- Athletic Fields
 - Bids- January 2024
- 5-6 Building
 - Act 34 Hearing- January 2024
 - Bids- July 2024

The Phase One schedule aligns with the future projects schedule that was developed with the District Master Plan.

Review of current Phase One cost estimates:

- Costs will be updated through the design development phase as the designs continue to be developed and refined.
- Cost effective design solutions have been explored with phase one. These include:
 - Elimination of any future phase outdoor athletic requirements with the current turf field designs.
 - Elimination for the need for a new high school gymnasium with the design for the 5-6 building gymnasium.

Next Steps:

- Design team will proceed to Design Development (DD) phase
- Project score and budget will be reviewed again by school board at the end of Design Development phase

Questions/Comments/Concerns:

Dr. Macharola asked the Board to adopt and approve a resolution of the architect's presentation this evening. A couple of the board members said it was not necessary as everyone was in agreement. Upon receiving this response, Dr. Macharola then looked at all of the board members present and asked for a verbal consensus of agreement. No board member present disagreed, all were in agreement.

Dr. Macharola thanked everyone for their presentations and great discussions.

Hearing of Visitors - Muhlenberg School District taxpayers and residents have an opportunity, at this time, to comment on matters of concern, official action, or deliberation which are or may be before the Muhlenberg School Board. ***This period of time is for comments only; it is not a time to engage in a question and answer or debate with the board. Comments from the Board are at the option of the Board.*** The Board retains the option to accept all public comment at this time. Presentations ***will*** be limited to two minutes per person. In the event that the Board determines that there is not sufficient time for residents or taxpayers of the School District to comment, the Board may defer the comment period to the next regular meeting.

There were none.

Adjourn Meeting

Moved by Mrs. Eagle and Mr. Lupia, that there being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting be adjourned. Meeting adjourned at 7:11 PM.

Attest:


Cindy L. Mengle
Secretary