

Horace Mann Elementary School Addition/Renovation Project

Horace Mann School Building Committee/DRC Meeting			
Date: Thursday, September 28, 2023			
Location: Zoom webinar			
Time: 6:00PM			
City Staff		Consultant Team	
Josh Morse	Public Buildings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Thomas Murphy	NV5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Alex Valcarce	Public Buildings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Melissa Gagnon	NV5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jini Fairley	City ADA Coordinator <input type="checkbox"/>	Gene Raymond	RDA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Steve Watchorn	RDA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Dustin Powell	Traverse <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
School Building Committee		Design Review Committee	
Alec Zimmer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mark Nardelli <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Amy Mackrell <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jonathan Kantar <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Alison Leary <input type="checkbox"/>	Stephanie Gilman <input type="checkbox"/>	Ambrose Donovan <input type="checkbox"/>	Josh Morse <input type="checkbox"/>
Ayesha Farag <input type="checkbox"/>	Maria S. Greenberg <input type="checkbox"/>	Andrea Kelley <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Michael Haueisen <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Chris Brezki <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Michael Feldstein <input type="checkbox"/>	Barney Heath <input type="checkbox"/>	Peter Barrer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Emily Prenner <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Maura Tynes <input type="checkbox"/>	Carol Schein <input type="checkbox"/>	Robert Hnasko <input type="checkbox"/>
John Oliver <input type="checkbox"/>	Maureen Lemieux <input type="checkbox"/>	Christina Abele <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SingNing Kuo <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jonathan Yeo <input type="checkbox"/>	Phil Grgurich <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	David Gillespie <input type="checkbox"/>	Steve Siegel <input type="checkbox"/>
Josh Morse <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tamika Olszewski <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ellen Light <input type="checkbox"/>	Tom Gloria <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Liam Hurley <input type="checkbox"/>		Emily Prenner <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Additional Attendees			
Nick LaVita <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ima Jonsdottir <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

Josh Morse opened the meeting at 6:06PM. Meeting participants and attendees were represented from RDA/Raymond Design Associates (Architect), Traverse Landscape Architects, NV5 (Owner's Project Manager), Horace Mann School Building Committee, Design Review Committee, elected officials and the Community. The intent of this meeting was to provide project updates regarding the site and landscape plans, summer due diligence work and some minor refinements to the proposed addition and interior renovations.

The meeting presentation and the video recording are both posted to the project website here:
<https://horacemann.projects.nv5.com/>.

It was noted that the City staff, RDA and NV5 met with Horace Mann school staff earlier today and made some good progress with positive feedback.

Gene Raymond and Steve Watchorn (RDA) and Dustin Powell of Traverse Landscape Architects provided site plan design updates which have transpired since the last SBC-DRC meeting. The previous site design option presented on 8/10 was version D.8; the option presented tonight is D.9.2.

Summer Due Diligence Work

RDA provided updates to the Summer Due Diligence work, which included consultant engineer visits to the site to perform borings and test pits, as well as a site survey, a thorough code review of the current concept plan and review energy requirements. In tandem with the onsite testing and analysis, the building design continued to be further developed.

A completed site survey was presented with rough locations of where the additions are proposed. A Geotechnical Borings Plan was presented as well as a Test Pit Plan where test pits were performed, to determine whether existing soil conditions can properly support new foundations. Based on preliminary results, some ground improvements with piles may be required to fully support the addition with a proper foundation system.

A flow test will be scheduled within the next few weeks.

The Horace Mann staff was updated earlier today and some very good feedback was received.

A next step includes cost estimating the current design to move forward to Schematic Design.

Site / Landscape Plan

RDA and Traverse presented an updated rendered site plan showing further refinements since the last meeting on 8/10/23. Some highlights are as follows:

- Comparisons were presented between the following playground conditions: Lincoln Eliot proposed (13,700SF), Horace Mann existing (18,000 SF) and Horace Mann proposed (17,000 SF).
- The existing baseball field was relocated to create a contiguous open green space at the top of the hill
- New U-8 90x60 soccer field
- New full-size basketball court
- Existing and new playgrounds are depicted (highlighted in purple) with rubberized poured in place surfacing

Design considerations and studies are ongoing with regard to the following:

- Accessible pathways to connect the upper and lower plateaus
- Site accessibility improvements
- The need for an additional outdoor learning space, between the school and the rear parking lot
- Practicality of green space adjacent to the rear of the building
- Pros and cons of flipping the basketball court with the new large playground
- Soft fencing/landscaping between the parking lot and the new large playground
- Fencing around the basketball court – amount, height and placement
- Activate the space between the building and play areas

The rendered playground image shows replicating the design which has been developed and proposed for the Lincoln Eliot School. The design team will continue to review the following items with teachers and staff:

- Specific play equipment and various play elements
- Individualized games shown on the basketball court
- Accessible pathways through the open field space and the baseball diamond area
- Additional landscape buffers between the neighborhood and the outdoor classroom
- Residential pedestrian improvements, such as a raised sidewalk
- Islands with shade trees to help heat island effect and provide some shade and greenery to the parking lot

Precedent images were presented for playground equipment, hard surface play and outdoor learning:

Playground Equipment

Playground equipment which is currently in the Lincoln Eliot design was presented and reviewed. Elements include swings, low level climbing structure, musical play and sensory panels.

The surface will be poured in place rubberized surfacing.

Precedent playground images were shown with a rock/nature theme, wooden structures, mounded play with low height equipment, rain gardens, formal seating/play feature, shade structures and a cascade climber.

Specific play equipment and various play elements will be reviewed, appropriate for Horace Mann.

Hard Surface Play

In addition to a full-size basketball court (40x60), some other games such as an obstacle course, four square and a plinko drop shot could be incorporated. The triangular area below basketball court is open and could serve as a staging area for classes to gather before going back into the building. Options will be reviewed with the teachers and the Working Group.

Outdoor Learning

Some precedent images were presented with themes for the outdoor classroom – natural, formal playful and gardening.

In addition to the outdoor classroom near the existing smaller play area, a second outdoor learning area was proposed and is being considered. This area could accommodate some raised garden beds.

Questions and Comments – Site Plan

- Covered outdoor learning area – A point was made that it may be easier to provide a cover at the location closer to the building, as opposed to near the parking lot.
- Adjustable basketball hoops – A point was made that adjustable basketball hoops will be important for students with disabilities. It was also noted that it will be important to consult with the after-school program re: the height of the hoops.
- Segmented older and younger playgrounds – A question was asked about the need to separate playgrounds by grades. Mark Nardelli noted that the new larger play area will be multi-age and multi-purpose. Separation of grades will happen through scheduling.
- Playground noise and possible impact to nearby classrooms – It was noted that the library is the closest to the playground, being on the first floor and classrooms are on the second level. Acoustical treatments are being studied for the library. The building will be air which will help to minimize impact from outside noise.
- Height of chain link fence around basketball court – it was noted that such a tall fence may create an obstacle for access and that it would be helpful for there to be more openings facing the building where many students exit to access the outdoor play areas. The City noted that there will likely be fencing along the edge of the playground as a barrier from the parking lot.

Building Design – Option D.9.2

Floor plans for all three levels were presented with some adjustments since the last meeting. Highlights include the following:

Lower Level

Gymnasium and cafetorium are on this level, located in the community center of the school.

Music moved into the top left corner, now adjacent to the stage and the cafetorium, with direct access to the stage, at the same elevation. The cafeteria, stage and kitchen have not changed. The L-shaped addition includes more back-of-house programming, including cafeteria storage and receiving. A new central stair was added, which runs through all three floors.

First Floor

Grades – kindergarten, 1, 2 and 3.

Intent is to activate and provide collaborative learning experiences. Included project areas and breakout rooms for each of the clusters. The kindergarten cluster has its own break out area. Each of the other grades have a combined breakout and project area; layouts from other elementary schools in Newton are being studied.

Trying to limit the extent of demolition. Want to provide meaningful spaces that align with the educational program and provide required adjacencies while trying to salvage as many of the existing walls and infrastructure as possible. Per the current design, the stair at plan west will be salvaged. Also, per the code review summary, both existing and new stairs can all be open and do not need to be enclosed. The open stair design will allow the building to have a much more open feel.

Second Floor

Some SPED and support service spaces. Clusters for grades 4 and 5 with breakout and project areas centrally located per cluster.

Per recent refinements, the overall size of the addition has been reduced and a more succinct plan has been developed for the existing building.

It was noted that although the addition slightly was reduced in size the net SF has increased because the design has become more efficient in the addition. For the user experience it's a net increase but GSF is reduced due to overall efficiency.

It was also noted that RDA is working to maximize natural daylight throughout the building throughout the building, with skylights and glass corridor walls, which will enliven existing long dark corridors. May try to borrow sunlight from 2-story library.

Questions and Comments – Building Design

- Classroom size – In response to a question regarding classroom SF, RDA noted the kindergarten classroom SF is at the MSBA standard size of 1100SF. The other classrooms are around 900SF which is similar to classrooms at the other new elementary schools in Newton. Classrooms may be +/- a few SF due to locations of existing walls.
- Phasing of the addition and work inside the existing building – the City of Newton noted the plan is for the project to be phased with selective demo in the first summer, new construction/addition throughout the school year and selective demo of interior walls the following summer.

- Classroom sizes of existing vs. proposed – the City noted an overall comparison can be provided. It was also noted there will be some evolution of design with the non-classroom spaces.
- Groupings of the classrooms with the project spaces may need some refining. The design team will take a closer look at possible ways to optimize layouts. RDA noted that with regard to the kindergarten cluster, the stair is open and is part of the corridor, so the students do not need to walk through the stair as part of the grade cluster.
- RDA presented an older version of a 3-D rendering with the new addition. These images will be updated to reflect the current design. Front and back images were presented.

Schedule and Timeline

Josh shared an original timeline. The original schedule, prior to the override results. The original goal was to start construction in January 2025, which assumed design phase would resume in March 2023. However, whereas design resumed in July 2023, it looks like the project would be completed in the winter of 2026/2027, during the holiday break.

Two summers will likely be required to complete the project. It was noted that the project is ready to move into the early Site Plan Review process with Site Plan Approval in the January/February 2024 timeframe. Phasing will need to be figured out so two summers can be utilized. Based on the design progress and status, the City will work with NV5 and RDA to update the overall schedule and distribute to the DRC, SBC and the Horace Mann Community.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:22 PM.

Prepared by: Melissa Gagnon, NV5 [End of 09/28/23 Meeting Minutes]