

Town of Darien
Tokeneke and Royle School Building Committee
Regular Meeting
Thursday, August 22, 2013

MINUTES

Attendees: Deb Ritchie, Bruce Hill, David Genovese Gwen Mogenson, Katie Stein, Mike Lynch, Heather Shea (Board of Education),

Ms. Ritchie called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM. All members were present except Ms. Mogenson. Motion made by Ms. Stein to approve agenda for this meeting, Genovese seconded, all voted in favor.

Motion made by Ms. Stein to approve minutes of the July 30th and August 1st tour of schools meetings. Hill seconded, all voted in favor

Ms. Ritchie explained that she had spoken with Royle principal, Keith Margolus, about the conceptual ideas presented to the Committee, specifically, if OT and PT space in the basement could work or would this cause problems. His view is that there could be issues for several disabled students.

Ms. Ritchie also asked Keith if moving the cafeteria to the other side of the building presented problems. He has a concern that deliveries could cause problems as they may distract students. Timing of deliveries would need to be coordinated more carefully than happens now. He also expressed a concern about creating an additional point of access, and the security issue created by this change.

Ms. Stein explained that she spoke with Tokeneke principal, Mary Michelson. Mary requested that consideration be given to creating a separate entrance off Tokeneke Road for ELP, as the current drop-off situation is confusing to some.

Mary also explained that with the expansion, we will want to make sure that there is sufficient blacktop for the "wall ball" area. Mary also explained that we may need additional parking for ELP, as parking at Tokeneke has been an issue given the current usage of the building.

Ms. Mogenson joined the meeting at 9:40.

Ms. Shea presented the Board of Education (BOE) enrollment projections for the next several years.

- Based on a roll forward of the existing enrollment, with no attrition, enrollment is expected to increase at the elementary level. Kindergarten enrollment has been increasing faster than the birth rate 5 years earlier, indicating a migration of new K students into the Darien school district.
- An absorption analysis considers the number of additional students per grade per school that can be accommodated before adding another section

(classroom). The absorption analysis indicates that there are several sections at various schools each year where there is very little leeway to accommodate additional students.

- Based on the 8/1/13 registered enrollment, 2 additional sections at Holmes will be added (K and 4th grade). Some schools added sections in one grade and reduced them in another with no change in the overall number of sections required.
- There are 118 total elementary school sections for 2013-14. Total elementary school capacity is 125 classrooms, not including 14 existing portables. Based on the absorption analysis and not including new students coming from The Heights (previously Allen O'Neill) or Kensett developments, classroom demand will increase to 120-130 sections by 2017-18.

Ms. Shea also noted that the BOE had reviewed several expansion options including leased space before approving additions at Tokeneke and Royle.

- The foundation at Ox Ridge cannot support a second floor addition and it is on a shallow water table with large wetland restrictions.
- Holmes has no land space.
- Adding classrooms also requires additional space for more parking, gym etc. Hindley's gym is already over the section use capacity.
- The Ed Specs (building requirements) are designed for flexibility.

Ms. Shea explained the construction proposal.

- Add 8 classrooms to Tokeneke (4 each on two floors) as an addition to the existing ELP wing. Two of the classrooms will be used to centralize the town-wide ELP function with a dedicated ELP pick up and drop off access point. The playground would have to be relocated to the field area.
- Add 5 classrooms to Royle by building a 2000 sq. ft. cafeteria addition to the existing common room and renovating the existing 1800 sq. ft. lower cafeteria space to accommodate the art room, support school services and storage. No grade level classrooms would be located in the current cafeteria level.

Mr. Lynch indicated that the construction budget is \$4.7 million, including compliance work to bring Royle up to code. Royle was last renovated in 1996 and building codes have changed. The cost is based on the square footage added at a set cost per sq. ft. Tokeneke uses new construction costs and Royle is based on new construction for the Kitchen addition and renovation cost to reconfigure the existing lower level.

Mr. Lynch provided a sample Request for Proposal (RFP) for architectural services. The RFP will be sent to four firms including the architect for the new Tokeneke School, architect for the Royle 1996 renovation and two other firms with experience in school design. The RFP will have a short 3-week response deadline.

The Building Committee then had a fulsome discussion of the information provided. They had no issues with the Tokeneke building proposal but had several issues with the Royle proposal.

- The proposal does not address known existing HVAC problems relating to the first grade wing and 2nd floor (5th grade) classrooms. Perhaps it would be better to raze the first grade wing and replace with a two-story addition?
- The scale of the proposed Royle addition does not address potential longer term issues if The Heights and Kensett, or the Golden property development, significantly increase enrollment.
- The committee seemed to feel that we were being asked to under-build for a possible future and that the Royle addition could be deemed inadequate in a relatively short period of time.

The committee asked that Mr. Genovese summarize these concerns in a memo and will ask for a meeting with the BOE Facilities sub-committee to discuss the scope of the elementary school expansion project.

Ms. Stein moved and Mr. Hill seconded a motion to release the RFP to the four architectural firms, covering both the Tokeneke and Royle plans. It passed unanimously.

The committee voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:35 AM.

Respectfully submitted.
Gwen Mogenson, Clerk