

Community Meeting Notes

121-08038/A204a

Riverview Elementary School Replacement

October 7, 2008

Riverview Elementary School Library

A Community Meeting was held to gather public input regarding the Riverview Elementary School Replacement. It is early in the process of developing the replacement school. This phase is called Pre-design and involves completing the Educational Specifications, reviewing site opportunities and constraints and collecting input from the various stakeholders. The building layout has not yet been determined. This meeting is part of the input which will inform the building and site design.

Riverview Principal Tammy Jones described the process to date and shared the key themes and ideas that have been generated by the Ed Spec Committee. This was followed by a substantial discussion among the entire group, consisting of neighbors, parents, teachers, staff, project managers and architects. Following is a synopsis of the discussion:

Process and Community Input

- There is a weblog for the Machias and Riverview Elementary School projects, which is open for public comments and questions at <http://machias-riverview.blogspot.com>.
- How was the Ed Spec Committee selected?
 - The Ed Spec Committee includes key staff (Principal, Secretary, Librarian), Teacher Representatives and Parent Representatives.
 - Teacher Representatives were chosen based on a combination of interest and availability, with consideration of the number of District-wide efforts that many teachers are involved in.
 - Parent Representatives include parents who have a track record of interest and involvement with the school, subject to their availability.
 - The Ed Spec Committee has invested numerous hours in defining the qualities and components to be incorporated in the new school. A round of applause indicated the community's appreciation of these dedicated committee members.
- How was the architect selected?
 - A public Request for Qualifications was issued to obtain the resumes, relevant experience, references and company information from teams of Architects and their consulting Engineers.
 - From the RFQ responses, an Architect Selection committee chose a shortlist of firms to interview.
 - The committee conducted the interviews and evaluated each team before deciding on a selection to recommend to the School Board.
- The community would like to have the Board Meeting notes posted more quickly to the District website.

- The project timeline should be posted on the website. (*Subsequent to the meeting, the draft timeline was posted to the project weblog.*)

Community History and Culture

- A desire to preserve memories of the existing school was expressed. A Legacy Committee is being put together to preserve stories and identify artifacts expressing the school's history and culture.
- The new school should have a brass bell as a continuation of the tradition of school bells at Riverview.
- There was a suggestion to re-use some of the existing bricks as an historical connection to the existing school building.
- It is important to maintain a country atmosphere at the school.
- The existing building is the second Riverview School.
- A time capsule was suggested to preserve memories of the existing school.

Cost and Schedule

- A community member noted that a nearby elementary school was built for a construction cost of \$17 million. This project is expected to have a construction cost of about \$20 million (in today's dollars) and a total project cost between \$35-40 million (at completion of the project).
- The Ed Spec committee has targeted an accelerated schedule, with the new school ready to occupy in January 2011. If the committee believes at any time that the accelerated schedule will compromise the quality of the building design, they will revert to the original schedule (occupancy in Summer 2011). It is also possible that external factors (permitting, weather, site conditions, etc.) could extend the schedule.
- The current schedule includes moving students and staff to the Freshman Campus from June 2009 until January 2011.

Building and Site Design

- The community would like to see contiguous interior building to maintain the interior community at the school. The different grade levels K-6 enjoy seeing each other as they pass in the hallways. The school should have an open, transparent feel.
- It is important to make this the best kid-friendly environment possible. Incorporate kids' input where possible. The existing courtyards were planted by the kids.
- The site needs to be accessible and open after hours; it must have community park feel.
- Sustainability:
 - Community members expressed a strong desire for sustainable design. Students at the school are learning a lot about sustainable practices.
 - The new building should be a model of sustainability. It would be great to include solar power (photovoltaics).

- Will it be a LEED building? No, it will comply with the Washington Sustainable Schools Protocol (WSSP). The WSSP is equivalent to LEED Silver, but is geared more to the requirements of schools and has less onerous documentation requirements.
- There should be a budget allowance for art to be incorporated in the project. Little Cedars Elementary has art integrated into the site design. There is cool art integrated in Snohomish Public Library.
- The school should be an inviting place for the community to gather. They do not want a cold modern look to the building. It should be warm. Snohomish Public Library was cited as an example.
- There is a need for good equipment for playground. Recess is an important time for the students. Also, the playground and field are well used outside of school hours by the community.
- The school should have a pitched roof, to better withstand our wet climate. A flat or inverted roof could lead to water problems.
- Accessibility is important to accommodate all students and staff, including power switches at doors and level entryways to the building.
- What kind of technology will be in the new school? The Ed Spec calls for the most current applicable technology at the classrooms, including Smartboards and sound reinforcement. The District Technology Director has been working with the Ed Spec Committee to define the current standard.

Roads and Transportation

- There are safety issues with the current traffic circulation. Bus and car traffic should be separated. There are currently 6 large busses and 2 small ones.
- The road gets congested before and after school.
- Traffic would be less of a problem if more students rode the bus to school. There should be more information about busing provided to parents. There are many families on variance, who live outside the bus service area, who chose to go to Riverview because it is a great school.
- There was a suggestion that neighbors should accommodate parking in front of their lots, to avoid a more intrusive road widening.

Utilities and Systems

- It was noted that there are buried water and storm drain lines along the street frontage, 30' from the edge of the road.
- A question was raised as to whether sewer lines will be brought to the site, or if septic drainfields will continue to be used. The current plan is to use a septic drainfield and an analysis is currently being performed to evaluate the capacity of the existing system and the required capacity for the new school. The current student population is less than 400, but the new school (including the drainfield) will be designed for a student population of 600.
- The team should review if natural gas should be brought to the site, or if propane will continue to be used as the fuel source for the school.

- A neighbor noted that the site and surrounding properties have drainage problems. There are lots of wells on nearby sites, some quite close to the surface. The site used to be a horse pasture that required a drainage pipe to keep from accumulating water. Dewatering may be needed.
- A community member indicated that radiant heat is prone to problems requiring repair.

Transition

- There was a concern expressed about the impact of the demolition of the existing building on students, who may perceive it as a “violent” upheaval. The teachers and staff will begin conversations with students to explain the process and the transition to a new school.
- What is freshman campus like? There are concerns about mold and mildew which should be remedied.
- It will be important to provide a quality playground at Freshman Campus. Can the newer playground equipment from Riverview be moved?
- Will the school boundaries be adjusted? It is not known at this time.
- Lessons learned from Little Cedars should be transferred to the new project. The Ed Spec committee has met with Little Cedars staff to review their feedback, so that information is incorporated in the Ed Spec.

Construction Quality

- The lowest bidder is not always the best for the project. Is there a law about low-bidder? Yes, on a public bid project, the law requires that the lowest qualifying bidder be used. The District and the Architect review bidder qualifications. How can we avoid construction workmanship problems? In addition to District oversight and the Architect’s observations, the District has hired Heery International for another level of project management to oversee the Contractor’s work.