

Thurgood Marshall Middle School – Lynn, MA	MEETING MINUTES
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Public Forum No. 2	November 14, 2012
Location:	Thurgood Marshall Middle School Cafeteria
Time:	7:00 PM

1. Opening Remarks:

Dr. Latham welcomed everyone to the second public forum regarding the Thurgood Marshall Middle School building project. She thanked the school committee members and councilors and principal and other key team members for being present and showing their support for the project. Dr. Latham reviewed the presentation agenda and then reminded the public that there will be a meeting at Council Chambers on Tuesday 6:30 City Council Chambers to discuss Eminent Domain. The Superintendent invited everyone to go to the meeting to become informed, ask questions and get involved. She then introduced Gene Raymond, of Raymond Design Associates (RDA), the Designer for the project to discuss Site Options.

2. Available Site Options:

Mr. Raymond showed the original five site options explored by the planning and design team before explaining the positives and negatives of each site. He then showed a chart that represented the thorough site options analysis completed on each of the five site options and how the Brookline Site was chosen as the preferred option.

Preferred Option - Brookline Street:

Mr. Raymond explained that three different strategies have been explored on the Brookline Site, and that the site preferred by the school committee was the option that involved no takings. The option would involve the purchase of a vacant lot on Brookline Street. The entire school program fits on the site with enough parking for teachers and staff. A member of the public asked why the takings were decided against since it would give them the option for more play space. Mr. Raymond explained that the takings would be disruptive and expensive and would result in a small play field. The current design includes a playfield on the roof of the gym and cafetorium that will maximize the building footprint, while avoiding the need to take homes through eminent domain. The ground floor holds the community spaces, making them more accessible to the public than the classrooms, which are on upper floors of the school. The long layout of the design allows the seventh and eighth grade to be in one end of the building, and the sixth grade to be on the other side to separate the two and make the transition from elementary school to the middle school an easier one for the students.

Existing Thurgood Marshall Middle School Site:

This site is smaller than the Brookline Site and many houses and businesses would need to be taken on Essex Street in order to get the same sized site as the site on Brookline Street. This is an expensive, disruptive option. If the houses on Essex Street were to be taken, there would be room for the school, play space and 150 parking spaces, but the process is expensive and disruptive to everyone. The process would begin with relocating residents and businesses on Essex Street before demolishing the buildings. Next, the classroom wing of the new school would be built in place of the demolished buildings. When that step is complete, the students would move into the new wing of the building, and the existing school would be demolished before the gymnasium and cafeteria and various other critical pieces of the building could be built. The whole process is disruptive to the community and the students who would likely be without a gym or cafeteria for over a year. While not the ideal option, it is the first fallback option if something does not work out with the Brookline Site.

Keaney Park Site:

The third option, which is the second fallback option to the Brookline Site, would be located on, or adjacent to the Keaney Park Site next to the English High School. There are two options that have been considered for this site. The first option is to locate the school on the park site itself. This would take the place of the existing Little League field, which would be rebuilt on another part of the site. The building would also result in the loss of three softball fields used by the English High School sports program. If the school were to be built on the park site, federal law mandates that the City of Lynn would have to replace the park space elsewhere in the City. This would be extremely difficult given the density of the City. The second option would involve nearly 30 takings, including both homes and businesses. Both options are costly and would only be reconsidered if the Brookline Street Site and Existing Thurgood Marshall Middle School options did not work out.

3. Preliminary Geo-Environmental:

Mr. Raymond explained that the team is taking an in depth look at the history of the Brookline Site by looking at public records dating back to the 1850s as a preliminary examination of the site's geo-environmental status. Because the site is currently private property, the City is unable to get access to the site to take borings and do soil testing at this time. The extensive historical study of the Brookline Street Site has shown that any known problems with the site have been remediated; meaning any contaminated soil on the site has been removed and replaced with clean, safe soil. The project will have a Licensed Site Professional (LSP) on-site during all of the earth work as a precaution just in case anything is discovered during site work. The LSP will also make sure that the correct procedures are taken if contamination is discovered and needs to be remediated.

4. Schedule:

Lynn Stapleton of Joslin, Lesser + Associates (Joslin Lesser), the Owner's Project Managers for the project, explained the project schedule as it currently stands. She explained that the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) should approve the project in June of 2013. In July of 2013, the City will vote to approve the funding of the project. After that, if any houses or businesses need to be taken by eminent domain, that process will start after the City votes to approve funding. Design Development will take place during the same time period. In March 2014, the construction documents will be completed and bidding will commence soon thereafter. Construction would begin in June 2014, although some early packages will go out to bid and construction could start earlier which would mean the school could be completed earlier than expected.

5. Public Comment

Chris Clocher (8 Seymour Avenue)

Mr. Clocher asked when the Schematic Design (SD) phase will take place.

Joslin Lesser stated that the SD phase would begin in January 2013 after the MSBA votes the project into the SD phase in Jan 2013 and will wrap up in April 2013.

Mr. Clocher asked if there be another public forum when SD is completed.

Joslin Lesser informed the public that there will continue to be public forums throughout the project in order to keep the community involved with and informed about the project.

Jesse Jaeger (7 Williams Place)

Mr. Jaeger explained that he had driven past the Brookline Street Site and noticed many large trucks in the area. The trucks were coming and going from the Durkee Mower Marshmallow Fluff factory location. He asked whether the traffic on and around the site would be considered as part of the project.

Joslin Lesser explained that each MSBA submission requires some level of traffic study to be done for the site. As the submissions progress, the more in depth the traffic studies for the site will be. Councilor Darren Cyr added that the deliveries to and from Durkee Mower are generally made during hours when the school is not in session.

Mr. Jaeger noted that he was very glad to hear that there is a parent on the planning committee. He explained that he thinks there should be more parents, specifically parents of children that will be among the first to attend the new school, on the planning committee and asked whether this was something the City would consider. He also suggested that the whole City be notified of the public forums to ensure a larger population of parents and citizens in general would participate in the project discussion.

Dr. Latham explained that the MSBA approved the committee early on in the process, but that parents are invited and encouraged to attend the public forums that will be taking place throughout the project. Flyers were sent home with students in all schools in order to encourage a larger turnout of parents. The flyer as well as public meeting minutes, public forum PowerPoint presentations and much more is posted on the City's website to keep the community informed.

Peter Grocki (6 Marianna Street)

Mr. Grocki expressed his disappointment in citizen turnout at the public forum and suggested that the City explore different options to get the information out to the community. He also stated that he felt the decision on site selection was made too quickly and that the public was not informed during the decision-making process. He felt more time was needed to make a more informed decision.

Dr. Latham explained that 80% of the eligible costs of the project were being funded by the MSBA. In order to receive this funding, the City needs to follow the MSBA rules, process and deadline schedule. Dr. Latham reiterated that the City has been posting everything online, making the selection process as transparent as possible. The City posts meeting minutes from planning and design meetings, the presentation from public forums, the public forum meeting notes. She also mentioned that the public forums are televised to reach out to those that are unable to attend.

Mr. Grocki interpreted RDA's comment that the site is tight as meaning there would not be enough space on site to build. He then asked why the planning committee would build the school in such close proximity of the train tracks.

Dr. Latham noted that Lynn Vocational Technical School is also extremely close to train tracks and is operating successfully. She then explained that the MSBA will allow approximately 176,000 square feet of school space based on the 1100 student enrollment and that the Brookline Street Site is capable of handling a school of that size. She stated that of course the City would love a larger site, but that the space is not available in Lynn.

Mr. Grocki asked why larger options like Keaney Park are not being explored as the preferred option. He also further expressed his disappointment in the City's ability to inform its citizens of the site analysis process.

Joslin Lesser explained that an extremely thorough site analysis had been completed that took a hard look at everything from the number and cost of possible takings, to the ability to fit the building program, to traffic in order to reach the conclusion that the Brookline Site is the best option overall. It was also stated

that the chart shown during the presentation was only a visual summary of everything discussed in the meeting minutes and forum notes that can be found on the City's website. Joslin Lesser went on to explain that the biggest problems with the Keaney Park site came down to cost and general community disruption. If the school is built on the playfields, federal law mandates that park space would need to be replicated on another site somewhere in the City, due to its density, finding that amount of space in Lynn would be nearly impossible, and likely very expensive. The second option on the Keaney Park site involves the taking of 27 properties (a mixture of homes and businesses); it would be one of the most expensive and disruptive options.

Mr. Grockie said that he had read in The Item that the schools are suffering from overcrowding. Given this information, he wanted to know how the Brookline Site option would be able to grow in the future if it is on such a tight, landlocked site.

Dr. Latham explained that the MSBA requires the building to meet the needs of the City for the next 50 years. After an extensive population growth study done by the MSBA, a student population of 1100 will meet the needs of the school for at least 50 years.

Gardy Jean-Francois

Mr. Jean-Francois expressed his disappointment that the community did not come to the forum to learn more about this important project. He suggested that the City find a better way to get the message around to members of the community. He noted that he had heard that 14,000 flyers went out about the project, but that they were somehow still not the best way to get the message out. He stated that the Thurgood Marshall Middle School project is important to the community, and that parents need to get involved. He noted that with a project of this level of importance, the room should be full.

Nehemiah Brent (20 Empire Street)

Mr. Brent stated that he lives very close to the Brookline Street Site, and yet he noted that many of his neighbors had not come to the forum. He stated that communication between the City and the community is a problem, and that the citizens need to be better informed about the project. Mr. Brent made it clear that more of the community needs to be informed about meetings in a different way, and added that it would be terrible if the construction started and the neighbors did not know anything about the project.

Dr. Latham took this opportunity to remind the audience that there would be a meeting in the Council Chambers to discuss eminent domain on Tuesday, November 20th at 6:30PM. She stressed the importance of passing this message along. She also reminded everyone that the information regarding the project's progress and any important meeting information could be found online at the City's website.

Jesse Jaeger

Mr. Jaeger suggested that the City go around to the other schools in the district to explain the project. He explained that going to the different schools would be a better way to reach more people in their own neighborhoods.

Councilor Darren Cyr explained that the City has been reaching out to the community. The team has spoken to the school's principals, to newspapers, and have even gotten the message out via television. He explained that the City does not have the manpower necessary to go door to door, but expressed that the City will be

working harder to reach more of the community. He also stated that the Brookline Street Site makes the most sense for the City as a whole and encouraged the public to go onto the City's website to take a look at the data to better understand why it is the best option, and why it will save the City money. Councilor Cyr also commended Superintendent Latham for all her hard work on the project.

6. Closing:

Dr. Latham thanked everyone for their participation in the second of a number of public forums on the topic of the Thurgood Marshall Middle School project. She then encouraged everyone to attend the meeting to discuss eminent domain on Tuesday, November 20th at 6:30PM.

Public Forum #2

Sign-In List

Location: Thurgood Marshall Middle School Cafeteria - 7:00 PM

	name (nombre)/e-mail	address (dirección) /phone (teléfono)
41	name/ nombre: Path Capano e-mail: path7761@hotmail.com	address / dirección: 105 Ruffe Heights Rd Lynn phone / teléfono:
42	name/ nombre: Jane Grocki e-mail:	address / dirección: 6 Marianna St phone / teléfono: 781 584 6937
43	name/ nombre: Chris Clocher e-mail: chrisclocher@yahoo.com	address / dirección: 8 Seymar Ave. phone / teléfono: 781 598 5839
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47	name/ nombre: Irene Cowdell e-mail:	address / dirección: phone / teléfono:
48	name/ nombre: Kelsey Cowdell e-mail:	address / dirección: phone / teléfono:
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Public Forum #2 - PUBLIC COMMENT

Sign-In List

Location: Thurgood Marshall Middle School Cafeteria - 7:00 PM

	name (nombre)/e-mail	address (dirección) /phone (teléfono)
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102	name/ nombre: PJH/Cruti e-mail:	address / dirección: C Portman St phone / teléfono:
103	name/ nombre: Chris Clocher e-mail: chnsclcher@yahoo.com	address / dirección: 8 Setmar Ave. phone / teléfono: 781 598 5939
104	name/ nombre: GARDY JEAN-FRANCOIS e-mail:	address / dirección: 781 354-2402 phone / teléfono:
105	name/ nombre: Nehemiah Breat e-mail:	address / dirección: 20 Empire Street phone / teléfono:
106	name/ nombre: e-mail:	address / dirección: phone / teléfono:
107	name/ nombre: e-mail:	address / dirección: phone / teléfono:
108	name/ nombre: e-mail:	address / dirección: phone / teléfono:
109	name/ nombre: e-mail:	address / dirección: phone / teléfono:
110	name/ nombre: e-mail:	address / dirección: phone / teléfono:

Approximately 100 were in attendance. Very few signed in.