

Facilities Planning Task Force
Oct. 30, 2012
Meeting Minutes

Attending members: Leslie Adamson, Mike Anderson, Pam Behee, Alex Brede, Steve Clarke, Paul Clement, Ron Cowan, Missy Ferguson, Marilyn Grams, Hale Hanaway, Laura Johanson, Jay Jordan, Mary LeDonne, Rob McElroy, Teri McIntyre, James Pai, Mark Peterson, Rick Qualls, Vicky Reardon, Zoe Roberts, Evan Schmitt, Phyllis Textor, Tom Venable, Rachel Williams and Doug Nichols

Co-Chairs: Jim and Linden Darling

Ex-Officio: Superintendent Greg Baker, Executive Director of Communications and Community Relations Tanya Rowe

Union Representatives: Kris Craker, Peggy Shepherd, BASE; Bill Stuckrath, BAO; Matt Read, SEIU; David Vanderyacht, Teamsters

Welcome: Co-Chair Jim Darling welcomed the group. He presented the previous meeting minutes.

Clean-up work:

- Jim Darling presented a question about Options High School enrollment and the ideal number the district is looking for future small high school enrollment.
 - Deputy Superintendent Tom Venable said the district is seeking a capacity of 250 students. The location is undetermined. After talking to other districts, it seems it is a good idea to keep the school close to the business district.
 - Superintendent Greg Baker said the district is looking for a site that would accommodate 250 students but was also flexible to allow additions.
- Assistant Superintendent Ron Cowan addressed a question about charter schools. He said the current state initiative allows for 40 charter schools throughout the state, based on need and socio-economic make up. The charter school must be approved by the local school board. He said he doesn't think this should have a significant impact on district capacity but there are also too many unknowns.
- Ron Cowan said the district would like to expand the Highly Capable Learners (HCL) program. He said the district currently envisions a pull-out model, where students would leave class and attend the program at another location. He does not think capacity needs to be added for this.
 - A task force member said there are 120 students in the elementary level of HCL.
 - Ron Cowan said the district wants to serve more than that.
- Ron Cowan said the district wants to support families who choose to homeschool. The district is not sure what the program or facility needs are at this stage.

Presentations:

Repurposing Presentation by Task Force members Rob McElroy and Missy Ferguson

Executive Administrator Rob McElroy introduced the presentation. He said the district has not repurposed or closed buildings in the last 30 years, but has done this in the past.

- New school construction in the last 30 years
 - New schools built on new sites
 - Kulshan Middle School, Squalicum High School, Geneva Elementary School, Northern Heights Elementary School, Wade King Elementary School and Cordata Elementary School.
 - New schools built on the same site
 - Silver Beach Elementary School, Fairhaven Middle School, Bellingham High School, Shuksan Middle School, Whatcom Middle School and Birchwood Elementary School
 - In the north end of the district, there are several new schools including Squalicum and Shuksan. At center of the district, new schools include Bellingham High, Whatcom and Kulshan middle schools. Looking at the south end of the district, there have only been two new schools in the last 30 years.
- Summary of physical condition and functional adequacy scores: Rob McElroy presented the scores that Dave Teater from Educational Service District (ESD) 112 had given the task force previously. Rob McElroy pointed out that the consultant's findings indicate Columbia, Carl Cozier, Alderwood and Roosevelt elementary schools need work but not a whole remodel.
 - The data shows that Larrabee is one school we need to consider for repurposing
 - Current school built in 1919
 - Data also shows that Roeder school needs to be considered for repurposing; it has been a school and administrative office.
- Factors, criteria, considerations for repurposing or closure
 - He asked the task force to “turn and talk” and bring up ideas
 - Ideas the task force presented included community/neighborhood needs and desires.
 - Size, safety, accessibility, delivery of services, cost per student and feature programs were other topics the task force wanted considered as factors.
- Do we have schools that are safe?
 - Accessibility is an issue at Columbia, Lowell and Larrabee elementary schools. Students on crutches or in a wheelchair and parents and community members with accessibility issues currently cannot access the upper floors of Columbia, Lowell, Larrabee or the District Office. They either need to attend a school outside of their neighborhood area or services need to be brought to the first floor for them, as feasible. A task force member said that she did not feel this was acceptable.

- The schools need capacity for current and projected enrollment.
 - Southside is unique because there are three schools in a one-mile radius. Of those three schools, one of these schools is over capacity and two are under capacity.
- Cost efficiency
 - Elementary operational costs includes certificated staff, classified staff, utilities. Even though Wade King Elementary School cost \$100,000 more per year to run than Larrabee Elementary, it holds more students, so the cost per student at Wade King is actually less.
- Which facilities, sites, and locations are good candidates for remodel/rebuild?
 - When looking for a new site, the district would like 10 acres of land.
 - A member asked does the functional adequacy score include space for students outside the school?
 - ESD consultant Doug Nichols said outside space is integrated into the functional adequacy score. He said the general condition of the sites were mostly good.
- Capacity
 - Do we have space for in our schools for programs such as music, physical education, special education, preschool services, etc?
- Potential programs that need facility space:
 - Early childhood center
 - Home-school partnership
 - Highly Capable Learners' program

Lowell Elementary School principal Missy Ferguson said she has taught in schools with 500 students or less. She has also been principal of very small schools including Columbia and Lowell elementary schools. She said those schools have a very close knit staff and a strong sense of community. Schools that are smaller will sometimes have a single teacher at each grade level. When this happens, the teacher doesn't have as many options for collaboration with other teachers. Even though Missy Ferguson said she enjoys working in a smaller school, she said that collaboration is huge. She said very small schools can have drawbacks.

Miscellaneous Projects presented by Buildings and Grounds Director Mike Anderson

Mike Anderson said that there have been bonds in the past and this money has been used for the following projects:

- Building Envelope
 - Roofing, windows, skylights, doors and walls
- Energy/Resource Conservation
 - Digital controls, unit ventilators, steam traps
- Exterior Buildings and Grounds

- Asphalt, storm drainage, pick up/drop off, etc.
- Painting
- Flooring
- Improvement Projects from 2006
 - Principal requests, fire alarms, boilers, hazmat and renovations

District improvements completed since the last bond:

- Direct Digital Control temperature systems have been placed at Birchwood, Parkview and Sunnyland elementary schools.
- A lot of roofing work has been completed throughout the district. He said painting is the first level of defense to keep moisture out of the building.
- Fire alarm systems were updated at several schools.
- Replaced a boiler at Silver Beach Elementary School.
- Replaced heat pumps at Roosevelt due to vandalism.
- Added a new sprinkler system at warehouse building.

Proposed Miscellaneous Projects for Future Bond

- The district has 1.3 million square feet of roofing. The district would need to spend \$180,000 a year just to stay even. Buildings and Grounds is seeking \$500,000 for these upgrades.
- The district has 6 million square feet of coated surfaces. Buildings and Grounds is seeking \$500,000 for these upgrades.
- The district has 1 million square feet of covered floor surface. It cost \$4.50 per square foot to replace. In a 20-year cycle, in order to maintain the carpet, it would cost \$200,000 per year. The district is asking for \$500,000.
- The district would like to upgrade Direct Digital Control systems throughout schools.
 - This system has started saving \$100,000 at Squalicum High School after the first year.
 - A member asked about energy grants and if the school district has applied for some.
 - Mike Anderson said that the state requires the use of specific engineers and contractors which can impact costs.
 - Ron Cowan added that the district has received rebates from energy providers. If the district gets a rebate, that goes back into the general fund.
- Jim Darling asked on behalf the task force, would it be unreasonable to assume in this 6-year period that \$1 million per year for maintenance would be sufficient?
 - Ron Cowan said this would accelerate replacements. He said that money from the capital budget cannot be used for repairs, it can only be used for replacements. Because of this, systems tend to be pushed further to the point of replacement. If

we sprung a leak, we wouldn't be able to fix it with capital funds because it's a repair.

- The district wants to replace walls at Alderwood and it would cost about \$200,000.
- Repairing the loading zone at Happy Valley is needed. The district has spoken with the City of Bellingham, to allow the improvement. The district wants to widen the street so parents can pick up their students and not impede traffic.

Bellingham School District Vacant Development Properties presented by Ron Cowan

- Properties we own already
 - Vining Street Property, 5.5 acres
 - Mount Baker Highway Property, donated to the district, 2.19 acres
 - West Maplewood Property, 1.09 acres
 - Cougar Road Property, 17.34 acres acquired a year ago for a school site someday near the King Mountain area. This property is positioned well to build a school in the northside. It is difficult to find property, so planning well in advance is needed.
 - This site size is suited best for a future elementary or middle school

Middle and High School Capacity

- For middle school, projected enrollment for the 2022 school year stays below capacity.
- For the high school level, projected enrollment will exceed capacity in 2018-19.
- Elementary and middle schools capacity look fine for the next 10 years, but high schools are getting close.

Elementary Capacity with Additional Pre-K

- If there was one section of pre-k in every elementary, we would not have enough capacity in the future.
- Tom Venable said the district is trying to help close the achievement gap by getting students into school earlier.
- Superintendent Greg Baker said there are three categories of pre-k; there is state-funded pre-k, there is private pre-k and there is no pre-k for many students whose families can't afford it. The state has suggested early childhood education is a good investment.

Next meeting: 8 a.m. Friday, Nov. 2, District Office Board Room