



PUBLIC FORUM NOTES

Date: December 18, 2013

Project: RSU #19 Major Capital Improvement Projects

Subject: Etna-Dixmont Public Forum

Discussion:

1. Darren Briggs gave a quick introduction of the project and introduced team.
2. Greg Potter explained where we are in the process. The district has two approved state funded projects, #3 Nokomis Elementary School and #6 Nokomis High School. He explained concept approval and planning.
3. Greg emphasized that these are state funded projects and that OPA is currently instructed to stay within the state funded dollars for design. The district could raise additional money for enhancements if they chose to do so.
4. Greg explained that the high school may be new or renovated but the elementary school would be new as recommended by the state.
5. Greg explained pre-concept and concept contracts with OPA and how that money is reimbursable if the public votes yes for the project.
6. OPA will come up with several plan options and recommendations.
7. OPA looking district wide to see what kind of configuration would be best for the district and what shape the other facilities are in.
8. Rob Tillotson explained that we don't have to do exactly what was awarded; it is open and can be negotiated with the state.

Q: If the referendum passes are we committed to concept?

A: Yes

9. Darren explained how each stage and each straw poll is important to move forward.

Q: Will we know if there are extras added to the project for the referendum?

A: Yes, Rob explained that we were hired to do a state funded school. First there will be a straw poll for site, then a straw poll for concept and then the referendum. At referendum, the district will know the exact cost of the project including any enhancements chosen by the district.

10. Rob Tillotson explained what the state pays for and how fund raising affects the project.

11. Norm Lemire stated that the public will have floor plans, site plans, massing plans and field plans before the vote.

Q: Who ultimately has a say on how the school looks?

A: The public will be given choices.

12. OPA explained how we usually design schools with the public functions up front and classroom wings in the back. Finish materials are very durable. We are huge proponents of natural light.

13. Rob explained how we like to orient the classroom on an east/west access so the classrooms face due south.

14. Rob gave examples of items districts raise additional funds for i.e.: increased gym size and bleachers, larger auditorium, sod for playing fields, money for a consolidated heat plant, generator, additional lanes for the track, etc.

15. OPA does an analysis to see what the school costs to run compared to the existing school.

Q: Are there any studies that compare what it would cost to heat a building with different fuel sources?

A: Yes, and we will show options. The state will not fund geothermal.

Q: What is the plan for the elementary school?

A: We do not have a plan right now but we will show options. We have the ability to reorganize the schools if the district wants to. Right now there are many inequities between the schools. The district wants to provide a rich, equitable education for all.

Q: How will each town's referendum vote be counted?

A: Each town votes independently.

C: Participant would like to see weighted votes because of the history of how towns vote.

16. Rob explained how we can solve district needs with different options that may include the reconfiguring the schools.

C: Some people are concerned with moving several elementary schools into the middle school.

C: This community feels forced into the RSU. They feel they offer students opportunities that the other schools don't.

C: There was a previous comment that this school was too far away to pull into a consolidated elementary school.

Q: How does technology fit into the building? Why can't students get the same access to classes through technology instead of being in the same building?

A: Some of that does happen already.

C: We need to teach kids how to learn in an environment where they can be self-focused and self-learners.

C: The schools have to take the best of what they have and expand it, not take it away.

Q: Is there an apprenticeship at the HS level?

A: Students can start at about 16 years old, but the program needs to include academics such as language arts, math, etc.

- Q: How can vocational programs fit into this program?
- A: The state does not include vocational programs. We will promote the existing programs within the high school and will negotiate with the state to keep them.
- Q: If the district wants to go above and beyond what kind of fundraising have you seen?
- A: Selling auditorium seats, local businesses donating, local people who may be interested in making a large donation, tax base (we have been told not to add local money this way)
- Q: Is there a time limit on fundraising and does it prevent progress?
- A: You should know at referendum how much additional funds you will have. It can continue after, but this district will need to vote to accept it or we can add a line in the initial referendum that allows the district to accept up to a named amount of money from fundraising.
- Q: Are there automatic triggers that flag a building from becoming a renovation to a new construction project?
- A: No, there are no exact triggers, but we look at what the cost comparisons are and what the phasing would look like for students regarding staying in the building or needing portables.
17. This project may not affect Etna Dixmont for elementary school, but it will for the high school. Talk with your friends and family and educate them and get them to come out and participate.
- Q: When will committees be formed?
- A: After referendum.
- C: The high school has applied for a construction project many times before and it finally was given a project.
- C: The district is still leery of the school board. A lot of people do not know the facts of this project.
- Q: When will groundbreaking occur?
- A: Depends on the scope of the project. The 5th graders today will most likely be the first freshman to enter the new school.
- Q: How does the state figure out the future enrollment?
- A: Planning Decisions in Portland has a process that uses current population, live births, and other demographics to project student enrollment 10 years out.