

Name of Committee: Override Study Committee – Capital Sub-Committee

Meeting Date: May 27, 2014 Time: 4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Meeting Location: Town Hall

Members Present:

X	Sergio Modigliani	X	Lisa Serafin Sheehan (Chair)
X	Carol Levin	X	Timothy Sullivan

The meeting was a discussion about the reaction to the Sub-Committee’s vote at the prior meeting.

Carol felt that the planning recommendations were appropriate.

Sergio felt that the Sub-Committee’s work provided important information.

The Sub-Committee supported Lisa’s letter about the vote, as follows.

To Whom it May Concern:

Members of the Capital Subcommittee of the Override Study Committee (OSC) have assessed the reactions to our recommendation to our OSC colleagues last Monday, and believe that our intentions have been misinterpreted. We understand that there is a time-sensitive vote on the Driscoll feasibility study funding, but since the OSC is a fact-finding rather than a political body, we had no intention of influencing that vote.

The Capital Subcommittee provided a recommendation to the full OSC on May 19, 2014 that a feasibility study for a specific school should be informed by a long range facilities plan developed by an independent professional development consultant. When subsequently asked to clarify, we specifically noted in writing on May 20 that we did not make a recommendation regarding the Town Meeting Warrant for the Driscoll Feasibility Study. However, we noted that “the Capital Subcommittee’s preference would be that the Town allocate funds for the long range facilities planning process immediately – either through the Driscoll Feasibility vote or through another mechanism.”

Having observed that a long range facilities plan is important to provide context to the Driscoll process and beyond, the Capital Subcommittee’s intention on May 19 was to share our observations with our OSC colleagues and spark discussion as to whether there was any message that the entire OSC thought appropriate to convey out of the Committee as to how such a study could be funded or when it should begin. Although the OSC chose not to take any type of vote around our recommendation I, on behalf of the Subcommittee, would like to take this opportunity to clarify the context of our observations since they have been the subject of much conversation over the last week.

First, we believe that the Driscoll Feasibility Study is an important component to understanding build out capacity at the Driscoll property and that an answer on what is

feasible on the Driscoll site does need to be known to add to the general knowledge base and inform the Town's long-range plans. In addition, we believe that the Town needs to understand Driscoll in the context of other capital needs coming down the road that are not yet fully understood and that a long range facilities plan would provide this context.

Combined, the long range facilities plan and the feasibility study can be used to inform the decision about whether and how to proceed with a Driscoll project as well as other investments.

We also feel very strongly that the Town needs to understand the broader, long-term facilities plan for its upcoming slate of projects in order to make the best decisions going forward. This includes:

- BEEP: BEEP classrooms are currently accommodated in space leased from Brookline temples. Where is the ultimate destination for the BEEP classrooms and in what time frame? What will long term accommodation of BEEP classrooms cost?
- Pierce: The School Committee has identified Pierce as the next school in line for a renovation/expansion but no specific capacity or cost analysis has been conducted. How many classrooms could a renovated or reconstructed Pierce school accommodate and at what cost? In what year could it be undertaken and what logistical challenges, including temporary location for the students during construction, would need to be resolved to realize it?
- High School: B-SPACE identified a number of options with a wide range of costs for expansion of the High but was unable to make a specific recommendation. A study regarding how the academic program will evolve to meet population growth is expected to be complete by late summer and will provide a foundation for exploring the next steps on a capital plan for the high school. How large would a high school expansion need to be? Could it be accomplished on the existing campus or would it require additional assets? How much would it cost? When would it need to be undertaken?
- Ninth School: A ninth school could be required under a number of scenarios including:
 - o If the feasibility study showed that 4 sections could not be accommodated at Driscoll
 - o If Pierce exploration indicates that it cannot grow to a 5 section school
 - o If kindergarten enrollment were to rise significantly above current projections
 - o If Hancock Village and other new growth projects occur

Therefore, it is critical to identify where a ninth school could be located if it were needed. B-SPACE was constrained by a requirement for classrooms being on line by the Fall of 2017 and therefore did not fully explore all town-owned and privately owned sites potentially appropriate to siting a ninth school in a longer time horizon. Where could a ninth school be located? What would be necessary to assemble properties? In what year could it be brought on line and how much would it cost?

- **Property Acquisitions:** Burgeoning growth of school age residents is putting pressure on all facilities used by this cohort including athletic fields. What are the real asset acquisitions necessary to address any of the above and to accommodate this growth? What would it cost? What is the mechanism for the town to be able to take advantage of opportunistic acquisitions as they come on the real estate market?
- **Other School Capital Needs:** All of the schools are experiencing pressures from enrollment growth. What capital interventions are necessary to address programmatic needs in schools not receiving renovations across the district and what will they cost?
- **Old Lincoln School:** Old Lincoln School is a valuable town resource that has been effectively used as swing space for both town and school renovation projects. What is its role in the future and what capital investments are required to facilitate its use?

As noted in our May 13, 2014 Executive Summary to the OSC, absent a long range facilities plan that addresses these issues, the Capital Subcommittee would be unable to determine whether the proposed Driscoll project is a sound investment for the town or to evaluate other decisions, like the fiscal soundness of the BEEP lease strategy. For example, we understand that under its most aggressive buildout, Driscoll would only barely meet the current projections for the classrooms needed in 2019. There is no detail available for us to evaluate what would come next or what options would be available if Driscoll yields fewer classrooms than expected or if population growth occurs more rapidly than projected. We recommend that the Town undertake a robust long range facilities planning process (looking to at least 2025 or later), conducted by a development consultant, to understand these and other issues, and to provide a pathway for addressing population growth beyond the Expand in Place time horizon. While we believe that the Town could benefit from a full assessment of all its properties, Phase I of such a study which is specifically aimed at answering the types of questions presented below related to the schools could be substantially completed in as quickly as 6 months. The process should include reviewing existing plans across Town and School departments and exploring the questions at a strategic planning level. The resulting deliverable should identify options, implications and range of costs as well as a process for working with Town and School officials to identify a clear but flexible comprehensive strategic plan for moving forward.

In sum, we had no intention of “stopping” the Driscoll feasibility study but strongly believe that additional and specific long term planning, building on what has been analyzed through the B-SPACE process and through other work to date would be complementary. Given that the earliest that a Driscoll feasibility could start would be in the Fall, there is an opportunity to begin this long range planning study in advance, or at least in parallel, with the Driscoll feasibility study. Our preference is that a long range facilities planning process be funded and started quickly (even a commitment as soon as this current Town Meeting) so that it can begin providing decision-makers and the community with critical information about long-range capital and financial implications for capital projects as soon as possible.

I hope that this email clarifies our observations regarding what we have thoughtfully come to believe through the course of our nearly nine months serving on the OSC and our professional experience would be a productive study. We will continue to refine these recommendations and include them in our overall report to the Override Study Committee. Our Subcommittee members would welcome the opportunity to discuss the scope, cost and

process to further develop the concept.

Sincerely,

Lisa Serafin

Chair, Capital Subcommittee of the Override Study Committee

The meeting adjourned.