

Facility Committee Meeting Minutes
Friday, November 14, 2014
Ray Bjork Learning Center

Present: Terry Beaver, Libbi Lovshin, Aidan Myhre, John Carter, Kent Kultgen

Guests: Cathryn English-Straub, Pete Brown, Betsy Baur, Alexander Deedy, Michael O'Neil, Chuck Butler, Chere Jiusto, Nancy Nicholson, Sarah Sullivan, Pam Attardo, Jami Lorenz, Melanie Reynolds, Krys Holmes, Ellen Feaver, Jan Lombardi, Joe Cohenour, Cherche Prezeau, Tim Meldrum, Greg Upham, Joslyn Davidson, Ron Alles, Mike Dowling, Tony Perpignano, Eric Bryson, Nick Radley, Don Platisha, Libby Goldes, Sharon Haugon, Pat Boles, Rebecca Ryland, Jeff Cowee, Sherri Haller, Sue Sweeney, Emily Brand, Tim McMahon, Gary Frankforter, Sumner Sharpe, Brentt Ranharter, Tina Brothers, Steve Thennis, Anna Thennis, Jennifer Schaefer, Lisa Lowney, Richard Alberts, Dolan Gilreath, Erin Turner, Brian Cummings, Jilyn Oliveira, Gary Dalton, Beau Downing, Traci Sears, Jon Rush, Diana Hammer, Andres Haladay, Ashten Broadhead, Doug Shenkle, Amy Heuser, Rick Hays, Lona Carter-Scanlon, Stephanie Thennis, Julie Novak, Shauna Sticht, Greg McNally, Sunny Ray Mandeville, Nancy Robinson, Phyllis Dorrington, Brett Zanto, George Thebarga, Kareen Bangert, Alan Nicholson

Dr. Kultgen began the meeting by giving an overview of the goals of the Facility Committee. He then provided the format of the meeting. He said there is representation from teachers, parents, administration, board members and community members. The goal of the meeting is to break into four groups and share information and look at a K-12 facility plan.

Dr. Kultgen introduced Ron Alles, City Manager. Mr. Alles said the City works with the district as much as possible especially with facilities and safe routes to school. His goal is to have the partnership continue forever. The City will follow the processes and issues relating to the school district. He went on to talk about the major policies of the city. There is a three year plan of what the City will look like over the next few years. He showed a map of the city limits and said the City will do all it can to provide services to those within the city limits. There were several other city officials in attendance. They want to learn as much as they can about the school facilities and provide information to the groups. He said there are policies and procedures that must be followed when building with hopes to work side by side with the school district.

Dr. Kultgen asked the four groups to think outside the box and to stay engaged. Use collective thinking. Don't try to convince others; work with the group. He asked them to consider this: Remember there are bond limits. Ask yourself if the scenario recognizes a long term plan. Keep in mind that it will take about six – eight years before a school can be built. Be comprehensive and think of all schools. We need a K-12 vision. Not all schools need to be

alike. The school sizes can vary. Consider buying new land and selling old. Think about walkability for students.

The four groups met and discussed proposals until 10:00.

Teal Team: The team had six constants that apply to each proposal:

1. Jim Darcy will be rebuilt as a new school.
2. Warren will be renovated and space added
3. Redraw elementary attendance areas.
4. Consolidations of schools with consideration to selling the ones that close.
5. Address technology and safety for all buildings.
6. Identify land to purchase – one on the east and one on the west

Proposal #1 – East side - Build a new Helena High School on a new piece of property. The current Helena High would be renovated and upgraded to meet the needs of a middle school. The Helena Middle School students would move to the “old” Helena High location. The current Helena Middle School would be renovated and upgraded to meet the needs of elementary students. Students from several of our elementary schools would move into the current Helena Middle School location. Identify schools to be consolidated.

West Side – Build a new Capital High School on a new piece of property. The current Capital High would be renovated and upgraded to meet the needs of a middle school. The C.R. Anderson students would move to the “old” Capital High School location. The current C.R. Anderson building would be renovated and upgraded to meet the needs of the elementary school students. Students from several of our elementary schools would move into the current C.R. Anderson location. Identify schools to be consolidated.

Proposal #2 – East side – build new Helena High School on a new piece of property. The current Helena High would be renovated and upgraded to meet the needs of a middle school. The Helena Middle School students would be moved to the “old” Helena High location. The current Helena Middle School building would be renovated and upgrade to meet the needs of elementary students. Students from several elementary schools would be moved into Helena Middle School. Schools would be consolidated.

West Side – A new middle school would be built on a new piece of property on the west side. C.R. Anderson moves to the new location. The current Capital High would be renovated and upgraded to meet the needs of a modern high school ensuring facilities are comparable to the new high school on the east side of town.

The current C.R. Anderson building would be renovated and upgraded to meet the needs of elementary students. Students from several west side elementary schools would move into C.R. Anderson. Schools would be consolidated.

Proposal #3 - East side – A new Helena High School would be built on a new piece of property on the east side. The current Helena High would be used as a temporary location for Helena Middle school students as the current Helena Middle School is renovated with the goal to complete a building that will continue to serve our community as a middle school. Upon completion of the Helena Middle School renovation, the Helena Middle School students would return to the current location and a decision on what to do with the current Helena High land would be made. While this is being completed, a new elementary school would be constructed on the location of the practice fields at Helena High. The new elementary school would be in the 6th Ward and house students from several current elementary schools. Elementary schools would be consolidated.

West Side – A new C.R. Anderson or Capital High would be built on a new piece of property on the west side. The current Capital High would be renovated and upgraded to meet the needs of a modern high school or a modern middle school depending on which level gets a new building. The current C.R. Anderson building would be renovated and upgraded to meet the needs of elementary students. Students from several elementary schools would then attend C.R. Anderson as an elementary school. Elementary schools would be consolidated.

Purple Team: West side – Capital High School would become the middle school. Move Hawthorne and Kessler students to C.R. Anderson. Include Special Education Preschool and Administration too. Renovate Broadwater and redraw boundary lines to include Sunhaven. Sell May Butler Center and add safety and technology to the other schools.

East side – no changes. Helena High and Helena Middle School would stay as is. Renovate Smith to 4-3 school. Renovate Bryant. Add safety and technology to Warren and Jefferson. Or another East Side option would be to build a new Helena High School and move Helena Middle School to Helena High. Renovate Smith to a 4-3. Helena Middle School becomes an elementary school. Keep Jefferson adding safety and technology and keep Central and turn it into a community center.

Yellow Team: This team had one proposal. The team didn't come to a consensus. Their proposal was very similar to the Teal Team's. East side – Build a new Helena High and renovate the current Helena to be a middle school. Helena Middle School would be renovated to an elementary school. Smith would become a major school. Warren stays as is with safety and technology upgrades. Keep Jefferson long-term. Central School was left undecided.

West side – Build a new Capital High School and turn current Capital High into a middle school. C.R. Anderson would become an elementary school closing Kessler and Hawthorne. Jim Darcy would become a new school. The group discussed walkability and neighborhood schools – No matter what the schools should be quality schools. The group talked about what they wanted to see 15 years from now? There was no consensus. The group was concerned about the passage of a bond. They talked about the advantages of having programs available in all schools. The group talked about reopening Central before a bond passes.

Pink Team: The discussion was surprising. They started with the high schools. Their proposal was very similar to the Teal Team. Build a new high school on the east side. Renovate Helena High and then Helena Middle School would move to Helena High. Helena Middle School would house Central and Bryant students and possibly Hawthorne students. Jim Darcy would become a new 4-3. Rossiter would become a 4-3. Four Georgians would remain a 4-3. Broadwater would become a sister school to Four Georgians. C.R. Anderson would be built at another location with Kessler and possibly Hawthorne moving into the current C.R. Anderson. Don't close any schools at first but rather wait and see what happens. Warren would become a 4-3 school. Keep Smith as it is. Fix the infrastructure in most schools. The group felt the district needs to take care of the Bryant/Central kids quickly. The group wants to bring special programs to elementary students - Montessori or preschool. There was a brief discussion of bringing Central back to Central and turning it into a 4-3 school.

Dr. Kultgen asked the groups what the most difficult thing was for the group and what the easiest thing was. Here are their responses:

Teal Team: Difficult thing – They kept hearing same thing from the members and making no progress.

Easy thing – Once they started at the high schools level, everything flowed and things started to trickle down. There was 100% participation from the group

Purple Team: – Difficult thing – It was tough to decide what happens first, second, etc. The discussion was held up trying to answer all questions. They needed to look at long-term and not short-term. The 20 year plan was easy to do. The two or five or ten year plan was the hard part. It will be painful to move forward. Another difficult discussion was Central and what to do with it.

Easy thing – Talking about the west side.

Yellow Team: Difficult thing – East side was more difficult than the west. Everyone in the group agreed that we need a new high school but not sure where. Helena Middle School needs to be larger. Not much hesitation of improving things at the elementary level. Deciding what to do with Jefferson and Smith was tough. They found no solution to closing schools. They said we should make a decision and move forward. Everything needs to be put on the table with a full plan laid out. The group suggested we invite parents and the community and talk about the importance of neighborhood schools. We can't avoid the topic of neighborhood schools. The group compromised on neighborhood schools.

Easy thing – You only end up with a few questions. Determining the west side was easy.

Pink Team: There were lots of givens. Difficult thing – Determining what to do with Bryant and Central, and Hawthorn and Kessler – what do we do with those students. Do we put them into the middle schools? Short term it's difficult plus how do we deal with the timeline. The group

knows it takes time to build high school. We're relying on the high school bond to pass in order to move the middle schools and elementary schools. We would have to put money into existing schools short-term. The timeline is difficult to determine. There is an immediate need on school closures. The moment you bring up school closures, the community gets defensive.

Dr. Kultgen asked the Facility Committee to comment:

Libbi Lovshin thanked the architects for facilitating and the community members for attending. She added that the comments were helpful and she looks forward to having a plan real soon.

Aidan Myhre echoed the words of Ms. Lovshin. She said it's a challenging and painful process. She hopes we can come together in 20 years, ten years and two years. What do we want Helena to look like in 20 years? We need to think about quality education and get off neighborhood schools. Does walkability and neighborhood schools means quality schools? We need to think about our next steps.

Terry Beaver: Mr. Beaver thanked everyone. It was good to see the community get involved. The solution hinges on the high schools. We have to look at all schools in order to solve the elementary school issues. Prior to doing that, we have to salvage what we have in our elementary schools. We have to invest in existing schools. There are two major problems - displaced students but we are possible 12 years away from solving that problem. And we need to look at the community responses because they will be voting. It's going to cost some money to get our schools up to where we want to be because it's been so long since we've done anything. Now we're saying we want to float a high school bond. This is something completely new to the community. How are they going to react to yet another proposal? He asked everyone to please stay on board and keep us informed of what is being said in the community.

Dr. Kultgen said it all comes back to how we can best serve our students. We need to increase learning for our students and improve the areas for our teachers to teach.

Dr. Kultgen said as new information arises, he will send it out to the attendees of this workshop.

General Public Comment: Betsy Baur thanked the architect for their involvement.

Dr. Kultgen thanked everyone for taking the time to come to the Workshop. The meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.