



## Lincoln Eliot School – Design Review Committee Meeting

*Design Review Committee Meeting with others in attendance.*

**Meeting: January 11, 2023 (6:00PM-9:00 PM)**

**Location: Digital, via Zoom**

### Attendees

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<b>City of Newton:</b>	Joshua Morse	Stephanie Gilman	
<b>Design Review Committee:</b>	Maria Leo David Gillespie Steve Siegel SingNing Kuo Ambrose Donovan	Peter Barrer Jonathan Kantar Emily Prenner John Mulligan	Carol Schein Thomas Gloria Ellen Light Rob Hnasko
<b>School Building Committee:</b>	Rajeev Parlikar	Kathleen Shields	
<b>Arrowstreet Architects:</b>	Larry Spang	Tina Soo Hoo	Daniel Jick
<b>Hill International:</b>	Douglas Murray	Mark Krikorian	
<b>Others:</b>	Richard Rasala Marc Kaufman	Brad Seamans Susan Albright	Jini Fairley

\* Denotes Voting Members

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[Link to Meeting Recording](#) \*Lincoln Eliot begins at the 1-hour mark.

[Link to Presentation PDF](#)

Joshua Morse briefed the DRC and provided a status update on recent developments with a revised single level design option. If the redesign does not get DRC approval, it will not move forward. If the redesign does get approved, Newton Public Schools as well as Principal Maura Morse and Maura Tynes will be review to address programmatic concerns, if any.

Tina SooHoo of Arrowstreet presented the revised VE design floor plan.

Ms. SooHoo noted that that a revision is being studied for cost savings. The proposed revision reduces square footage by removing the 2<sup>nd</sup> level of the new lobby addition, as well as consolidates some program in the new addition, and redistributes some programming to the existing classroom wing. The, gym, auditorium, and cafeteria remain largely unchanged.

### **Proposed Changes of the Cost Saving Revision.**

- Lobby and Secondary lobby has been consolidated
  - Shared lobby with entrance to school and gym
- Preserves the majority of the site which was approved
  - Slight adjustments will need to be made to ramp lengths
- 2<sup>nd</sup> floor has been removed entirely
  - Elevator which will serve all 3 floors remains
- Principal's Office, Admin suite and medical suite has been reconfigured but remains located together.
- Sloped walkway in main hallway lobby – 1:20 slope (no handrails required)
  - Wide and generous to provide natural circulation
- Split-level media center on first floor
  - Story time area with learning stair
  - Stairs and ramp that communicates both elevations for accessibility. (3ft elevation change)
- OT/PT spaces have been relocated adjacent to the new Team Specialist/IEP Conference room location
- Team specialist and IEP Conference room relocated adjacent to the Waban St./Walnut Park entrance
- Waban St./Walnut Park entrance has been reworked and entry hallway has been reconfigured to work with the design changes.
  - Ramping to be studied more

Councilor Maria Greenberg proposed viewing both options side-by-side.

Councilor Greenberg asked for clarification of the grey spaces located near the main entrance.

Tina SooHoo of Arrowstreet noted the grey spaces were the Gym lobby bathrooms that had been relocated adjacent to the entrance. The gymnasium has remained in the same space however, the gym storage and gym office have been reconfigured.

Arrowstreet presented the 60%DD and VE options side-by-side.

Councilor Greenberg expressed concern over locating bathrooms so close to the main entrance.

Councilor Greenberg asked for confirmation that the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor will be removed in the proposed VE option.

Tina SooHoo of Arrowstreet confirmed, noting that the elevator will be the only part of the building that will be rising to the 3<sup>rd</sup> level and originally the Media Center was going to be on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.

Ellen Light expressed concern that she does not get a good feeling about the redesigned entrance, noting that it seems odd to enter the main office off the vestibule in the proposed configuration. Ms. Light suggested that the vestibule should be more like an airlock, and that visitors should enter the office after entering through the vestibule.

Ms. Light added that she also does not like locating the bathrooms adjacent to the main entrance. Ms. Light suggested relocating support spaces to the proposed bathroom locations and find a different location for the bathrooms.

Ms. Light also expressed concern that the communicating ramp in the main lobby could be boring, and suggested architecturally designing a visually interesting destination at the top of the walkway. Ms. Light added that the ramp in the Media Center and the ramp in the main lobby should support each other visually.

Kathleen Shields noted that in the 60%DD design Technology office and other support spaces were located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> level and if they would be incorporated into the proposed VE design.

Tina SooHoo of Arrowstreet clarified noting that the IT/Technology office will remain within or near the Media Center. Ms. SooHoo added that the media center design being shown is still preliminary and a location will be found for the IT/Technology space. Ms. SooHoo added that ELL has been relocated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the renovated existing building.

Ms. Shields expressed concern with the proposed VE design lobby being dark and not particularly welcoming, noting she liked the “airy-ness” of the original lobby, and especially the media center on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor with windows that provide natural light. Ms. Shields also expressed concern with the feel and visual impact in comparison to other schools in the City.

Ms. SooHoo noted that Arrowstreet would like to incorporate higher ceilings in the lobby and media center. The raised ceilings will provide the opportunity for clear story, and sky lights to increase the amount of natural light in the space. Ms. SooHoo also noted that space for murals and display cases has been incorporated in the Lobby hallway.

Steve Siegel noted that due to elevation changes, the medial suite is inaccessible from the admin suite. Mr. Siegel also expressed concern over the entrance experience with the number of hallways and ramps noting that it is a lot of circulation to get to the spaces people need to get to. Mr. Siegel suggested reconfiguring the entrance and would like to see further studies regarding circulation vertically and horizontally.

Jonathan Kantar noted that the proposed VE design is similar to Angiers school. Mr. Kantar suggested studying a more direct path for entry to the building.

Steve Siegel noted that Angiers has a direct path for entering the building and classroom spaces.

John Mulligan asked how much closer the proposed VE design will bring the building to Waban St.

Tina SooHoo of Arrowstreet noted that the walls have been configured to be more orthogonal, and the gymnasium which is closest to Waban St. has not been reconfigured. Ms. SooHoo added that the site will lose some greenspace at the Waban St./Walnut Park entrance.

Mr. Mulligan inquired about the height of the building with the 2<sup>nd</sup> level removed and raised ceilings incorporated.

Ms. SooHoo estimates the building will be approximately 8ft lower compared to the 60%DD design.

Mr. Mulligan expressed that he feels the VE design is not as inspired and dynamic as the 60%DD design, and that it seems more utilitarian.

Thomas Gloria made some suggestions on hallway design based off Ellen Lights comments, noting that the Waban St./Walnut Park entrance could be better incorporated to the ramp design.

Mr. Gloria added that the administrative area seems dense and loses the light and airy feeling of the lobby. Mr. Gloria suggested there may be a way to split and shift some of the pieces of the admin suite around the lobby area. Mr. Gloria also suggested bumping out the media center slightly to provide more open area to the hallway space.

Mr. Gloria noted that he would like to see further iterations.

Emily Prenner noted that she was a bit disappointed with the changes to the lobby and entry way. Ms. Prenner noted that the ground is not level with the floor of the media center and will limit the window options that could be incorporated there. Ms. Prenner expressed concern that the Media Center will be a darker space than desired.

Peter Barrer noted that he thinks the circulation needs improvement and expressed his preference of the 60%DD lobby. Mr. Barrer expressed concern that the proposed VE design doesn't have "pop" or "zing".

David Gillespie noted that, in previous designs, there was a visual connection between the Jackson Rd. entry and Waban St./Walnut Park entry adding that the proposed VE design presents as more of a back entrance. Mr. Gillespie expressed security concern over utilization of the Waban St./Walnut park entrance if there is no visual connection between the entrance and main office.

Mr. Gillespie also suggested investigating exterior elevations to minimize ramping internally.

Regarding the media center, Mr. Gillespie noted he likes the two level design however he suggested modifying the media center to be a single level with entry on the upper level. This proposed change could allow for incorporating more windows. Mr. Gillespie noted the abundance of bathroom fixtures near the gym and Media Center. Mr. Gillespie also agreed that the use of Clear story glass and sky lights to bring natural light into the lobby areas.

Tina SooHoo of Arrowstreet noted that due to the elevation changes throughout the site, reducing ramping internally will increase ramping externally. Ms. SooHoo added that Arrowstreet will study raising floor levels to minimize excavation and reduce interior ramping.

Ms. SooHoo addressed bathroom fixture counts, noting that the design is exceeding fixture counts due to the gymnasium bathrooms. Ms. SooHoo noted that there are certain travel distances that need to be met with regards to bathroom fixture locations.

Laurence Spang added that the Gymnasium can be segmented off for night and weekend events and the bathrooms located near the gymnasium will serve those events without having people take trips through the building.

Ellen Light suggested relocating the Team Specialist/IEP Conference room to the top of the main hallway ramp and utilize a translucent glass wall to provide privacy and bring natural light into the lobby. Ms. Light also suggested doing something creative with the media center as its one of the first things you see when entering the building.

Ms. Light suggested relocating the IDF room and moving the admin suite entrance to that location.

Tina SooHoo of Arrowstreet noted that changes and adjustments to the spaces will be studied.

Laurence Spang of Arrowstreet clarified that the design being shown is a preliminary idea to move the media center down to the first floor and eliminate the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor entirely. Mr. Spang added that the main office entry off the main entry vestibule was a desired layout from a security standpoint. Main entry doors will be locked between 9AM and 3PM, requiring visitors to enter the main office prior to being allowed entry to the building.

Arrowstreet presented preliminary massing.

Tina SooHoo of Arrowstreet noted that some glazing can be incorporated on the exterior wall of the media center adjacent to the Waban St./Walnut Park entrance.

Laurence Spang noted that incorporating glass along the ramp of the media center will provide a more open feel to the main lobby and relocating the IDF room is being studied.

Maria Leo asked if there was a way to bump out the front entry of the building to provide open lobby space.

Tina SooHoo of Arrowstreet noted that it is possible, but there is a balance of total square footage which the team is trying to reduce and utilize as efficiently as possible.

Joshua Morse added that the goal of the redesign was to reduce the gross square footage of the new addition to provide some cost savings. The alternate design being presented was for the DRC to review to highlight any

potential issues. Principal Maura Morse and Maura Tynes are reviewing the changes to work through the programmatic adjacencies. Mr. Morse noted that if additional square footage is being added to the revised design, the City would most likely proceed with the original 60%DD design.

Maria Leo asked if there is still the potential to add future classrooms to the building.

Tina SooHoo confirmed, noting that it is possible however, a space will need to get reconfigured to provide a throughway to the future classrooms.

John Mulligan asked if the original design is not feasible economically. Mr. Mulligan expressed concern over revising the design if that isn't the case.

Joshua Morse noted that inflation and escalation challenges are what is driving the redesign. Moving through the VE revision process the team is trying to absorb the historical inflation and escalation which is putting pressure on the project budget. The team is investigating creative ways to provide a great project for a lower cost.

John Mulligan asked how much time the DRC can spend to decide whether we can move forward or not.

Joshua Morse added that a lot of time cannot be spent exploring additional options. Mr. Morse noted that the VE revision process will not delay the project and will be studied in the time frame of weeks not months.

Joshua Morse also addressed HVAC changes, noting that the changes do not impact air quality, air conditioning, heating, and temperature controls. Mr. Morse noted that discussions have identified minimal difference between VRF and displacement systems, however the VRF systems provide a \$2.2mil savings.

Peter Barrer noted his preference for displacement ventilation, adding that displacement ventilation systems are quieter than VRF. Mr. Barrer agreed that VRF is the best solution given the cost difference described.

Arrowstreet presented and reviewed the project schedule.

## **2023**

- February 15 – 100% Design Development Documents
- February 16 – Start Construction Documents
- April 15 – 60% Construction Document Pricing Set
- May 30 – Submit for Demo/Site Permit
- June 14 – 90% Bid Documents for DRC Review
  - o 2-week DRC review and comment period
  - o 2-week Design Team response period
- July 12 – DRC Vote on 90% Bid Documents
- July 31 – Final Construction Documents / Bid Set
- October 1 – Mobilize/Start Construction, 18-month duration

## **2025**

- April 1 – Complete Construction
- May 1 – School Move-in

Joshua Morse noted that if moving forward with the VE option revision, modifications must be completed by February 15<sup>th</sup>.

Councilor Maria Greenberg asked if the original proposal is still on the table.

Joshua Morse noted that the original design is the current design. The VE option presented is an alternate option that could be altered if desired. If the project is completed as the proposed VE revision it provides \$1.2mil savings. Mr. Morse added that it may not be worth moving forward with the proposed VE option.

Councilor Maria Greenberg noted that \$1.2mil is not a large enough savings to move forward with the changes presented.

Ellen Light asked if the VE cost estimating is being done in house or working with the cost estimator. Ms. Light asked if the cost estimator will be working with Arrowstreet for the next month to see if it's a financially feasible method to move forward.

Joshua Morse noted that there is not enough time to refine the options, get cost estimates on the options, and make a strictly cost estimator cost-based decision.

David Gillespie noted that expanding the footprint of the building is not equal in cost versus building up a 2<sup>nd</sup> floor on a smaller footprint.

Peter Barrer suggested that if the team is trying to sell this different approach to the community, it is important to depict what the lobby interior will look like.

John Mulligan noted that the landscaper marked a limit of work which excludes the old retaining wall north of the proposed gymnasium.

Joshua Morse asked if there was concern that a part of the site would be ignored.

Mr. Mulligan stated that the response received noted that it is not in the City's scope of work.

Arrowstreet presented the drawing which John Mulligan was referencing.

Tina SooHoo of Arrowstreet clarified noting that the area excluded from the dotted line area include grass/greenspace that will not be modified.

Joshua Morse noted relocating some trees along the parking lot to open up sightlines and soften the facade.

John Mulligan asked why the existing retaining wall is being preserved, and why it cannot be eliminated with grading to remove the need for a fence.

Tina SooHoo of Arrowstreet noted that if the retaining wall was removed, there would be a steep hill to traverse the elevation change.

Mr. Mulligan added that the walkway could be moved closer to Jackson Rd. with minimal grade change to eliminate the retaining wall.

Joshua Morse announced that Newton Early Childhood Program has opened and kids are in the building. A ribbon cutting for NECP will occur on January 25<sup>th</sup> at 8:45AM with an open-house the following Saturday from 10AM-Noon.

Josh Morse also notified the group that NECP is the first net zero school in Newton.

Meeting recording can be found on the project website at:

<http://lincolneliot-necp-projects.com/meeting-recordings/>

The next Design Review Committee Meeting is scheduled for February 15, 2023 at 6:00PM via Zoom.

***These notes will become part of the project record as written***

To the best of my knowledge, these notes are a fair representation of the items discussed at the meeting.  
Additional items or corrections should be brought to the attention of the writer.  
Submitted by: Mark Krikorian