

# SOMERVILLE NEW SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT

## SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE

### MEETING MINUTES

**Virtual Meeting**

**Monday, February 2, 2026**

**Via Zoom**

**4:30pm**

**Members (Present in bold):**

**Emily Grandstaff-Rice (Chair)**

**Jake Wilson, Mayor**

**Rich Raiche**

**Ruben Carmona**

**Courtney Gosselin**

**Ed Bean**

**Chris Ames**

**Daniel Grayton**

**Eric Weisman**

**Andre Green**

**Kathleen Seward**

**Jesse Clingan**

**Suraj Rajbanshi**

**Courtney Koslow**

Rich Heidebrecht

Hanna Bao

**Guests Present:**

Khin Mar (CoS)

Ralph Henry (CoS)

Magda Gomez (CoS)

Sean Burke (PMA)

Nick Masse (PMA)

Bob Bell (PE)

Lisa Pecora (PE)

Dan Arons (PE)

Michael Berger (PE)

*2 Members of Public*

- **Call to Order – 4:32pm**
  - The Chair called the meeting to order
- **Meeting Minutes**
  - Approve meeting minutes from January 5, 2026.
    - Rich Raiche motions to approve as amended. Daniel Grayton seconds the motion.
    - Discussion: PMA noted that they needed to correct the date in the heading.
    - VOTE (roll call): 8 yes, 0 no, 3 abstain, 4 not present
      - Yes: Emily Grandstaff-Rice, Mayor Jake Wilson, Rich Raiche, Ruben Carmona, Daniel Grayton, Andre Green, Courtney Koslow, Ed Bean
      - No:
      - Abstain: Eric Weisman, Chris Ames, Kathleen Seward
      - Not Present: Jesse Clingan, Courtney Gosselin, Rich Heidebrecht, Hanna Bao, Suraj Rajbanshi
- **New Business**
  - Workplan Update
    - PE noted that the project is halfway through the PDP phase, as the team is looking at preliminary options for 115 Sycamore and Trum Field sites, for both enrollment options. PE is looking for feedback today on those options.
    - Plans will be sent to the estimator this week to find out rough order of magnitude costs of the massing options.
    - PE reported that the MSBA kickoff meeting was successfully held on January 17<sup>th</sup>.
    - City has been helping the team set up meetings with different city departments to gather information on.
    - City standards, project goals, and other recommendations – we met with Engineering and DPW last week, with a few more set up for this week.
    - Site survey teams are out on site and will be wrapping up shortly.
    - HazMat was out on site at the existing school to perform some analysis and testing of existing building.
  - Educational Visioning & Programming Update
    - MLP has led a series of activities – including shadowing day at each school and meetings with each principal, tours of other comparable schools in the State on 1/13, Educational Visioning Session on 1/20, and all along working with leadership teams on project workshops
    - Visioning Forum, with 60+ attendees, had several different parties as part of the process including City leadership, SPS leadership, project team, parents, and members of the community. The purpose was to have a shared understanding of pk-8 learnings and affirm Winter Hills Identity as a Community and innovation school. Outcomes were guiding principles which help shape decision makings. This is a good foundation, and we will continue this work.
    - We learned that design must be developmentally driven, the whole child is central, flexibility is essential, equity and inclusion must be built in, learning is experiential and the environment should foster pride.
    - In teaching and learning we need to create opportunities for movement and play, create developmentally appropriate environments and routines, spaces for small group learning. Grade band organization was prioritized, streamline circulation and arrival patterns, adaptable well supported leaning spaces, and fully accessible spaces are needed.

- PE reviewed the Visioning Outcomes with the Committee, which are essential daily student experiences and building design to support daily experiences.
  - Superintendent asked PE if they can share the timeline shown when they share their findings with the group.
- Community Engagement
    - PE noted that they have been working with the City’s Communication Group, which is helping guide the project team through what they believe fits Somerville best.
    - Mayor Wilson had Coffee Hour with the Brown School Community on January 3<sup>rd</sup> to get a sense of some of the concerns that the community may have
    - Another Coffee Hour will be held tomorrow morning at the Edgerly School with the Winter Hill Community.
    - There is a Virtual Coffee Hour set up for this Thursday evening for the broader community to participate.
      - Mayor Wilson recommended changing the name from Coffee Hour to Community Meeting.
    - February 28<sup>th</sup> and March 7<sup>th</sup> there will be Community Walk and Talks. We plan to meet at Brianna’s and walk around some key areas of the site. It will give an opportunity for the community to give feedback face to face.
    - Committee member recommended that for all the community outreach events, it would be nice to have at least one committee member present.
- Design
    - PE presented the proposed Preliminary Options
      - Option 1A – Addition/Renovation for 690 students @ 115 Sycamore
      - Option 1B – Addition/Renovation for 925 students @ 115 Sycamore
      - Option 2A – New Construction for 690 students @ 115 Sycamore
        - Committee member question regarding traffic routes of the four roadways that surround the property, and PE clarified some information and noted those further site discussions will be happening shortly to refine.
        - Committee member question regarding rooftop playground and would like the committee to consider the difficulty of maintaining the space, access to the space, trash removal, etc.
        - Committee member made some comments about current traffic patterns, noting that the two-way Evergreen can cause major traffic jams, and if a bus needs to go there, there is not enough space because of parking on both sides.
          - City noted that they will look at these routings with the Engineering Department and there could be a potential for this street to turn into a one-way, as there is limited impact that it would have.
        - Chair asked about moving the open space towards Evergreen and Thurston and away from Medford
        - Committee member asked about staff school parking, and where it would be. City noted that the current Winter Hill and Brown Schools both do not have parking at the moment, and PE assumed taking the same approach.
          - Chair mentioned that parking is an item that we should continue to discuss.
      - Option 2B – New Construction for 925 students @ 115 Sycamore
        - Committee member asked about number of exits from the building, and the Chair noted that the number of exits will be required by Building

Code. PE noted that they will discuss with their code consultant and ensure there are sufficient amount of exits as required.

- Superintendent asked about AIM program, noting that there will need to be smaller spaces for AIM classes, and the way instruction needs to be provided for those programs.
- Committee member requested that the stage be adjacent to the Drama/Music space, and PE noted that they understand and can work through refining these plans as more feedback comes in.
- Option 3A – New Construction for 690 students @ 115 Sycamore
- Option 3B – New Construction for 925 students @ 115 Sycamore
- Option 4A – New Construction for 690 students @ Trum Field
- Option 4B – New Construction for 925 students @ Trum Field

▪ Evaluation Criteria for Preliminary Options

- PE presented to the committee their proposed evaluation criteria including stakeholder and community sentiment, cost, green space, neighborhood feel, educational considerations, health and safety impacts, timeline, disruption, traffic, operation costs, and permitting. PE asked the committee for their opinions on the proposed evaluation criteria and if there are additional criteria they would like included.
  - The Chair mentioned sustainability to be added as a criteria.
- Committee member asked if the building could be oriented in a different way and PE noted architectural and cost as reasons to their proposed design.
  - Chair agreed, noting that the community would be ok with more massing towards Medford St.
- PE will work on refining options and evaluation criteria.
- Next meeting PE will be presenting the space summary and the educational program. Chair asked if the project team would like a meeting with the school committee. PE noted that they would need approval by the School Committee on the space summary and the educational program, and proposed having joint meeting with them on March 2<sup>nd</sup> to approve those items.

● **Next Meeting**

- Scheduled for Monday, March 2, 2026 at 4:30pm, and will be held virtual via Zoom.

● **Public Comment**

- The Chair opened it up to the public to ask any questions or make any comments.
  - There were none.

● **Adjournment**

- Vote to Adjourn
  - Ruben Carmona motions to adjourn. Rich Raiche seconds the motion.
  - VOTE (roll call): 14 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain, 2 not present
    - Yes: Emily Grandstaff-Rice, Mayor Jake Wilson, Rich Raiche, Rueben Carmona, Courtney Gosselin, Ed Bean, Chris Ames, Daniel Grayton, Eric Weisman, Andre Green, Kathleen Seward, Jesse Clingan, Suraj Rajbanshi, Courtney Koslow
    - No:
    - Abstain:
    - Not Present: Rich Heidebrecht, Hanna Bao

**Minutes Signed by:**

NAME: Nicholas Masse, PMA Consultants

DATE: 02/17/26