

Pre-Referendum High School Consolidation Committee

Meeting Minutes

March 8, 2012

A meeting of the Pre-Referendum High School Consolidation Committee was held at Enfield High School Library, located at 1264 Enfield Street, Enfield, CT on March 8, 2012.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** The meeting was called to order at 6:34 PM by
Art Pongratz.

2. **ROLL CALL**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Judy Apruzzese-Desroches, Maureen Brennan, John Dague,
Randy Daigle, Pat Droney, Steve Sargalski

MEMBERS ABSENT: John Coccia, Bill Schultz, Thomas Vaghini

ALSO PRESENT: Robert Hunt, Kyle Kalagher, Tina LeBlanc, Art Pongratz, Genaro
Sepulveda, Greg Stokes. Silver/Petrucci & Associates - Chris
Nordi, Dean Petrucci, William Silver.

3. **MEMBER COMMENTS:**

Maureen Brennan suggests that each member introduce themselves. Art Pongratz agrees with suggestion.

Pat Droney begins stating he is a former member of the Board of Education, 28 ½ year Police Officer with the Town of Enfield, currently a Police Chief in a small town in the Berkshires and have one

daughter at Fermi, two grandchildren in the system, and several nieces and nephews so I am very interested in the consolidation process.

John Dague introduces himself as the Tech Ed Department Chair for Enfield High, Fermi and JFK. A resident of Enfield and graduate of Enfield High in 1998.

Maureen Brennan introduces herself as a life-long resident of Enfield and graduate of Enfield High. Has one son in Enfield Public Schools and 2 daughters. Served on Demographic Advisory Committee, advocated educationally, also involved in Enfield Foundation for Excellence in Education which is a non-profit organization and very interested not only for personal reasons but for the whole community to see this become a success.

Robert Hunt introduces himself as a sophomore at Enfield High.

Kyle Kalagher introduces himself as a freshman at Fermi.

Greg Stokes introduces himself stating he has 3 children and 3 and one on the way grandchildren. Married to a life long resident of Enfield. Former Chairman of the Enfield Board of Education and now on the Town Council, he is the liaison for the Town Council for this committee.

Judy Appruzzese-Desroches introduces herself as former Board of Education Member. Was on the board for six years. I came to Enfield when I was 6. I graduated from Fermi. I have 2 boys, one who graduated from Enfield High, and one who will be graduating this year. Husband graduated from Enfield High. I am the comptroller for a small software company in East Windsor and I am an education advocate and work voluntarily for Educational Resources for Children.

Tina LeBlanc introduces herself as a Board of Education Liaison. This is my first term. I have 3 children in the public school system. One in middle school, one in the intermediate level and one at the primary level and I am very happy to be a liaison.

Steve Sargalski introduces himself as Assistant Principal at Enfield High School for the past 10 years. Love Enfield Public Schools. I have 4 kids from college to first grade.

Randy Daigle introduces himself as a life long resident of Enfield. Formerly the Chairman of the Building Committee for the school expansions. Currently with the State of Connecticut, and oversees the construction of all the Universities in the State. Before that I was the owner of an architectural firm that designed and specialized in education, higher ed and high school. I have 5 children, 2 graduated, one at Enfield High, one in Fermi and one in Parkman. Very interested in education and the future of the Town and that is why I volunteered.

Art Pongratz introduces himself. He is retired. Full time Grandpa. Working part-time for the Town of Enfield to help the committee write the grants and do the paperwork and help with the submission to the State Department of Ed.

Genaro Sepulveda introduces himself as Assistant Director of Public Works. I am new to this position. Only been on board for one month. Looking forward to assisting you, and looking forward to the doing the best for the town and up-keeping the facilities. Thank you for having me.

Art Pongratz states we will now accept nominations.

Pat Droney nominates Randy Daigle as Chairperson. His experience in going through this process when we did the expansions at the elementary schools would prove extremely beneficial to us. He has been through the landmines that await us as a committee and I think his experience both as a former owner of an architectural firm that did work on schools and his present position with the State of Connecticut, I think lends him extremely well to take the Chairmanship on. I enthusiastically nominate Randy.

Art Pongratz requests roll call to propose Randy Daigle as the Chairman of the Pre-Referendum High School Committee.

Patrick Droney moved, seconded by Maureen Brennan that Randy Daigle be appointed Chairman of the Pre-Referendum High School Committee.

Motion passes by roll call: 8-0-0.

Mr. Randy Daigle says thank you. I appreciate it very much and I will do my best. It's a team effort. Thank you.

Art Pongratz states next item is nominations for the Vice Chairperson. This position would assume the duties of the chairperson when he/she is not available. Any nominations?

Randy Daigle moved, seconded by Patrick Droney that Maureen Brennan be appointed Vice Chairperson of the Pre-Referendum High School Committee.

Motion passes by roll call: 8-0-0.

Art Pongratz states next is nominations for Secretary to the Committee. Patrick Droney asks what is involved. Art informs Pat that what you do is you work with Randy and Art by email deciding on the agenda for the meetings. Randy states it would include agenda and any correspondence.

Randy Daigle moved, seconded by Maureen Brennan that Pat Droney be appointed Secretary of the Pre-Referendum High School Committee.

Motion passes by roll call: 8-0-0.

4. OLD BUSINESS:

Art Pongratz turns over the meeting to the Committee Chairperson, Randy Daigle to introduce the proposed Architectural firm for schematic and pre-referendum phase of the Enfield High School project.

Randy Daigle invites the 3 members of Silver/Petrucci & Associates to the meeting. Randy states Silver/Petrucci is the architectural firm that will be assisting in the pre-referendum that needs to be submitted to the State. I believe it is by June. Randy continues to the members that are new to this environment, please feel free to ask any questions you need to feel comfortable with any decision or anything moving forward, ask any question at all – to the firm or to any member. We are following Robert Rules. If somebody wants to suggest, it is considered a motion. It has to be seconded and everything gets recorded so sometimes when the public is here, choose your words wisely.

Mr. Bill Silver introduces himself. I will be the project manager. Dean Petrucelli is the principle architect. Chris Nordi will be the job captain. We are delighted to be here. We are a 35 person architecture/engineering and interior design firm in Hamden, CT.

We submitted with 29 other firms back in January. It was advertised as an on-call project. They short listed 5 firms, they interviewed us, all of us together. The sub-committee selected/recommended Silver/Petrucelli Associates.

Mr. Silver continues that you can read our package at your leisure, you can see the long list of school projects. Right now we are active with the 69 million dollar Berlin High School expansion and alteration. We're involved in the 73 million dollar Central High School consolidation project. They are consolidating/ reducing their students from 2,200 down to 1,900. We recently completed 17 million for Stratford Elementary School and a 25 million dollar expansion and renovation program at Ford High School, the list keeps going. This gives you a sense of what we are involved in.

Mr. Silver knows the task here with you is to assist you with the pre-referendum. You will see later on the agenda, in the next to the last page is the schedule bar-chart what has been put out for this joint committee between the Town Council and the Board of Education in getting at least the application into the State Department of Education by the end June and then working during the summer with the target of getting the referendum by November. We have a general framework of our understanding. We have been through the school, at least in the last 3 days. Art and Genaro have provided us with some data files. We have a lot of data collection to do. At least we know a little bit of what is going on. We don't really know your program. Art is really good at most of that. We are eager to get going.

We recently finished/helped Berlin through its 69 million dollar referendum approval. So we have been through many suburban towns, we work through the referendum, especially the publicizing and advertising of the project. How do you get the word out, how do you communicate effectively and efficiently. So we'll bring lots of ideas but they are really working for you. We'll take your lead on that. Hopefully that is brief enough.

Randy Daigle asks have you received copies of the programs? Silver/Petrucelli answers that they received them 10 minutes ago. Thank you. It was very helpful. We all understand that program-wise one of the things I'd like to suggest that we consider as a committee is maybe having some sub-committees of the actual users. We can come up with what we feel or what we think, but the actual users really understand what is required. We will get the wish-list and then we can break it down as to what we can afford or what is realistic. Once we get moving on, we can think about forming different sub-committees and one member can be the sub-committee liaison for the actual users.

Randy continues the more meetings we have the longer the agenda, the longer the minutes and sessions will be. Right now we are just starting to come to terms of what we're doing. Any questions regarding last weeks tour? Concerns?

Maureen asks if we are going to get a video and/or do you want me to do still photography? Randy asks of the tour? Maureen replies of the rooms.

Art states he is uncomfortable with that due to the sensitivity of the conditions of Enfield High School due to code violations. You could really have the school closed down. Art states you have to be careful.

Tina states that Wethersfield had to pass a referendum and they opened the school for a tour to the residents, so the residents would get on board with the idea of the referendum. I don't know how that worked, but their referendum passed. I don't have children in the high school yet, but I didn't have much to comment on.

Art states as we get closer to September or October we can open the building on a Saturday. I'm not sure that we as a committee can host that.

Randy replies, we couldn't but the Town could.

Greg states the town staff would work possibly between 10:00-2:00 to take groups of 10-15 people and have that service. So that way it is not elected official doing it and lobby one way or the other, because we can't do it either. But if that would be an interest, we can talk to Matt about an Open House.

Maureen states that would be good, because it's not a still picture or a video and it will be presented at a time when we know people can point and say oh, that is what that will look like.

Art states we could possibly have some elevations and reproductions of what a modern science lab looks like.

Tina replies she isn't sure that the residents know and it would be an effective way to convey that.

Greg asks Randy, as liaisons, we work with the wishes of the chair. Sometimes we sit quietly and observe. Randy, what are your wishes? Do you want us to give our input? We don't have a vote in the matter.

Randy replies that as long as the input is not politically motivated. One of the things I know is we were picked because we have a zero political interest. As long as the liaisons can keep to that, I have no problem with input. Let's do this as a team. Keep the discussions under control. Professional experience or opinions are more than welcome.

Greg states they understand, thank you.

5. NEW BUSINESS:

Randy has two items to bring up. How can we convey this to the public? To educate them. I would hate to have them feel degraded that we're trying to educate them because they don't know what they're doing. Should we use the term "inform". Sell – sounds dirty, like we're trying to snowball them. Educate could be demeaning.

It's going to be tough to get this going. Everyone has personal reasons. I'd like to suggest that when we talk about it to the public – inform.

Pat Droney agrees. On Facebook there are a couple of active Facebook groups in town. One concern being expressed by people is they know the cost associated with doing Enfield High and Fermi High and looking at it in strictly dollar and cents standpoint they are wondering, already there are objections to this building being selected as the high school. Moving forward to make sure that we inform why this is the better selection for the purpose of one high school. People throughout the town ask why this building and not Fermi. Most of us involved realize the issue with the soil contamination at Fermi. What if the soil is tens of millions of dollars to remediate it. I'm on board with the Town Council and Board of Ed with the selection of Enfield High School as the location and I'm supporting that. What we need to do is inform the public why this is a better choice than a newer building (Fermi). That is something we need to be aware of.

Maureen agrees that inform is a great word and I understand what you're saying. I back up what Pat says. We have work to do before we do any work. A couple of major decisions have been made, one that we will have a referendum to consolidate and two that it will be Enfield High where the final school is. There is a lot of "what, this is already happening"? I'd suggest that we put together a powerpoint or key points to why Fermi wasn't a good choice. What will happen if the referendum doesn't pass. What the cost were for the two. Reimbursement was a big issue. Put it out there so that they will be as informed as possible. We're already operating under a cloud. I feel we should have an informational session where we could put up a 20 minute powerpoint and show them some of the very basics of why we are where we are right now.

Judy agrees that inform is the perfect word. Pat brought up the Facebook page and I think we all need to be aware that when we speak, whether you acknowledge it or not, they think you speak for this committee because you are a member. You need to be very careful when you open your mouth or when you pull out your keyboard. Found out the hard way being on the Board of Ed, anything you say becomes "well, the pre-referendum committee said..." and be careful because the communication needs to be controlled. There has been some talk putting up a website specifically for the consolidation. I don't know if that is going to happen. You can put up a Facebook page that is informational only. We really don't want to get into it on Facebook. We can post the minutes, committee member names, how to get in touch with us if they have a concern, when our meetings are, all the information and details that we have so the people can see it but can't fight with us about it. We don't want to fight on Facebook. A lot of information and a lot of mis-information is interpreted as fact when it comes out. We need to be very careful when we are posting about this subject. We need to find a way to communicate with the public in a way that they get the facts and the information from us. Then, if they want to, lack of a better word, piss with each other, go ahead. I had thought that through this process there would be three community conversations. Where the community could come speak and ask questions. People are under the impression and so was I that there would be 3 of these through the process before it is finalized by the Council as to what the question would be. I don't know where that stands.

Maureen asks have you all seen any of this. Architect representative states we have seen all of it. Posting it up on websites is a key component in today's technology. What we recommend is a website that doesn't have blogging associated with it. We'd rather be in the position where we can post information but not have an avenue for blogging because we know where that ends up. Facebook would not be our first choice. It typically would be a website set up by the Town specifically for this project. It would be factual information that folks could go to and it links to all your towns other websites, linked to Facebook. We wouldn't recommend any opportunity where there is dialog within the body of the information. You are opening up a can of worms. You mentioned three public sessions usually seeing this on the agenda as Public Comments. Then the public is invited. Right now it is not on your agenda, so you technically exclude them.

Randy comments one of the things we have done in the past is we don't allow the public because these are working meetings. We allocate specific times where we can have dialog because if every meeting the public can come and listen and observe. No different than the Town Council or Board of Ed. This is a working group. I understand what you are saying; I agree 100% with the blog free. It would become nothing but justifying. As far as having the public, we should have specific times.

Judy states that is why she was thinking of community conversations. Which is what I thought they said we would be doing.

Pat states we are all here for the same reasons. The philosophy that I'm thinking is we put students first, we put kids first. We're going to hear a ton of "this is to save money", I want, through our communications, continually fall back on and refocus on this is for the kids of Enfield, for our students. They will benefit the most out of it. We're not going to lose sight of that, I know. It is going to be a tough up hill battle and we will have to continually hammer that home.

Art says one of the biggies is that the Board of Ed and the Town Council are considering combining the high schools to give the kids a better opportunity in education. It's not for any other purpose. Granted, it will save you a few bucks, but the money you will save by closing Fermi compared to cost of renovations is going to take to renovate Enfield High is a pretty long payback.

Judy states, like Randy said we're not going to educate we're going to inform. We're going to invest, we're not going to spend money. We're investing in education. People looked for the savings in the elementary school consolidation we just went through. The thing that I would say to them is there was no savings, except that we saved the TLC reading literacy program. That wasn't cut because we consolidated. We saved this other program because of the consolidation, we have the money to fund that. So in renovating Enfield High and then consolidating, we'll have the resource to provide the Advanced Placement courses that we can't offer at the schools because we got 5 or 10 ten kids in each building and that is not cost effective. If we have 20 we can offer it. We can't offer Latin, because we don't have enough. If we combine we could offer it.

We have to offer 2 years of foreign language to 100% of the students with high school reform. It costs twice as much to do that in two buildings unless we're going to do classes of 40 or 45. We're going to invest in education through the consolidation.

Maureen states, inform, invest and ignite.

Greg states the last 4 years of the consolidation with the elementary schools we all knew from the Board of Education perspective that it was about improving, and better environment. There is always a group who will say what did you save. We can reinvest in the schools. It's not the savings. It's about the future of the kids. That has to be a talking point, the top verbage everywhere we go. This is about improving and better offerings.

Judy states improving education means improving our community. We talk about economic investments. Who wants to invest in a community that won't invest in itself. Who is going to move to a community where education is not a priority. They need to see a reason to be here for their families and their children.

Randy states we need to start from the beginning. How did we choose this? I was not involved in that process of determining the cost, the violations.

Art states it was a result of the Strategic Planning Committee a combination of the Board of Ed and the town's process of going through the advice of the architect who did the study. That was how the decision was made. When they talk about being concerned about Fermi's dirt all we did was overlay it. We did the minimum that was required by the Dept. of Environmental Protection. We capped that to keep it safe from contaminating the surface. That field was used for agricultural purposes for 100-200 years. Lord know how far the contamination with the pesticides goes down. The Board and the Council looked at that and thought the last time we fixed it, we weren't thinking of putting in/spreading concrete foundations. We were thinking about covering the contaminated soil.

Randy asks was there an executive summary that had everybody come up with their own decision after reviewing their summary. Art says the Town Manager asked him to go with GM2. Judy asks if the GM2 study is even valid anymore? It was under the assumption that there would be a 9th grade academy, and none of that is going to happen. Art states the cost will be made public. Judy states there will be final costs that will be real, that these guys will come up with and we need to make people aware of that. Having the original strategic planning committee there were 3 things, soil, land lock, bond.

Randy asks how do we answer the question, why did we pick Enfield High over Fermi? Base it on dollar amount? Start off with if we do nothing? Then since we have to do something, this is how we got to

Enfield High. The code issue is imminent. We're already cited. That should be the first thing, if we do nothing. We should come up with a cost of Enfield High if we do nothing and Fermi if we do nothing.

Even if we don't consolidate. Maureen states if we do nothing we're open to liability. Randy agrees. Board of Education was cited for non-compliance by Dept. of Justice.

Randy Daigle reiterates that Art was just explaining how there has been a number thrown out \$1,927,899.00 as the cost of doing nothing. That is for both schools. This is the cost of continuing both operations as they are, no improvements. Per year operating cost. Can someone keep track of this discussion, the cost of doing nothing. 1.9 million dollars is salaries, overhead, doing nothing, rolling like we're rolling every single day. Now we have the citations, the fines.

Greg states we were getting letters. We stated we were aware of this, we have a plan. Because we were in the process of reorganizing the entire district that gave us the ability to say we are aware of this, but we have a plan that we are working on to redo the school district. So they have given us some leeway. We have not been fined. Only cited.

Randy states that would be good to add. Once we have a number of what it would be if we get fined, now we have to prevent that fine from happening. Now we have to do the ADA upgrades for each of the schools. Do we have any research of what to do about the ADA requirements. There are numbers for FHS. Enfield High was not cited.

Maureen asks if they are known and listed? Art replies not for this building. This building (EHS) went through the update in 1990. Fermi in 1991. Codes change.

Randy states so we have a number we could put on the category of Fermi costs of bring up to code.

Art states by existing square footage.

Greg states that the buildings are owned and operated by the town. That information would be on the town side.

Randy states if we have that for Fermi, we don't technically know what the violations are for Enfield. The cost to have the study done to make the improvements? This building has had some minimum ADA upgrades. More so than Fermi? Art thinks about the same. We spent more on fire codes.

Randy wants to open with the same number, estimate without study, find out what the cost was to do the study, and then we can put that under if required this is additional money.

Judy states just knowing our community, the answers for putting up a number for Enfield High is going to be "nobody said you had to, why are you bothering to spend that money. You don't have to spend that money. You have to spend it for Fermi, you don't have to for Enfield." It is going to open that question up. We haven't been cited for Enfield. I think we need to have that information available.

Randy states the saving for doing it now and the costs will only get higher. This is what it is going to be if we do it today, it is only going to get worse. Now we have those two numbers. Cost of violations, cost of fixing the violations.

John is concerned with accreditation. We were cited at our last accreditation for our science labs and tech labs. Ten years later we come back and our labs are exactly the same. Chances of getting accreditation is not that good. We were able to pass the library part of accreditation because the plan was in place.

Accreditation means a lot. Diplomas would not be accepted in some colleges.

Maureen asks about bond money and a time line. Clock is ticking.

Greg states that the laws have changed about the soil remediation. You can't interrupt the soil. It would have to be removed. We can't do what we did before.

Randy: Sticking with accreditation, the focus is technology and getting kids to stay and not leave to go to magnet schools.

John states we are missing out on opportunities because we have two separate schools. It limits the sections of AP. We are limited in the number of sections we can offer for the new engineering program, because the teacher is split between two schools. It costs to train a teacher. You would have to pay two teachers for training or summer courses.

Pat states there are steps that could be taken if accreditation isn't achieved. College issues.

Maureen offers bond listing for the next meeting. If were to close EHS in August, 2012 we would owe 2.7 million. The renovation wouldn't be paid off until August, 2027. It appreciates at about 200,000 per year.

Randy: Lack of doing nothing – accreditation, ADA, code violations, environmental issues.

Judy states the educational component. The new graduation standards. If we were to renovate two buildings, we are not prepared to deliver the technology and science that we need. We don't have the facilities to support those offerings that we have to provide in order for the students to graduate. We need to have additional offerings of math. State mandates for graduation.

Greg states if we did nothing and when the State implements the new requirements, they are then going to penalize Enfield. You could lose funding, have the State take over the Board of Education, that is the extreme. Lose ECS grant funding. What if our students cannot graduate with a recognized CT diploma?

What is the cost for faculty in both schools - 1.9 million to cover staff and benefits for 300 teachers, operational costs. There are new requirements coming in that we are going to have to pay for. We are trying to position ourselves to be a 21st century school.

EHS Boys Basketball score announced 26-25 at the half.

Enrollment is a concern. Demographic study being done, what is the 10 year projection? Use most recent data. What were the enrollment numbers when both schools were full? Enrollment trends. Loss

to magnet schools, what is the tuition. Two years ago we were paying \$600,000 in magnet school tuition going out, a year and a half ago it was 1.2 million. Not all high school. We have to have room for those kids should they stay, or come back or if parochial school students come back. Be prepared with numbers. Sports? Band? Can more be added?

Presentation boards to be created. Start with an open forum within the next several weeks. Justify why we're here. Need to start working with the architects on programs, footprints, suggestions. We need to stay on top of this due to the State deadline for reimbursement. Art needs a number by the end of April. Referendum question has to be prepared by August.

Architects state July and August informational sessions are a high priority. Use the presentation boards. Get the costs. Architect renderings. We can help you inform the public on how Fermi will be reused. Use blocked diagrams.

Judy has a concern. There is a lot of contention in the community of how Fermi should be used. Too many items on the past referendums. Emotions play a part in the high school choice.

Maureen asks will the referendum include a monetary value for the use of Fermi?

The Referendum committee will decide on how the question will be asked.

Greg states a group of people from the Town staff will work on brainstorming about what can be done with Fermi but not have any of that be brought back to the Council until after the referendum passes. But be ready to go. It was never the Councils intentions to have the answer done before the referendum.

Do not address it until after. Other town departments can brainstorm what that building could be used for. Another committee after.

Priority is to inform the public. Need a schedule of when decisions have to be made, submission dates to the State.

Maureen offers to do a Powerpoint presentation.

Motion (by Maureen Brennen): To set a date for an Initial Public Information Session. Seconded by Pat Droney.

Discussion: Maureen to make presentation boards. By the next meeting after we correspond with each other, we will set the date. It could be big, need an auditorium. Check with Superintendent to see if there are no conflicts.

Show of Hands – Motion passes 8-0-0 to choose a date for an Initial Public Information Session at the next meeting of the Pre-Referendum High School Consolidation Committee.

Architects state that Art is gathering program information from the educators. By the next time we meet we will have the number of classrooms, square footage, existing square footage and what/where your expansion needs are.

Art states STEM/STEAM has a major impact on what we're doing. All teachers (both schools) are involved in interviews of what is needed.

Are we talking Green? Architects state it will be high performance building standard.

Randy: Let's talk/provide what we need/expect from Architects:

Architects: Exterior, program, D-Wing, lots of engineering options, high performing, energy, Renovate as new. 71.99% reimbursement rate for renovate as new or additions.

New components are eligible. Replacing components one for one is not eligible. Getting new we can certify that the component will operate for 20 years. In this 1960's building, there are very few that meet that criteria. Everything has to be changed. What you end up with is virtually a brand new building. Walls, floors, electrical systems, plumbing systems, heating, windows, doors, mechanical systems will end up being new under the renovated/new scenario. You get 72% reimbursement.

Cost savings come from energy efficient buildings.

Power Point Presentation by the architects begins. It shows you how we think. Our graphic solutions, initial thoughts from educators. See attachment.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Droney moved, seconded by Maureen Brennen to adjourn the meeting of March 8, 2012. All ayes, motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Submitted by:

Ellen Smith,

Recording Secretary