

Tobin – Vassal Items (Skocpol)

STRANGENESS

Vassal school ends up on Concord Avenue, and Tobin on Vassal. Just sayin’ Swap names??

USE RESTRICTIONS ON CALLAHAN FIELD LAND?

Depending on how this land was acquired, there might be deed restrictions by a donor. That possibility must have been considered and ruled out, right?

CALLAHAN FIELD USAGE BY COMMUNITY

Compile and/or review current users of the field, by 1) time of year, 2) time of day, 3) part of field, and 4) user name and status.

-- My impression is that at most one or two baseball diamonds are used 1) only in the spring and summer, 2) most likely in the evenings under lights, 3) in the two diamonds along Concord Avenue, 4) by adult baseball and softball leagues with or without uniforms. The separate basketball court would not change. Callahan shows no official soccer fields. However, adult (primarily ethnic?) soccer teams have other venues including Danehy Park, Lusitania Field (?), and any others existing or planned in East Cambridge (?).

-- At the pro level, baseball is losing spectators, and soccer hasn’t gained large attendance or audiences yet. But soccer for kids is great for lots of running and team strategy, whereas baseball is individualistic and involves lots of waiting around.

-- From this analysis, you should be able to answer the question whether the one overlapping diamond/soccer field in each option is sufficient for current community demand. It should be lighted enough to be useful for either.

-- The three options differ in the community perception of availability. “Renovation/addition” tends to wall it off by buildings and privatize it. The others are more open to the community, in similar locations, with closer access to on-site parking.

SPACE FOR CONVENTIONAL AND INNOVATIVE PLAY EQUIPMENT?

The school presently has an area behind it that looks like play equipment. I presume that equipment will be selected and sized for the three different subparts. The locations for such equipment and open play space are not clear in the diagrams selected for your presentation.



UNDERGROUND PARKING?

Slide 8 mentions +/- 55,000 sq ft of underground parking, but the subject is never mentioned again. Is it an option with significant cost? How many cars is that? Who would use it, faculty and staff? How many faculty and staff will there be? Where is the entry on the circulation diagrams?

DROPOFF AND PICKUP

I understand that pickup involves waiting for the kid to show up, whereas drop-off is more straight-forward. The current distribution of pickup times is informative. However, the number of kids is going to double and the number of vans and buses shown on the diagrams remains at 3 and 6. Also saying that there will be 52 on-site spaces for pickup as opposed to the current 39 on-street pickups does not consider the doubling of the number of students. Do you expect a surge of pickups by parents using bicycles? ☺

THREE-STORY PRE-SCHOOL?

Are there other uses for the upper floors? Will pre-K classes be herded into elevators? Will pre-K parents park and ride elevators to drop off and pick up their kids?

TRANSITIONAL IMPACT – SWING SPACE

Is the plan to keep at least some of the existing school going during construction? The third option, Pavilion, overlaps about half of the existing school, while the other two just replace the gym and playgrounds behind it. But construction is noisy and dangerous in any case. Is swing space elsewhere available to hold the individual components of the existing school throughout construction? Would completely abandoning the site speed up the construction schedule?

BUDGET?

Does the present budget take into account rehousing the entire neighborhood to protect them from blast damage during destruction of the present concrete building, followed by repairs to their homes? ☺

MY PREFERENCE

I find all three options acceptable, but somewhat prefer “Wings”. My questions here are items for you to think about, and do not need to be answered in a reply to me.

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