

MINUTES
Green Meadow Building Committee
Monday, February 27, 2023, 5:00 pm
Remote Meeting

Pursuant to Gov. Baker's Executive Order dated March 12, 2020, suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A sec. 20, the School Committee has modified meeting procedures to ensure the safety of all participants. The public will not be allowed to physically access this School Committee meeting; video and audio will be turned off for the public. This meeting will be held via a virtual meeting (internet) using Zoom Technology.

Meeting Called to Order via Roll Call at 5:03 pm

Brian Haas - Present

Jennifer Gaudet - Present

Jerry Culbert - Present

Justine St. John - Present

Mary Brannelly - Present

Nicholas Kane - Present

Robert Rouleau - Absent

Anthony Midey - Present

Wayne White - Present

Mark Anderson - Present

Christopher DiSilva - Absent

Justin DeMarco - Present

Matthew Johann - Present

Greg Johnson – Present

Hilary Griffiths - Present

Katie Moore, FinCom (NV) - Absent

Ken Neuhauser (NV) - Present

Robert Savoie (NV) - Absent

Charles Gobron (NV) - Present

Others present: Kate Wheeler, Sustainability Committee; Orian Greene, Sustainability Committee, Julie Gagen, Sustainability Committee; Phil Palumbo, Colliers Project Leaders; Al Esteves, Colliers Project Leaders; Chris LeBlanc, MVG; Frank Tedesco, MVG; Marty Vickey, C.A. Crowley Engineering, Inc., Dennis Daly, MVG; Zana Cranmer; Abbie Barrett; Sarah Measures; Sarah Pryputniewicz; and Roger Stillwater.

Documents presented during meeting: The meeting included presentation of a PowerPoint agenda and supporting slides presented by Chris LeBlanc.

School Building Committee Meeting Minutes Approval

Ken Neuhauser and Mary Brannelly requested that the following changes be made to the 2/13/23 SBC Meeting Minutes prior to approval:

1. Clarification that the displacement ventilation system is anticipated to meet the building's comfort needs.
2. Clarification that the heat pump HVAC options will have to be bonded at the full upfront costs exclusive of the potential incentives given that the incentives will not be known 1-2 years after the building is in operation.
3. Clarification that the gas-fired HVAC system can be converted to either of the heat pump systems at the end of its useful life.

The meeting minutes are to be approved at the next SBC Meeting subject to the revisions being made.

Meeting Agenda Introduction

Phil Palumbo introduced the meeting agenda indicating that since the SBC decision to implement a gas-fired heating system, the following were explored:

1. Compliance with the 2023 updates to the Stretch Energy Code and Specialized Opt-in Code.
2. Additional diligence on the IRA incentive.

Stretch Energy Code & Specialized Opt-in Code Discussion Items

Chris LeBlanc presented a summary of the Stretch Energy Code and Specialized Opt-in Code Tiers as they relate to the Town of Maynard and anticipated GMES requirement. Please refer to the attached presentation.

Highlights of this topic were as follow:

1. The DOER representative indicated that the main goal of the Stretch Energy Code was for the building envelope to be as efficient as possible to reduce the energy demand regardless of what HVAC system is put in. Chris LeBlanc noted that the GMES is being designed with essentially a Net Zero Ready envelope.
2. As a Green Community, the Town of Maynard is required to comply with Tier 2 of the Stretch Energy Code as a base code.
3. Tiers 3 and 4 of the Specialized Opt-in Code can only be adopted by being voted into the municipal bylaws in a Town Meeting.
4. It is anticipated that Tier 3 of the Specialized Opt-in Code will be voted into the bylaws in the fall Town Meeting.

5. Tier 3 allows for mixed fuels; however, the building would need to be pre-wired for electric conversion. Additionally, Tier 3 requires 1.5W/Sq. Ft. of on-site solar renewable production.
6. The Tier 3 electrical design will include properly sized transformer, switchgear, subpanels, and wiring gauges, etc. to handle the additional electrical loads from an electric heating system. There would be no need to replace the major electric equipment during the conversion in the future.
7. The pre-wiring cost is considered incremental (mostly limited to upsizing), given that the electrical equipment is needed regardless of the heating system chosen.
8. The current estimate is anticipated to capture the cost of pre-wiring.
9. The electric loads associated with a fully electric building were calculated by the electrical engineer when the air-source systems were explored.
10. There may be a fee associated with the electric utility company at the time the project is switched to electric heating if there is a need to upsize the service into the building.
11. The pre-wiring increment would be paid by the local share given that the project costs per square foot are already above the MSBA reimbursable cap. The project still has to go through a VE process in an effort to reduce the local share.
12. The gas-fired heating system will consist of 130-degree hot-water-fed baseboards. This infrastructure is compatible with an electric heat pump system at the time of conversion. Marty Vickey pointed out that during extreme cold temperatures, the heat pump system alone may struggle to provide sufficient heat and may have to be supplemented by resistance heating.

Phil Palumbo asked the SBC whether they would prefer to keep current budget which captures the cost for pre-wiring or revise it to a Tier 2 budget knowing that pre-wiring may have to be added back in.

Justin DeMarco highlighted that given the building's anticipated life expectancy of 50-60 years versus the HVAC's life expectancy of 25-30 years, it would be beneficial to futureproof the building for electric heating conversion. This would capture the community goals while being fiscally responsible. Jennifer Gaudet seconded the comments. No objections were raised.

IRA Incentive Discussion Items

Chris LeBlanc indicated that neither Eben Perkins, of Polsinelli (the Law firm representing the Town of Acton in pursuing the IRA incentive) nor the DOER representative were able to confirm the scope of the IRA incentive given that the proper guidance has not been issued by the IRS.

Justine St. John cautioned that the process of obtaining federal funds can be complicated and may require the use of a third-party company which would "eat away" at the incentive.

Justin DeMarco gave an example of another federal act, in which, programmatic guidance is still being issued two years later. These factors should be considered when thinking about the recent Inflation Reduction Act.

Geothermal Discussion Items

1. Maynard's operation budget is already highly constrained and would be further stressed with the higher operation costs associated with the heat-pump systems especially when considering the challenges with achieving 100% solar power generation.
2. While the space above the geothermal well field would only be impacted temporarily during drilling, Crowe Park and the field behind the Fowler School should not be considered for a geothermal well field given the likely push back from the community. The field behind the Fowler middle school was funded privately.
3. The temporary heating costs carried in the geothermal system's \$10.25M upfront costs is \$100k. This includes costs rental and fuel costs.
4. Mary Brannelly noted that the Town of Maynard has the highest tax rate in Middlesex County.

Other Discussion Items

1. Brian Haas re-iterated the need to have a new school, regardless of what HVAC system is put in it. Brian Haas also noted that the MSBA is essentially giving the Town of Maynard ~\$30M to build a new school, and without a "Yes" vote, the district would be out of the program and these funds. This would leave the taxpayers footing the bill to renovate the existing school. Jerry Culbert indicated that the taxpayers should know what it will cost to bring the existing school up to code given that it is not ADA compliant. Justin requested that MVG revisit the renovation costs in light of the anticipated Tier 3 Opt-In Code vote in the fall.
2. Mary Brannelly reminded the group of the bylaw requiring projects spending more than one-third of the value of the building in renovations to bring the entire building up to the current code. For the existing GMES project, that figure would only be around \$2M.
3. An informational session should be scheduled on a Saturday with the various boards as well as the public to clarify any questions or confusion. An informational flyer would be helpful during this session. Mary Brannelly noted that there will be a Community Fair at the library on 3/18/23 from 10:30 AM to 12PM and it would be beneficial to have representation from the group.
4. The target EUI will be 25 which is in line with the Mass Save program.
5. Marty Vickey will send the estimated building utility costs to Chris LeBlanc, and subsequently to Justine and Zana Cramer.
6. Mary Brannelly asked if updated average building costs per taxpayer could be obtained given that this question is asked often. Greg Johnson will look into how this figure was previously calculated.

Project Schedule

Phil Palumbo presented the project timeline and upcoming meetings.

Next Meeting Dates

Monday, March 20th, 2023, SBC Meeting to Approve the SD budget

Meeting Adjourned via Roll Call at 6:19 PM.