

NOTES FROM MEETING  
KSS School Renewal Committee  
16 January 2008

Present:

Mary Chipmann  
Jacqueline Stoeckler  
Gwyneth Edgcumbe  
Larry Bengé  
Thomas Winkler  
Andrew Larigakis  
Elene Vanderpass  
Alex Grant  
Henry Ahking

Henry Ahking introduced himself as the VSB manager of Planning responsible for project planning, and go- between in discussions with the Provincial Ministry and Kitsilano Secondary School.

1.

Henry makes his opening remarks before questions; Committee's recollection of his remarks:

- The level of funding for a seismic project is determined by the "least cost option" which, for any given project, may be a full upgrade of the existing facility, a new facility, or a combination of upgrade and new construction. Given the preliminary figures for the costs of upgrade vs. a new Kitsilano School, the level of funding will be set by the cost for a new facility.
- The total cost or budget for a new facility is determined using area standards and unit rates for a given number of students but the school community has discretion regarding how that budget is used to provide facilities that match its needs.
- Floor Area standards, programming needs and unit rates govern what facilities are to be funded within the school, given the projected number of students

2.

Phase 1 addressed seismic upgrade options and costs. Phase 2 is intended to extend planning consideration to other inputs. HA identified these other inputs: vision of the school (supplied by school/principal), issues of disruption, infrastructure upgrade (other than structural), life-cycle costing, and so on.

3.

Committee responds by noting that a proper planning study needs other consultations beside the technical/economic aspect expressed by HA: for example, community requirements, curriculum requirements, heritage issues, sustainability, etc.

4.

HA has not researched the gaps between the school facility and current and future school programming needs. Alex has undertaken such an analysis, and will forward his analysis to the Committee. The VSB is focused on the first phase of the project, which is to establish the budget for the school renewal. This budget is set by the funding formula set out by the Province out the Seismic Mitigation Fund. In other words, **funding for school renewal is an exercise divorced from a needs assessment conducted specifically for Kitsilano Secondary School. AH stated that before there is a project to design, the funding must be in place. The funding level is decided without the specific needs of the school in mind; it is decided on the basis of the projected number of students.**

*Alex adds these notes: In the interest of clarity, we should keep in mind that the provincial funding is for seismic mitigation, while the VSB's and Kitsilano's goals are both seismic mitigation and school renewal. We should not be surprised that a program funded for one purpose (seismic mitigation) is not structured nor funded to be optimal for a different purpose (school renewal). Once funding for seismic mitigation has been established, we can begin the process of assessing*

*the school's needs. Where we find the funding for seismic is inadequate for also addressing school needs, we then have a basis for lobbying for extra funding for school renewal.*

5.

To date, the VSB has not undertaken a formal needs/uses survey that would lead to an understanding of the community role of Kitsilano. Only informal talks have taken place with the Parks Board and Public Library staffs.

6.

The design (master planning/programming) for the renewed school begins after the funding is in place.

7.

The HA goal (representing the VSB) is to deliver a school with the requisite areas per a Provincial area design table and program (no auditorium and additional gym) at a cost not to exceed the budget established by the Seismic Mitigation funding formula.

8.

If there is programming Kitsilano considers important but not funded by the Provincial formulae, additional funding needs to be found. The VSB has a separate ongoing capital projects fund, but the VSB would not see that fund going to "extras" beyond the basic facility funded through the Seismic Mitigation program.

*Alex adds: In order to access any VSB funds, in addition to Ministry seismic funds, Kitsilano will have to make a case for that use of limited VSB funds. Such funding does not occur as a matter of course.*

9.

Preliminary report indicates that funds cannot afford to fund the rehabilitation of the school because the tab for structural upgrades alone is \$78.7 million. A new (smaller) school would cost \$65 million (based on 13,600 m<sup>2</sup>). **If the PAC is interested in seeing the existing school remain as part of the school, it must actively join forces with other school PACs to lobby for increased funding and/or lobby for the VSB to develop strategies for managing their land resources in ways to generate significant revenue.**

10.

The VSB deals with the following individuals Provincial and civic staff: Nick Watkins, provincial ministry; Rob Jenkins and Yardley McNeill and David Autiero, City of Vancouver Planning Staff, Brent Toderian, Director of Planning if needed.

11.

Committee members are aware of a comprehensive review of the school facilities for the Dunbar area served by University Hill school; **the VSB believes that such a review for Kits is too complicated (!)** Any time spent in consultation is an added cost, consuming part of the project budget. Any time spent on planning the school beyond the bare basics funded under the Seismic Mitigation program is taking away from funds available for the building, since the funding is set once the project is approved. **The VSB is working with a funding regime that is exposed to escalating costs due to the inflation in the construction industry (reported to be as high as 1.5% per month at this time).**

*Alex adds: The VSB Educational Facilities Review (EFR) began with input regarding all areas of the city and is now proceeding to implementation in a phased manner, beginning with the area west of Dunbar. Kitsilano will be part of a future phase, but the timeline and details of that phase have not yet been determined. (I am not aware of any plans either to accelerate or slow down the current seismic process for Kitsilano in anticipation of any different direction emerging from the EFR). The Kitsilano part of the review is not seen as too complex; however, implementing all aspects of the EFR across the entire city simultaneously has been deemed to be both ill-advised and beyond the resources of the VSB to undertake.*

12.

The present construction schedule assumed when referring to a \$65 million budget: HA thought that it was assumed a construction start in the latter half of 2009. HA will forward the schedule.

Further Notes

A.

A strict comparison of the costs is not comparing apples with apples. The resulting schools would be different in size, and would differ in their mix of rooms. The province will not fund non-seismic related upgrades to the school. For example, a new furnace would not be covered, nor the cost for portables for temporary reuse during upgrade work to the existing school. There is a difference in area between the two options, the existing school upgraded being larger than the new school.

B.

The provincial funding formula has been accepted by the VSB. The VSB sees their role to work within the constraints of that funding formula.

C.

But the VSB is not actively facilitating or finding ways to increase funding. Their only suggestion is for the school to find private partners and/or fundraise. Fundraising for a particular school may not be allowed, since such a framework would place schools in areas with poorer populations without equal facilities.

D.

Since the funding formulae do not consider an auditorium to be essential to the school curriculum, and since they will not fund anything above the cost for that new school, Kits will be without an auditorium – and likely other spaces now considered essential - after the school renewal process is complete.

*Alex adds: The funding formula does not specifically preclude an auditorium, nor does it make inclusion of an auditorium easy to achieve. Once our needs assessment is complete, we will be better able to determine which essential components will be achievable within the funding formula.*

E.

If the PAC does nothing to influence the school renewal process, the VSB will approve a new school for the site. That new school will be smaller and plan a facility using the space allocations set out by the provinces Area Standards document, and lacking spaces now considered key to the successful functioning of the school (eg the auditorium).

F.

Inadequate levels of Provincial funding for the renewal of schools is at bottom the problem. The VSB is choosing to work within the constraints of that inadequate funding.

G.

The VSB process will lead to a recommendation that will not incorporate the original Kitsilano Secondary School buildings.

*Alex adds: Phase 1 identified a new school as the "least cost option" for seismic mitigation. In order to access seismic money for a more expensive option (such as upgrading some or all of the existing school building), the VSB would need to make a business case for proceeding with that option.*

H.

The VSB has not positioned itself to argue for the cultural and educational value as buildings of stature in the community with great spaces for learning. The quality of the spaces planned to replace the existing rooms is not on a par with the existing.

*Alex comments: Since we have not yet completed a formal review of the adequacy of the existing building, nor do we have a planned new building for comparison, it is not self-evident that "the quality of the spaces planned to replace the existing rooms is not on a par with the existing".*