Virtual Buildings and Grounds Sub-Committee Report

Monday, June 7, 2021

Broadcast from the Media Arts Studio

454 Broadway, Cambridge, MA

Called for the purpose to continue discussing the Election Commission's proposal of using the additional schools in 2021 that were used in 2020. This meeting is expected to end by of before 7:00 p.m.

Members present: Member Rojas, Chair; Member Fantini; Vice Chair Bowman

Others present: James Maloney; Vedad Konjic

Member Rojas is the chair and called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.  Member Rojas shared the goals of the meeting.

* Discuss Cambridge Election Commission proposal and safety plan.
* Provide opportunity for community members to ask questions and ideas on these topics to the administration, the health & safety working group and others.

 Member Rojas provided more detail of the Election Commission request: for the use of four additional school used in the 2020 election: Martin Luther King, Jr. School - Use of Gym, Kennedy Longfellow School - Will use CPD Community Room instead, Haggerty School - Looking for alternative site, Cambridge Rindge and Latin School - Use of Media Cafeteria

Member Rojas asked for the Schools that the Election Commission already uses, what measures have been taken in the past to make it work for all concerned?

Mr. Maloney provided background of the issues that arise using schools as polling locations. Mr. Maloney discussed how this will also continue to get more difficult.

Ethridge King from the Election Commission provided an update that two schools left on the request are the High school and the MLK School.

* Larry Ward echoed Mr. King’s sentiments and the importance of working together to get to a “yes.” He discussed the thoroughness of the safety plan.

Principal Campbell from the Haggerty School discussed the challenges of using the Haggetry School.

* Member Rojas confirmed that in the current plan Haggerty School will not be used.

Dan Monahan discussed the importance of collaborating with the principals to ensure this works. Mr. Monahan discussed the reservations about using the media café for voting, discussed perhaps using the field house.

Mr. Maloney asked what the options are for City buildings and talked about the long term ramifications.

* Mr. King provided further information about the buildings that the Election Commission use. He discussed how schools are a small percentage of the precincts.

Member Rojas turned the meeting over to the other Sub-Committee members.

Vice Chair Bowman discussed the importance of creating a criteria for what schools will be used and raised health concerns. Member Fantini discussed the importance of being supportive of the election commission. Member Fantini asked is there a deadline.

* The Election Commission provided background on when the decision has been made and that they are open to different locations at the high school
* Member Fantini asked about masking.

Dan Monahan advocated for thinking out of the box to help mitigate some of the concerns of disruption to the School.

Member Rojas shared concerns from the Health and Safety Working Group. Member Rojas talked about how there should be no mixing of voters and students in addition to any physical safety. Member Rojas asked Mr. Maloney to create a list where that separation is possible.

* Vice Chair Bowman discussed the importance of asking voters to wear masks. Anyone who wants to leverage our buildings needs to follow the guidelines of the building.
* Mr. King discussed how they cannot mandate masks but can suggest it.

Mr. Maloney asked for a revised list of the schools the Election Commission wants to use.

Vice Chair Bowman talked about the importance of explaining to voters the importance of wearing masks and making sure that the infrastructure is in place.

Member Rojas ended the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

Attest :



Allison Daley

Confidential Secretary to the Office of the School Committee