

Virtual Buildings and Grounds Sub-Committee Report
April 1, 2021
Broadcast from the Media Arts Studio
454 Broadway, Cambridge, MA

Called for the purpose of discussing the health & safety working group discussions on expanded in-person learning preparations, the Tobin School construction project and a request from the Cambridge Election Commission.

Members present: Member Rojas, Member Fantini

Other present: Mayor Siddiqui; Member Weinstein

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

Member Rojas turned the meeting over to the Election Commission. Ethridge King from the Cambridge Election Commission shared a list of the City of Cambridge Polling Locations. Ethridge King discussed the importance of still using the schools, and they need to let the community know where they are voting. The goal is to come up with a system that works for the schools and the City. He discussed how using the schools would be optimal. He intends to put a more formal request in writing.

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

Member Fantini asked for further clarification on the timing of this. Ethridge King provided an update about the timing and shared that they will not use schools for early voting. There is still a determination for the legislature, there is a sense of urgency from the commission to start providing materials for polling locations.

Member Fantini asked for an official request and to hear from Mr. Maloney on what the concerns would be.

- Mr. Maloney discussed for the past ten years, the direction of the School Committee/the City has been moving away from using the Schools due to the opposition from parents, principals and the impact on the School calendar, and issues on safety.
- Ethridge King discussed the requirements of polling locations and how they have been relying on non-City buildings and clarified that two days odd years, and for presidential years three days.
- Larry Ward noted that other Massachusetts districts utilize polling locations at Schools and the importance of having the community vote.

Member Rojas asked for further clarification on what schools would need to be utilized. Member Rojas asked what happened in previous years.

Mr. Maloney asked the election commission about using fire stations. Ethridge King talked about the space issues.

Ethridge King talked about how it has been hard on the community constantly changing locations. Ethridge King discussed how we could change the dynamic on voting in school to be disruptive.

Member Rojas turned the meeting over to Mr. Maloney on an update on the Safety and Facilities manual.

- Mr. Maloney elaborated that this is a working document and how they've changed metrics, routine changes. He further discussed the review process for cases and provided further clarification on contract tracing.

Member Weinstein provided an update from the Outdoor working group and asked if there is a way that we have the infrastructure to support outdoor learning and eating. Mr. Maloney clarified that the intention is to have lunch outside.

Dan Monahan, president of the CEA, shared highlights: masks compliance, improvements on testing

Dr. Dobertein shared that they are fully staffed and they were well equipped to handle the improved testing.

Mr. Maloney talked about how they have started planning for the summer.

Member Rojas asked about plans for graduation. Mr. Maloney shared that they are still having conversations about that and no determination has been made yet.

Member Rojas then turned the conversation over to an update about the Tobin.

- Mr. Maloney shared an update: they have lost a year in the process. He said that Monday night the City Council approved the home rule petition. He talked about how they were able to work through the issues of the Callahan and collaborated with DCR. He talked about how the cost of the project will continue going up by every year that we delay. He says that it looks like this project will begin in June.
- Mr. Maloney shared that they will be looking for space for about 10 OSS staff and a relocation of the special start in the Longfellow building.
- Mr. Maloney further discussed air quality measures they are taking: ultraviolet light “zappers”, with recovery money they want to continue to look at how to improve HVAC systems and that the Sub-Committee will be hearing more about these issues in the upcoming meetings.
- Member Weinstein asked for further clarification on the timeline. Mr. Maloney confirmed that it was for four years and that they would move back into the Tobin in September of 2025.
- Mr. Maloney discussed how if there were further delays they would move to the Vassal Lane School but that is not ideal to move mid-year. The goal is to keep the project going. He further clarified that each year we are delaying the Tobin project, it causes other projects to be delayed.
- Mr. Maloney also shared that there should be building assessments in the next fiscal year and that the City is not in the position to fund another major project like the Tobin until it is finished and they are looking to do more of a comprehensive renovation of the buildings.
- Dan Monahan asked for further clarification on the Kennedy-Longfellow. Mr. Maloney discussed how they will be looking at the ultra violet and that they are focused on the Long Fellow. He discussed how Kennedy-Longfellow building the HVAC systems there are out of date.
- Dr. Lichtensein discussed how instead of going with one large hepa air filter, to use two smaller air filters
- Mr. Maloney discussed how they are in the middle of looking at cleaning the air ducts, and the ducts in Cambridgeport were in better shape than expected.
- Mr. Maloney discussed how they are going to be able to get four exchanges at Kennedy Longfellow.

Member Rojas adjourned the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Attest Allison Daley

Confidential Secretary to the Office of the School Committee