

FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

October 18, 2016

5:00 p.m.

Spencer Borden Elementary School

1400 President Avenue

Fall River, MA 02720

A roll call at 5:21 p.m. showed:

Mr. Costa: Present

Mr. Martins: Present

Dr. Costar: Present

Also present were Steven Camara, Ken Pacheco, and Joyce Rodrigues.

Mr. Costa read the Open Meeting Law.

A salute to the flag followed.

1. **Discussion:** Mann Murals

MOTION: Dr. Costar-Mr. Martins: To refer the topic of Saving the Mann Murals to the full committee with a recommendation to support the CPC's assessment by a conservator.

Discussion:

Ms. Rodrigues presented an outline to members of the Committee that summarized what she had been doing over the last year in order to preserve the Mann Murals. In August 2015, Ms. Rodrigues sent a letter to the editor of the Fall River Herald News. In September 2015, she met with the Facilities and Operations Subcommittee to speak about the condition of the murals and the tech building auditorium. On the 14th of September, the School Committee endorsed the effort she was making and opened a discussion on what the murals meant to the city and what they can do to preserve them. She passed out the summary of what was discussed at the School Committee meeting from September 2015.

Ms. Rodrigues submitted a proposal to the CPC to replace the roof in the technical high school auditorium where the Mann Murals are displayed. The CPC encouraged her to look in other directions for funding. She then went to the Massachusetts Historical Commission with a Letter of Intent and submitted an application to them for funding to protect the Mann Murals. She received a letter from them denying the proposal. The reason was that they did not have funding for brick and mortar projects. The replacing of a roof represented a brick and mortar project. In their letter, they stated that the best place for funding for artwork of this kind was the

Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF). She did not pursue that at the time. She continued with the CPC and the original proposal. In December 2015, she presented at their meeting but was told that funding for the project would not benefit the community because the auditorium is not open to the public. Attorney Rumsey and Attorney Machado were interested in projects that have community impact. She started to research the MPPF and found that their parameters were the same. They are interested in projects in Massachusetts that will benefit the community, projects that will have an impact on a broad audience.

In April 2016, the CPC funding was denied. They recommended that Ms. Rodrigues submit a proposal for 2017. Ms. Rodrigues and Mr. Camara were there this evening to speak about that proposal. Because of the research and impact studies that have been part of this process, Ms. Rodrigues has come to the conclusion that the best thing to do would be to ask the CPC for funding for a conservator to go into the tech auditorium to assess what they have in the auditorium to determine the condition of the murals. Any changes in what the auditorium represents to the community is a long-range plan and that kind of long-range planning means significant discussion by the School Committee and by the City of Fall River. Ms. Rodrigues needs the School Committee's endorsement and support in order to resubmit the proposal in December.

Mr. Camara added that, prior to the letter that Ms. Rodrigues sent to the editor of the Herald News, the Neighborhood Association, of which he is co-chair, did a project in conjunction with the Greater Fall River Art Association, AHA! Fall River, and the celebration of the Battleship's 50th Anniversary in Fall River. They were asked to undertake a simple project and they chose the Mann Murals. In conjunction with the Fall River Art Association, which owns 40 WPA paintings that are on exhibit at the Cherry & Webb Gallery, they did a two-part presentation and they invited the public into the auditorium on Rock Street then adjourned to the Cherry & Webb Gallery to view the paintings that are owned by the Fall River Art Association. This project turned into a real eye opener and they found that Fall River was the owners of the largest collection of WPA art in the country. The WPA was established by Franklin D. Roosevelt to pay artists to do art. This is when art received government attention.

Since the school department has ownership over the tech building, Mr. Camara feels that it's the School Committee's responsibility to submit an application to the CPC if the school department wants to continue to utilize the tech building and the auditorium and create a space that will become a valued space for the community to come and appreciate. The Mayor has pursued something called the Street Scape Project which will run down Rock Street, North Main Street, and Purchase Street. The intent was, from the Neighborhood Associations' perspective, that this last public auditorium in downtown Fall River ought to become a place of cultural pursuit where people can come to see a movie or a play. There's a great opportunity to get on board with the Community Preservation's effort as well as the effort to bring art and entertainment to the city.

He feels that the School Committee should adopt this project as its own because the CPC would be more inclined to support a project that was brought to them by the School Committee. Ms. Rodrigues wants the public and students to be able to enjoy these murals. She mentioned again that Fall River has the largest collection of WPA art in the United States. That assessment was made in 1940 when the WPA Director in the state of Massachusetts came to Fall River and dedicated those murals. They cover 2000 square feet.

Dr. Costar learned a lot about the murals. The last time he was in the building he wasn't able to see the murals because the door was locked but has been told that, even though there was damage to the roof, nothing seemed to have leaked onto the murals. He is supportive of making an assessment on the status of the roof and the murals. He knows there is a possibility that the murals can be moved but there is also a possibility that they can't be moved. He is not ready to make any discussion about possibilities of where they should reside but he doesn't want to see them destroyed. If they can be preserved in some way, there are a couple of options: (1) If the auditorium stays up, the school department will be engaging in a Capital Improvement Project and this may be part of that improvement plan, and (2) if they can preserve and relocate the murals, there may be room in one of the other Fall River schools. It's a history lesson of our city that students need to see and be exposed to. He's ready to support the application but, at this point, not ready to be more than a cheerleader.

Ms. Rodrigues understands that this is a long-range plan. She had confidence in Mr. Coogan and has confidence in Mr. Pacheco that, without a doubt, the School Committee will maintain any repairs that need to be done. Architects have determined that the building is crumbling, not just the auditorium, but the building itself. She understands that the Committee needs time for long-range planning.

Mr. Martins looked at the letter dated December 14, 2015 indicating that brick and mortar projects are not eligible for funding through the Survey and Planning Grant. He asked if that is in reference to the Community Preservation Act.

Mr. Pacheco clarified that the CPA is a city organization committee that would be looking at all preservation projects. That letter is from MHC. He thinks the reason it was denied was because it's a survey and preservation grant as opposed to a MHC grant that one would get to put a roof on a building or some other construction work. MHC does provide brick and mortar grants. He thinks they may have been confused what was being asked because the grant funding that was denied was the Survey and Planning.

Mr. Martins addressed the next letter that was dated April 26, 2016, which was the denial of the mural issue. He asked if this letter was predicated upon the information on the September 14 letter. Mr. Pacheco answered that they are two different organizations. Mr. Camara mentioned

that the second paragraph of the letter indicates that brick and mortar projects represented in the application are not eligible for funding through the Survey and Planning grant-funded program. The CPA could give them money but they chose not to.

Mr. Martins' understanding is that the decision of the CPA choosing not to fund this project was not predicated on receiving the letter. Ms. Rodrigues said that she didn't think so because she reported this letter after the December meeting. That's when Attorney Rumsey and Attorney Machado pointed out that no one sees what she is doing with the project. She's asking a bunch of people to support a project when they haven't even seen the murals.

Mr. Martins doesn't see any reason given for the denial. Ms. Rodrigues said that it was because funds were limited. Mr. Camara added that the project doesn't have a public function. They want to fund things people are going to see. Mr. Martins understood that but that was not made clear in the letter. Ms. Rodrigues deferred to Mr. Pacheco and asked if it was realistic to assume that monies poured into a project need to have more of a community impact. Mr. Pacheco clarified that he was at this meeting as an employee of the Fall River Public School System so he wouldn't speak on behalf of the board of the MHC but he will speak as a member of that committee. He explained that the committee is very interested in funding projects that the public will have access to.

Mr. Camara stated that if the School Committee would like to see a conservator hired in order to determine the value and the future use of the auditorium and making the murals accessible, then that opens the door for funding that the CPA might agree to because the intent is to provide for public viewing of the product. If the Committee decided to make the 290 Rock Street building the new central administration office and hold all future committee meetings there, it would be held at the auditorium and that would be a big jump in utilizing that space in a public capacity. If the auditorium were also used for regular showings of movies and theatrical events, then that would be even more exciting because, not only then would it be used for public meetings, but also for public entertainment.

Transcriber's Note: Superintendent Malone entered the meeting at 5:55 p.m.

Mr. Martins said that, given the decision that was made by the CPC, it seems that if there are uses for the public to access the auditorium, it would serve the protection of the murals. The only other alternative would be to remove the murals and hope that you don't damage them in the process. He would like to see that building further used for the Resiliency Academy. The building needs work. He feels that the murals are very important to the community. As far as having entertainment in the auditorium, it reminded him of when the Nagle Auditorium was redone and reopened and people said that it would be used for public entertainment but he has yet to see that happen. He would not object to this auditorium having plays and movies,

providing it does not interfere with the operations of the school. He would like to see more space used for career training programs for students. He supports moving this to the full committee as a recommendation to apply for funds from the Community Preservation grant as it will serve the community at large as well as the students.

Dr. Costar said that the first step is to assess then find out what the status is and find out if the murals can be preserved and moved or not. He doesn't know what the status of the building is and what the cost of renovating that building would be. He supports Step 1 and would not rule out the murals staying where they are now. He is not ready yet to support this without knowing what the Capital Improvement Plan is needing to do for all school buildings.

Mr. Camara stated that the murals were made for the constructs of that auditorium. There are three levels of murals: Native American History, Civil War and Revolutionary War, and the Industrial Revolution. To take these down and move them would make it very difficult to replicate what exists in that building.

Superintendent Malone said that he has seen the murals and they are amazing. He asked Mr. Pacheco if the MSBA no longer did the Green Repairs Program. Mr. Pacheco said that they still do. Superintendent Malone mentioned that this might be an avenue to pursue. He supports what Dr. Costar has laid out for the Committee to proceed without making a solid decision.

Mr. Costa explained that the next step is for this discussion to go before the entire School Committee with a favorable recommendation that the Committee support the application to the CPC for an assessment by a curator as to the state of the Mann Murals. After the Committee receives that information, they will be in a better position to intertwine it with the master plan. Mr. Camara reiterated that he would like for the School Committee to embrace this application as their own because it's more meaningful coming from the School Committee than it is coming from him and Ms. Rodrigues. He would like the School Committee to be the requestors of the funds.

Mr. Costa said that this would need to go through the full School Committee and he's not sure what the parameters are for an elected body to request money from the CPA. Mr. Pacheco explained that, if the school department gives its blessing on this project, they don't necessarily have to author it but they do have to do a letter of support stating that they are backing this project. Because it's a public building, it will go for public procurement and that part is where the school department will have that ownership. The application doesn't need to be changed. The letter from the school department will accompany the application. Ms. Rodrigues and Mr. Camara were satisfied with that decision.

All were in favor

None were opposed

Motion passed

Transcriber's Note: At 6:15 p.m., Ms. Rodrigues and Mr. Camara left the meeting.

2. **Discussion:** Tansey Outside Security

Mr. Martins said that, just before school began, he attended the ice cream social at Tansey and he got a chance to see the trailers, which were almost complete. He was impressed with the spaciousness of the classrooms. He took a tour with one of the custodians. He personally knows people who live on Ray Street and he frequently gets concerns from residents who see kids climbing onto the roof of Tansey. He asked the custodian how the kids were getting on the roof. He was told that there's a courtyard that has an entrance on the right where there is a low roof and the kids stand on the handrail and pull themselves up onto the roof. When he was at Diman, there was an entrance to the building that was low and it had handrails and kids got on the rail and jumped onto the roof. The metal shop made what appeared to be candy canes and they were put up in the area facing outward so that students couldn't get up on the roof. That was successful in keeping kids off of the roof and it didn't detract from the building. It's something that can maybe be used for Tansey to prevent kids from getting up on the roof.

Mr. Martins also wanted to address doing something about the heavy screening on the windows that makes it look like a prison. Mr. Pacheco said that there is a better screen that is much stronger but looks better. It's quite expensive but, in the Capital Improvement Plan that they are putting together now, a full window replacement is in the works for Tansey. This project is eligible for the MSBA's Green Repairs Project. They can also take care of the safety issue of kids getting on the roof.

3. **Discussion and Vote to Refer:** Request for Renovations to Administration Building through Community Preservation Act Funding

MOTION: Mr. Martins-Dr. Costar: To move the discussion of renovating the administration building through community preservation act funding to the full School Committee.

Discussion:

Mr. Pacheco submitted an application to the Community Preservation Act that had a September 1 deadline. The goal of this application was to make the first floor of 417 Rock Street handicapped accessible through the side door. They will put a ramp in the driveway area and that will be the main entrance of the building. That will allow for off-street handicapped parking. There will also be a set of stairs leading up to that door. The entrance will have a camera and a buzzer. The current main entrance will be locked and have a key card access. If an employee wanted to access that door, they could; however, everyone else would be using the other entrance which will be the main entrance. It will have a camera system that will allow HR or a person sitting at the reception desk to see who is coming to the building and give them the

ability to buzz the person in. This will be the same system that was installed in the Parent Information Center. He cannot make the entire building accessible but as long as they are not having public meetings above the first floor, they are in compliance.

Mr. Martins stated that the School Committee Conference Room was not big enough to have School Committee meetings. Mr. Pacheco agreed but said that they could hold subcommittee meetings there. Superintendent Malone said that this would allow anyone to conduct business with the Fall River School System. If someone in a wheelchair wanted to meet with the Superintendent, he would meet with them on the first floor.

Mr. Pacheco mentioned that the second half of the application is for the roof. The main roof of the building has been repaired but now they are needing to repair the repairs. There are four chimneys that need repairs. They're going to absorb the repairs of two chimneys that they feel are in deplorable condition with the school department budget. The other two chimneys will be done the following year. Most of the work will be done in house. They will also do a full roof replacement. There may be an abatement issue. They will bring the building to energy code and put some insulation down and put either a membrane roof (sarnafil) or a different kind of roof but not a tar and gravel one. There is a roofer who works for the school department who says that the roof is sound but it has harmed the plaster of the building. There is some water damage. Both projects are eligible for CPA funding because it's a public building and it's a historic building so they are looking at historic preservation.

All were in favor

None were opposed

Motion passed

4. **Update:** Summer/Fall School Building Improvements

Mr. Pacheco announced that they had quite a few projects, one of them being the Tansey Modular Units. They have a five-year lease on the trailers and it's a lease-to-own. After five years, the Fall River Schools will own those trailers. Close to \$100,000 was spent on renovations to the building. His team did some painting inside Tansey. They also gave Talbot a facelift on the outside. They cut about seven trees and brush so that the school can be seen from the road, cut some branches away from the roof so that it wouldn't damage the roof, hydro seeded all the grass area that was worn down, planted shrubs at the front of the building, mulched over new beds, and painted doors and windows. The school looks more inviting. They also did some patching and repairs in the parking lot.

On the Parent Information Center, there's still some painting going on inside the building. They have a TV monitor to put up in the waiting area. They will be putting in more comfortable furniture in the hallways and will secure doors on the inside of the building in order to prevent people from the school from going into the Parent Center and vice versa. They built a ramp to

allow for handicapped accessibility. They lined the parking lot with two handicapped parking spaces and designated two other parking spaces for Parent Information Center only. They installed a security system. The door is locked at all times. There's a camera system and the person inside could buzz the visitor in. There is also an intercom when the person on the other side of the door could communicate with the visitor if they didn't recognize the person and can ask what they are there for.

Dr. Costar asked what can be done to slow cars down. He has noticed that people drive fast in that area. He asked if they could put up a sign that warns cars to slow down or if they could put down a speed bump. Mr. Pacheco said that he could have signage put up.

Mr. Pacheco announced that the solar panels at Morton have been operating for two and a half weeks now and they have a monitor that is on a portable stand that can be taken to classrooms and used as lessons. It has a touchscreen so it's interactive and the students can see what's going on on the roof and how much each panel is generating. They'll see a running tally as it's being generated.

Mr. Martins asked if it was going to be controllable at this point. Mr. Pacheco clarified that it was interactive in the sense that students can see the panels through the monitors. Mr. Martins is interested in knowing the amount the panels are saving as compared to not having the panels. Mr. Pacheco said that they should have that data in two months and he will make sure to provide that information once he receives it.

5. **Update:** School Safety and Security

Superintendent Malone stated that safety was the number one priority. He informed the Committee that he and Mr. Pacheco have some great plans but there has been inconsistent practice across the sites over the last several years. There is a lot of work to be done in this area. He will keep the Committee updated. Today we dealt with the first major crisis response. Luckily, the Fall River Public Schools have really good partnerships with The Fall River Police Department, Fire Department, and EMS when dealing with crisis situations. Mr. Pacheco and his team are looking at upcoming issues such as the sunset of the SRO grant this year which includes 10 SROs. We currently paid for three. He's hoping that this Subcommittee will have discussions about strategy moving forward. Perhaps there can be additional SROs and additional security personnel. We could be looking at a full-time security person in every school. Superintendent Malone recommended increasing the number of unannounced drills over the next couple of weeks at the schools, especially at places like Durfee, where there was a recent incident.

Mr. Costa said that there was speculation that the district knew about the threat to the school sooner than they let on. Mr. Costa tried to assure parents that that was not the case. The school department gets the information out as quickly as they can. They want parents to be well informed. Also, in cases like this, parents wonder what's going to happen to their son or daughter if they choose not to send them to school. He explained to parents that it's a personal decision as to whether or not to send your children to school based on the information that they have. They wondered if it would be an excused absence or an unexcused absence. Mr. Costa said that, when the team makes a decision, it would be helpful to share this with parents so that they know.

Superintendent Malone said that the incident that happened at Durfee was a unique situation so they couldn't exactly go by the policy that was in place for attendance. Mr. Costa agreed. He added that it was similar to what we do when there's inclement weather. We alert parents that school is going to be open but we ask them to use their best judgment when sending their child to school. Superintendent Malone did not feel that the threat was credible enough to close school. Parents always have the right to keep their children home. We can't allow for hysteria to control how we operate.

Dr. Costar said that they had something that was called the Critical Incident Protocol. They didn't call it "Policy" because they recognized the need for flexibility. It was developed over the years because every crisis is different. Staff needed to be trained on how to approach critical incidents. Every school should have a crisis team consisting of a principal, vice principal, teacher, counselor, nurse, and a central administration representative. As soon as something came up, the team met to look at how they're going to handle the issue. They had a checklist to make sure that everything was covered. Group think is sometimes better than one person thinking. Superintendent Malone said that his team is working on having a mandated crisis response team at each building. Right now, he's been sending out the Superintendent Memo.

Dr. Costar asked how they are doing with hardware for school safety. He asked if all the buzzers on the doors and cameras on the school were in operating condition. Mr. Costa answered that last year Mr. Coogan went through the buildings to see if the fobs were working. There was one at Greene that was malfunctioning but he fixed that. It's worth revisiting to make sure that these things are in working order.

Dr. Costar mentioned that, after what happened at Columbine, there was a contagion effect where all sorts of things were happening. The incidents needed to be monitored by the police. They needed to put systems into effect so police could trace calls made to schools. In doing so, they were able to catch perpetrators and that went a long way to stopping anything from happening. That is one thing to explore. The other big lesson is to let students and parents know that, if you hear something or see something that makes you feel uncomfortable, tell someone.

Facilities and Operations Subcommittee: October 18, 2016

Superintendent Malone agreed that it is better to be transparent and upfront in order to build trust with our students and our parents. We're going to respond with the utmost integrity.

MOTION: Mr. Martins-Dr. Costar: To adjourn.

No discussion

All were in favor

None were opposed

Motion passed (6:54 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted,



Administrative Assistant

ADA Coordinator: Gary P. Howayeck, Esq.- 508.324.2650

Please note: A videotape/DVD of this meeting is on file in the School Committee Office and is available for review by contacting the Administrative Assistant for the School Committee Services