

School Steering Team Minutes

Meeting #3

Halifax South Peninsula School

Date: February 16, 2016

Location: LeMarchant St Thomas School

Attendees:

Name	Organization
Krista Stevens	TIR
Cindy Littlefair	HRSB (elected Board member)
Tanya Whynacht	TIR
Marie Fagan	HRSB (Operation Services)
Peter Howitt	EECD
Karina Montalvo-Lagunes	TIR
David Jakeman	LMST (SAC chair)
Joanne Williams	HRSB (EXCEL)
Judy Obersi	LMST (SAC vice-chair)
Jeanne Boudreau	LMST (principal)
Tim Schaus	Facilitator

Guests: Joachim Stroink (MLA), Keith Robertson (Solterre), John Crace (architect), Patricia Duncan (TIR), Ryan Kelly (Efficiency NS)

1. Ryan Kelly (Efficiency NS) gave a PowerPoint presentation on Passive House (a German building standard) design and construction. Passive House focuses on energy efficiency through building orientation, envelope and air exchange.

Some information expressed during the Passive House discussion include:

- LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is a mark of excellence to recognize a green building. One component of LEED is energy efficiency.
 - Passive House and LEED are very different things yet complementary
 - The largest building in Nova Scotia built to Passive House standards is the Valley Waste administration building. It is LEED Gold. It is much smaller than the Halifax South Peninsula school project.
 - Passive House is much more energy efficient than LEED standards
 - LEED goes beyond Passive House in some areas regarding air quality. Passive House doesn't address the nature of the materials used for toxicity while LEED does.
 - The site for the new school has not been assessed to see if it is feasible to do passive House. The building site is tight.
 - A Passive House project of this size has not yet been done in Canada.
 - Risks associated with a Passive House approach to this school project include: steep learning curve for designers, construction company, trades; delay in project completion; cost
 - TIR has a high interest in some of the features of Passive House however can't promise meeting that standard with this project until more research is done. TIR will make a well informed decision.
 - Community is looking for the new school to be a 'green school' with a high degree of energy efficiency.
2. Input regarding the new school design was gathered from a community meeting on February 10 and augmented with input from LeMarchant St Thomas staff. This information was presented. A report of this information was handed out and is attached to the minutes as Appendix A.
 3. Email was received at the meeting from Wayne Mason that HRM council had approved an enhanced gymnasium for the Halifax South Peninsula school project. The gymnasium will be enhanced from an elementary to junior high sized gymnasium.
 4. Next steps:
 - RFP for Professional Services (architect) closes February 24 but may have to be extended due to an upcoming addendum.
 - Project Presentation will take place shortly after RFP closing and Proponents' presentations will take place within one or two weeks.
 - Proposals evaluated after March Break
 - Contract awarded
 - SST meeting #4 focused on Schematic Design sometime in April

Next SST meeting: Probably sometime in April. Notice will be sent out prior to meeting

Appendix A

Considerations on the design of LMST

February 16, 2016

We thank you for the opportunity to give input towards our new LMST school. We would like our school to be beautiful and striking from all sides (Watt St. and Jubilee Rd.). We are attracted to the idea of a modern and vibrant school that inspires not just the children into being innovative thinkers, but also brings a source of pride to the community.

We looked at several examples and even used the public library as a source of inspiration.

South Queens in Liverpool and Norma Rose Point School in Vancouver were attractive exteriors.

For the exterior:

We don't like the idea of a big metal and brick or a painted concrete box. Mixed, authentic materials including wood and glass are considered more tasteful and durable than the use of bold and primary colours. A form that is a bit more broken into parts to help with the sense of scale. "Not Lady Gaga, but more of an Adele..." to quote one astute parent.

We feel that the school should be a true reflection of its urbanity with Civic presence and an emphasis on public and active transportation and outdoor gathering.

The environment:

The environment as well as the use of healthy materials was one of the top priorities for teachers and parents alike. It should set an example and teach others about our consideration for the environment. We want the building to be a learning tool to help the students develop awareness and respect for their environment. We would like it to be a role model and go above and beyond the standards to reduce emissions and operating costs.

An instructive building also. Wall cut-outs/windows to see plumbing/wiring. Real time monitoring of water/electricity/gas usage, solar power production etc.

Natural light and natural ventilation:

This was considered the other top priority for parents and teachers.

Natural light in all classrooms, and corridors. Direct or borrowed natural light in the gym.

Tall ceilings:

We like the tall ceilings at LeMarchant St Thomas. (9 foot ceilings feel too low), even in the classrooms. We want areas with double height ceilings that let in extra natural light like the entry, gym and cafeteria.

Outdoor space and a green roof:

We feel that even if the construction comes later, the planning and allocation of space for outdoor learning activities will be an essential part of the design process. We feel strongly about giving up green outdoor space for the extra parking spaces beyond what is really necessary. We are questioning the need for 51 parking spaces. (14 more than at the current school with no projected increase in enrolment). The emphasis should go towards outdoor green spaces that provide ample learning and fresh air opportunities, even in the winter months. We would like to retain our three separate play structures and incorporate a natural play area that has a berm for sliding. We are excited about having an area with ample sunlight to accommodate a future vegetable garden as part of the outdoor learning. We want an outdoor classroom.

We need creative solutions for green space due to our tight plot. We are attracted to the idea of a green roof, with a possible outdoor classroom on the roof, or rooftop seating.

We would like to maintain our existing natural buffer area on the East side of the parking lot.

Learning commons and cafeteria:

All parents and teachers want a larger cafeteria space, preferably twice the size of the current plan to potentially accommodate all children at lunchtime. This would function as a learning commons outside of lunchtime, with space for a variety of seating options. The teachers feel this larger non-gym space would be very well used, as a venue for guest speakers (e.g. astronauts), multi-class collaborations, multi-cultural day events, reading buddies, Excel, yoga, YPHD, community events (SST meetings!). It would be sufficiently large for band concerts / drama, ensuring the gym was used for gym purposes throughout the year. It could be linked to the gym, music and art spaces, to facilitate displays / presentations.

All parents and teachers like the idea of having a learning commons. This was the only space for which some teachers would consider giving up a bit of classroom space. The learning commons could accommodate project based learning activities for large group work and function as a multipurpose room.

Since teachers value their classroom sizes, there will be a need by the architects to come up with a creative solution for achieving this learning commons. Perhaps a minimal use of corridor space? Teachers thought that if the cafeteria was extra large and in a commons room off the gym, it could function as a multipurpose room. With the

proper infrastructure in place, the cafeteria could double up as a learning commons. This would only work with furnishing that can be put away quickly and easily.

Other suggested activities for this multipurpose room include:

After school excel and or YPHD programs, Guest speakers, Yoga, multi-class collaborations, reading buddies, community events.

We feel that if the cafeteria is in a common area and combine it with multipurpose activities and the learning commons, its larger size could be justified.

There seems to be a consensus on having the cafeteria off of the gym, connected to the outside, with lots of natural light. Its connection to the outside, would accommodate outdoor seating for nice days. It is seen as a hub.

The learning commons would have to have good internet access, although our assumption is that this will be the case throughout the school.

We are wondering if a way of dealing with the noise from the cafeteria in the common area, could be to have the cafeteria, gym and music rooms in their own wing, separate from the academic wing.

South Queens has an interesting model for this. The administrative area and entry, divide the academic wing from the Cafeteria & Gym.

We are wondering how we would address quieter eating spaces for children who don't do well in the noise of the cafeteria, aside from simply adding sound baffles.

Lastly, having a multipurpose, learning commons, cafeteria room, would free up the gym for its intended use. Currently the students find themselves sacrificing gym time for other activities and concert preparation during performance season.

Technology:

The teachers consider this one of the top priorities.

Planning for the future with fibre op and coding as well more technology is needed, like chrome books, mounted LCD screens and smart boards in all classrooms please.

Parents and teachers felt that technology could be incorporated throughout the school and into the classrooms. Due to its quieter nature perhaps some corridors could accommodate this as well, as they do now?

Classrooms:

Teachers value their full size classrooms and consider this another priority.

We want sinks in all classrooms.

We'd like the ability to use the white board at the same time as the LCD screen.

Operable windows with screens with natural light.

Library commons:

We see it as being in a separate room as opposed to in a hall or common room. We like the idea of this room accommodating nooks and crannies for group discussion as well as the individual who wants quiet reading time. Plenty of natural light in an inspired creative space. We picture it with lots of comfortable seating as opposed to filling the space with tables and chairs. The Librarian's area need not be that large, to maximize book storage and reading opportunities.

Corridors:

We like the idea of the corridors having nooks and crannies and areas of informal learning, like one on one reading, but we don't want formal classrooms in the corridor. We want the corridors to have lots of natural light and if possible encourage small informal seating areas (for one-on-one parent readers) as opposed to just having circulation space. To have sufficient cloak-room space/storage for each class.

Music room:

The standard size of the music room is satisfactory but we are concerned about having adequate storage. We have one of the biggest and strongest music programs in Halifax. The storage needs to accommodate chairs, music stand caddies, risers, props, and large percussion instruments, in addition to student instruments including 45 cellos! Additional storage for the students' instruments in the hallways, could be an option.

We would like a great music room, with tall angled ceilings and sound baffling on the walls and a shape that considers acoustics. Tall windows with Natural light. Charles P Allen and Kingswood elementary are considered good examples.

Some extra comments from the music teachers:

- 1) A sink which is really needed in a band room for cleaning mouthpieces, etc.
- 2) There could be raised semicircular or rectangular area along one wall that would function as a stage/riser for rehearsals. It would have to be designed so that you can fit at least one chair and music stand in width, but it doesn't take too much floor space. Two steps up would work well.
- 3) Audio/Visuals/Technology: I think it's obvious, but a new room should really include equipment to show and play music and video at a high volume level, be able to project videos onto the wall, and a small PA system. This would be integrated and easy to use. I won't go on about making a case for A/V in the music room.
- 4) Please use windows that can open!
- 5) It would be nice if there was a little alcove or a small low wall to put the teacher's desk behind.
- 6) It would be nice to see the room designed to allow for a growing program. A partition into cafeteria?
- 7) A multipurpose space for extracurricular music programs that happen simultaneously to general music activities, discreet from Excel and the cafeteria.
- 8) Being able to stack and move chairs and music stands quickly is very helpful to avoiding the wastage of teaching time and energy just to set-up and take down a class.

The 'raised classroom':

We have struggled with the idea of letting go of the stage. Although some of us felt liberated by the thought of a portable stage that could be set up in multiple locations, others don't want to eliminate the availability of a fixed stage for 100 years to come. So far the only room we've considered using as the raised classroom, would be the art room, but only if we can accommodate enough storage for art supplies along the perimeter. It is essential to have natural light in each classroom.

Some other ideas for the stage included having a depressed gym area next to a connected cafeteria that would double as the performance stage. We need a creative solution for this concept.

We would like to see thought given to lighting fixtures, sound equipment, curtains, scrim (backgrounds) and risers in the event of a fixed stage.

The gym:

Parents and teachers alike are aware for the need of a junior high size gym, given the large number of children at the school that can serve and connect us to the community. It should be near the canteen, cafeteria and music room, with the cafeteria as the hub. There is a request for a climbing gym. Extra storage for Excel would be nice.

Excel:

There is concern that planning for the Excel program is not being prioritized, as this program is oversubscribed and very important for working parents. The demand for excel alone is for about 110 students.

1. Cafeteria or classrooms (30 kids per room)
2. Access to a gym and stage area
3. Access to a sink
4. 1 or 2 fridges, depending on program size
5. Access to a computer, a small office near the stage would be great.
6. Storage for crafts and sports equipment (typically metal lockers)
7. Area to hang backpacks and coats

Other miscellaneous requests:

1. Kiss and go drop off area.
2. Bike rack areas that get plowed in the winter close to the entry or even under an entryway canopy.
3. Areas with overhangs that allow for cold and rainy days shelter/play during pick-up of multiple children with different bell times.
4. We would love to be able to save the beautiful mahogany archway and some of the stained glass windows from LMST for interior recognition of the history of the school in the area.
5. Consideration should be given to unique features currently available in other schools like a dedicated climbing gym or pottery studio, but we are open to other similar suggestions as these features can have powerful impacts on the physical and mental well-being of students. Unique features can be a source of pride within the school community and provide recreational opportunities to the broader community."

This document was compiled by parent and community members of the LMST SAC, including the SAC members of the SST: Judy Obersi (SAC vice-chair and SST member), Nancy Beck, Andrew Boyne, David Jakeman (SAC chair and SST member) and Laura White.

It is based on feedback received from a community information session held on February 10, 2016, a solicitation of teachers made by Jennifer McMillan (staff member of the LMST SAC), and discussions at the February 11, 2016 SAC meeting.