

**TOWN OF MADISON CONNECTICUT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

AGENDA

Regular Meeting, Thursday, November 18, 7:00 p.m.

Madison Town Campus

Attendees: Anne Foley, Jonathon Stein, Matt Bloom, Ryan Duques, Sheri Cote, Justin Murphy (BoF), Bruce Wilson (BoS), Superintendent Dr. Craig Cooke, Seth Klaskin (BoE)

1. Approval of Minutes of October 14, 2021 Meeting – Motion to Approve by Duques, Seconded, Steffen, Unanimous approval
2. Approval of Minutes of November 2, 2021 Special Meeting - Meeting – Motion to Approve by Duques, Seconded by Steffen, Unanimous approval
3. Public Comment - None
4. Presentation from the Superintendent of Schools on the School Renewal Plan – Presentation by Superintendent Dr. Cooke
 - a. J. Murphy asked why know elevations or schematics were included the presentation. Dr. Cooke noted that the construction consultant recommended they not include the architectural design. Additionally, costs related to architectural work could not be spent until the referendum is passed.
 - b. Bruce Wilson asked which costs in addition to acquisition costs will not be included in the referendum costs.
 - c. Dr. Stein asked what the timeline for the project is? Dr. Cooke’s response:
 - i. Polson work in the summers.
 - ii. Brown work in the summer. Brown school is not fully occupied so a portion of the work can occur during school.
 - iii. New K-5 would be complete for fall of 2025.
 - iv. J. Murphy asked regarding the \$89 million est. project cost less \$10 million of state reimbursement which expenses were not in the costs: \$1.3 million acquisition costs.
 - v. Dr. Stein asked if the cost of moving softball field was included in bonding in cash the new land purchase is not completed. Dr. Cooke said no.

- vi. J. Murphy asked if decisions have been made about what to use Jeffery school for? Dr. Cooke – no decision made. 3+ years to decide what to do.
- vii. R. Duques – asked what happened over the last 10 years with staffing and expenses as enrollment dropped? Answer from Dr. Cooke and BoE member Klaskin: there is a minimum budget requirement unless a school closed. Additionally, support staff were added to the school system to increase quality of the education.

R. Duques noted that population has declined while the budgets have continued to increase? Dr. Cooke responded say that some of the things he could point out:

- State reimbursements have declined.
- Health insurance costs have risen.
- Daniel Hand reduced teacher headcount by 3 from '20-'21 to '21-'22.

Duques commented that he feels the town fails to plan long-term. He noted the high school didn't have amenities like an auditorium. He asked if an average age of 35.5 years is good or bad.

Dr. Cooke noted that taking care of school infrastructure is important, but having highly qualified teachers is also important to parents.

Duques asked if there is an overarching town plan to create a unifying town infrastructure plan for the town? Steffen noted that the superintendent and school board may not be the correct group to address the issue.

Dr. Stein noted that a unified plan has been missing related to town infrastructure plan.

Steffen noted that the EDC should potentially re-focus on an infrastructure plan by touring the facilities.

Mr. Wilson inquired why the census data breakdown was ages 4-5 vs K-3. Dr. Cooke explained it was a state reporting convention. Given that we have two proposed schools as K-5 it was suggested we produce an “overlay” to reflect how the facilities would meet capacity.

Mr. Duques inquired if the Island Avenue School had been on line in 2008. Mr. Bloom asked how this distribution of children compares to surrounding districts.

Dr. Cooke emphasized that as school conditions improve the community appeal increases and will provide more economic benefits. Academics will of course need to remain strong.

Mr. Klaskin contributed that in Guilford the priority had been construction of a new high school without any included plans for the elementary or middle schools. He also emphasized as well that we do not want to create another “Daniel Hand” situation (ie falls short of community expectations.)

Mr. Duques suggested that we discuss endorsing the referendum as a plan based on the economic impact.

Mr. Wilson inquired if we would be a unique community with two K-5 schools? Mr. Stein suggested that at least on the shoreline that would make a unique circumstance.

Mr. Bloom inquired if as the design moves forward would there be more opportunities for younger families (who would likely have significant interest) to have specific input on design options. Mr. Klaskin referenced that there had been multiple meetings sponsored by the TriBoard soliciting community input regarding community design priorities. He further stated that going forward the process will be as transparent and open minded as possible.

Agenda Item 5: Light up Madison

Mr. Duques reported that the lights went up fast. There has been some consensus community input that more is needed on Wall street. There are still 2 trees that are awaiting a power source. Mr. Duques intends to ask the post office if they would be able to assist in this. There are some add on capabilities built in to the plan—not sure if DPW would be able to assist. Per Ms. Cote, Jay from Madison Flower was willing to help if there was funding. (Madison Beach and Rec vs Chamber of Commerce?)

Mr. Duques reported that at this point the lighting company was solidly booked for truck work but that there could still be more ladder work done. Ms. Cote pointed out that some of the lights are already out and Mr. Duques explained that it was likely due to an RFI tripping that needs to be reset (requiring a ladder.) Mr. Murphy posed that maybe next year we should consider just decorating the poles. Ms. Cote informed the commission that Madison Flower would be interested in bidding to do next year.

Mr. Sprague (public comment) asked if the Conservation Commission had been consulted regarding the environmental impact of the resulting light pollution. Mr. Duques responded that they had yet to meet since the pandemic but that he would once again reach out to them for input.

Agenda Item 6: EDC Director Update

Ms. Cote suggested an email data-base for local businesses. Have been using the Madison Chamber list but that excludes a number of businesses. Has started to collect some but would like EDC to fund the use of Constant Contact to create a better system. Mr. Wilson asked if the current town communication program might work. Ms. Cote discussed some of the benefits of the Constant Contact system that is in use in Guilford. Mr. Duques reported it was in concept with the thinking of EDC but asked that what we have at the town level be further investigated.

Ms. Cote reported on an ongoing project of a digital holiday gift flip guide. She has asked the Chamber of Commerce to partner in the project. It will serve the dual purposes of developing interest in the Madison businesses represented and provide an opportunity to collect data on participating businesses. The hope is to have it sent out next week.

Old/New business and adjourned.

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