

New School Playground Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 12, 2018

Present: Paul Perzanoski, Jeanie Doughty, Liza Martin, Jeanne Baker Stinson, Guest and advisor Matt from PDT

- 1) Minutes – changes suggested to improve the clarity of the phrase at the end of page two where it said “The scope of Josh’s planned work with PDT on our project includes the planning of the two designed spaces only.” Now reads “The scope of Josh’s work on the landscape design for the new school excludes any work on playgrounds. He will be designing the outdoor classroom and the outdoor art space.”
- 2) Where to go next? We had a free-wheeling discussion with Matt where we were able to determine our next steps and get many questions answered.
 - a. We all agreed that we’d like to see a playground like the ones Josh described at our last meeting but we weren’t sure how to get there.
 - b. When we built the Stowe School and its playground we were constrained by State participation from paying a natural playground company or landscape architect for a consultation as part of the RFP process. Paying for a consultation may still be necessary but now that we are using local money that should not be an issue if we decide that is what we want.
 - c. We looked at the input from the second grade teachers at Stowe and noted that much of it was quite specific (more picnic tables for example) rather than expressing broad likes and dislikes. We’ll keep these specifics in mind further along in the planning process.
 - d. Stowe School second grade teachers did express a desire for a running track like the one that is currently at Coffin. Matt thought that would be easy to add to the access roads that are already being widened in spots for use as the hard surface portions of the playground.
 - e. Right now the thinking is that the two wings of the building might have forest themes – but one deciduous and one conifer. We might be able to carry those themes into the playground design on each side of the building as well.
 - f. Matt said that our first job was to decide if the two playgrounds are “equivalent” – will they be used in the same way by the same numbers of children? Will they just be equivalent or will they be almost identical? We agreed right away that we’d like them to feel different but provide the same experiences in different ways. However, we then had a long discussion about programming. Will we be using two playgrounds each day for lunch recess? Is one big enough? How many duty teachers would we need for each scenario? If we planned a main playground and a secondary one would there be enough room on the main playground? As a committee we decided we preferred two playgrounds equal in experiences but with different elements but that we would produce Plan A (two playgrounds) and Plan B (one large playground and one much less well-equipped). At the new school committee meeting following the playground committee the larger committee rejected the idea of one playground. The school is being built with a cafeteria that seats 200 so there need be only three lunches. However, the feeling was that 200 children were too many to have on one playground at a time. We will go with “Plan A”!

- g. We discussed money again and Paul P. told us not to give up. He believes that the new school committee might find a quality playground a good use of the “surplus” money from changing the heating system.
 - h. Matt feels that the next step is to turn the list of requirements for our playground into a narrative for an RFP used to hire the designer who could give us the natural elements we want. Paul P. felt that it would be necessary to follow the usual process and get three bids and then choose the best. This person/company would design all the outdoor space of the playground areas. We’d then need a landscaper to do the actual work transforming any terrain, taking out or putting in plantings, etc.
 - i. We’ll then need a playground designer/playground equipment representative to put the traditional equipment in the spaces chosen by us and the landscape designer.
 - j. Jeanne Bee will write a rough draft of the RFP narrative to share with the Coffin Playground Committee. We’ll share this improved rough draft with the Playground Committee at the next meeting. When we are in agreement that it expresses what we want as a committee Matt has agreed to help transform it into an RFP document that we can share broadly with the design community.
- 3) Our next meeting will be April 5th at 5:00 PM.