

**COMMITTEE ON  
JOINT SCHOOL BUILDINGS  
(Continuation of April 9, 1997 Meeting)**

**April 16, 1997**

**6:30 PM**

Chairman Higgins reconvened the meeting.

The Clerk called the roll.

**Present:** School Cmte. Members Higgins, Healy, Zebrowski  
Aldermen Reiniger, Clancy, Domaingue

Chairman Higgins addressed item 3 of the agenda:

Discussion with the architect relative to close-out of Science Lab  
Renovations at West High School.

Mr. Matuszewski advised that the work at West High School was completed including the warranty items.

On motion of Alderman Clancy, duly seconded by Mr. Healy, it was voted to accept the completion of the project.

Chairman Higgins addressed item 4 of the agenda:

Discussion with the architect and engineer relative to the new Middle  
School.

Chairman Higgins advised, for the purpose of those who were not present at the time, that the Committee had done a site visit last week to two buildings that Mr. Marinace had been the architect for. The Committee received a letter from CLD outlining and addressing the concerns brought up at the April 2, 1997 meeting.

Mr. Sommers from CLD Architects proceeded to outline the proposed drainage system for the new Middle School. Several items had been put into addendum in the contractor's bid packets. The groundwater concern in the courtyard area and the retention pond in the back of the school were major concerns of the Committee. The courtyard grading had been revised to create a crown in the center and in addition the catch basins had been upped from one to four catch basins, to protect from overflow.

Chairman Higgins asked if those modifications would alleviate the bathtub effect.

Mr. Sommers answered the bathtub is still there, but I will talk about that later on. The four catch basins will help protect against the puddling effect that can occur after normal settling of the building. The second item was to add a fence at the top of the detention basin.

Chairman Higgins advised that the Committee was also concerned about the amount of water that would be in the detention basin at any given time.

Mr. Sommers answered normally when detention basins are designed it is with the intent that only five or six inches of water would be in them at any given time.

Mr. Marinace stated in the addendum we changed the elevation of the bottom of the detention basin so that there would never be more than a foot of water in it.

Mr. Healy asked where the fence would be placed.

Mr. Sommers answered on the exterior above the berm.

Chairman Higgins asked who do we expect would have responsibility for maintaining the detention pond area?

Mr. Houle stated in terms of cleanliness it would be PBS.

Ms. Zebrowski asked who would be in charge of clearing out any silt that would collect in the bottom of the detention pond.

Mr. Houle stated when it comes to cleaning out pipes and such, the role of PBS would be limited to calling the Highway Department, who are usually very cooperative about coming in and cleaning out drain pipes.

Alderman Domaingue stated some of the problems have been the responsibility of this site because we have had experience with other sites where the responsibility has really not been clear. What we are going to be expecting is that those issues are going to be worked out before that school is built. I do not feel very comfortable when we hear that we do not know which department will be taking care of things.

Chairman Higgins stated I expect that is why everyone is here. If we need one department to coordinate the care of the new school, I would expect it to be PBS. I think we need this in writing.

Mr. Sommers advised that utility trenches had been added up hill from the school in order to prevent groundwater from moving along towards the foundation of the school. As another measure of making sure the underdrains are accessible, we have added clean outs in so that it will be easier to keep the drains clear.

Mr. Houle suggested drawing up a plan for maintenance of the new school and bringing it back to the Committee for approval.

Mr. Sommers stated the next added item was curtain drains on the up hill side of the school. These drains were situated approximately three feet below the water table with the intention of drawing down the water table to intercept it and direct it down hill.

Chairman Higgins stated the concern is that the water table will rise and we will have a very damp building that will give us mold, mildew and insects. Are you saying that the series of drains is going to draw that water away?

Mr. Sommers answered yes. What we are essentially doing is lowering the entire groundwater table. The second thing is the vapor barrier, an extra thick one has been provided for in the addendum. All the elements together will serve to protect the school.

Chairman Higgins asked what happens if the under drains get clogged.

Mr. Sommers answered that is why we added the clean outs.

Chairman Higgins asked what happens if the vapor barrier fails.

Mr. Sommers answered we have put belt and suspenders in here, if one fails the other will work. If everything were to fail, I would still think given the elevation of the school, you would not have a great amount of water. We have deleted the detention basin sump. We have added a 6 inch to one foot ditch before the curbing at the toe of the Green Acres slope so that any water that comes off that hill will go into the ditch before it reaches the curb.

Chairman Higgins stated one of her biggest concerns was the pooling of the water in the courtyard area. I believe Mr. Bernard had suggested that the building be turned a bit to eliminate that affect. What I keep hearing is that there will be standing water in the detention basin at any given time, is that correct?

Mr. Sommers answered that is incorrect, because there are too many drains in the surrounding areas.

Mr. Sheppard from the Highway Department stated we maintain every catch basin in the City and still don't have the power to clean them all on a biannual basis. If Mr. Houle has a problem with a specific one, we get there within a couple of days.

Chairman Higgins asked is this something we could put on your regular schedule.

Mr. Sheppard answered it is, but typically our priority is the streets, but if Mr. Houle asked us to show up we would.

Alderman Domaingue stated when you know the City is putting a building in an area that may need more frequent treatment, are you telling us that the City does not set up any type of schedule for those kinds of special areas?

Mr. Sheppard answered in the past we have not patrolled the school areas.

Alderman Domaingue stated if you know there are special circumstances surrounding a building that may involve the Highway Department, are you telling us that you would not, ahead of time, set up some kind of a schedule to make sure that we don't encounter major problems when you know regular maintenance will avoid that.

Mr. Sheppard answered I think that is what I said when I stated that Dick Houle could work with us to set up a schedule for maintenance.

Ms. Zebrowski stated I think the reason why we are asking so many questions about the catch basins is because if we have a problem, now that they are located closer to the school, isn't there a better chance of water getting into the school?

Mr. Marinace stated on the addendum, we not only changed the catch basins, but we put two drains on either side of each of the three entrances, that are a few inches lower than the level of the school building. Even if that, what we call the bath tub fills up, the water is going to go out those six additional drains.

Ms. Zebrowski asked how much extra will all these additions cost.

Mr. Sommers answered I don't know off the top of my head, but they are in the addendum.

Alderman Clancy asked, at the buildings we toured last week, have they ever had any water problems?

Mr. Marinace answered no, and the difference with those buildings is that part of them are underground. Our middle school is above ground and quite a bit above the water table. In addition we have a heavier vapor barrier than either one of those buildings has, we have internal under drains, and we have the curtain drains that neither one of those buildings has.

Chairman Higgins asked would it be safe to say that all these additional amendments were a result of a lot of the questions that we have been asking?

Mr. Marinace answered it was a result of a lot of the questions you have been asking and we also volunteered a few things that you did not ask for.

Ms. Zebrowski commented I wonder how safe that detention area is going to be? Even fenced in I can just see the problems, with all the children, and the property being open to the public for sports, and such.

Mr. Marinace stated the slope at the East Derry Elementary School is steeper than the one at the proposed middle school, and there is no fence in Derry.

Chairman Higgins addressed item 5 of the agenda:

Discussions with department heads from Fire, Parks & Recreation, Police, Highway, Public Buildings Services and Water Works relative to site maintenance of the new Middle School.

Alderman Domaingue stated for the Police Department, at the meeting we had at Green Acres School relative to this site, some of the issues brought up by the residents who live there now had to do with lighting, and had to do with safety of the area and vandalism to both the school property as well as the homeowners, and whether or not there would be an increase in that. A major complaint that was lodged was that the neighbors do not see enough police coverage around the Green Acres property now, and were fearful that with increased activity there would be increased problems. They wanted to know what assurances they could have from the Police Department in terms of getting increased patrols for that area.

Chief Driscoll stated I was not at that meeting but I did attend a meeting prior to that one at the School Department where I believe the same presentation was made by Mr. MacKenzie and others. We did discuss, on the access road, being able to drive all the way around which would be conducive to the patrol cars going through there. That is rather hard to do with the Green Acres School the way it is now. I think that will increase the patrol, the fact that there is a new athletic field there, with more residents going there as well as kids, which will contribute to the

safety of that site and the safety of the building. The fact that there are some homes backing the property on both sides, I think that will help contribute to the safety. Certainly the police will make the commitment to patrol the schools as often as we can. I know that Sgt. Robidas, who has a tremendous amount of expertise in security and lighting, has reviewed the plans and spoken with a number of people on the committee and made recommendations as to lighting, and perhaps he can address that for you.

Sgt. Robidas stated at one of the meetings we had specifically discussed the lighting source and the type of lighting that we would be utilizing. The discussion was due to the lack of lighting currently at Green Acres School, in reality what we concluded was we would use metal halid lighting for the school with a flood type atmosphere. The reason for that is it is a better source of lighting. As a point of reference, similar to what you would see in an automobile dealership. It would increase the lighting in that area, and with a 9 million dollar school we should treat it as such and give it the proper lighting. Some of the other issues we discussed are the properties adjacent to the school property, and the type of fencing. What we wanted to stay away from was stockade fencing, which would be conducive to having people hanging around without being seen by the neighbors.

Alderman Domaingue asked on the lighting, are we going to have some kind of protective cover so that vandals don't get at the lights, and will the lights on the side of the neighbors have some sort of dimmer...

Sgt. Robidas answered it won't be dimming apparatus, in reality the light covers will be a polycarbonate material which will be resistance to rock throwing or someone with small gauge weapons. As far as shading, they will be located in such an area to illuminate the school but not cause light pollution to the people residing in the area.

Chairman Higgins asked is this all part of the bid.

Mr. Marinace answered yes, and what it will do is light up the building as opposed to having the light shining out from the building, which helps the neighborhood and also the highway, they won't be getting light coming out of the building, everything will be aimed towards the building.

Sgt. Robidas commented one of the things about that lighting source is when you are coming down the highway, it is such a bright light it catches your eye, so it calls attention to it.

Chairman Higgins stated one of the things I am concerned about is, we are going to have landscaping, shrubbery, grass, whatever...

Mr. Marinace stated we will have some, not a great deal, a lot of the shrubbery and trees are by unit prices, when we see how the prices are coming in for the whole project, we can buy additional trees if we want to.

Chairman Higgins asked who takes care of the landscaping.

Mr. Houle answered Parks and Recreation will be taking care of the fields adjacent to the school, as far as mowing the lawn and shrubbery, I suppose PBS would be responsible, but we don't have the expertise for shrubbery.

Chairman Higgins stated the other concern is the snowplows hitting the curbing, now who does the plowing.

Mr. Lugwig stated snowplowing is pretty much a nightmare, it takes a special piece of equipment, a front end loader, which we have one of. We met in January with Frank Thomas and had discussion relative to plowing. Whenever you get into little parking areas which make a nicer design, but not an easier plowing job, it is extremely difficult. We did recommend that if sloped granite as opposed to asphalt curbing was used it would be helpful. I am not any more proud of our school sites than anybody here tonight, but we have been the department that has been asked to oversee expenditures as it relates to going back and addressing the site after all is said and done. We did send written suggestions to the architect with recommendations for shrubbery, types that might have a better chance of just surviving given the attention that we see that it gets. It's is very difficult, I don't want to run from responsibility but it is a lot of handwork around the adjacent parcels of land around the schools. I think maybe this committee should take a look at developing a small contract. First of all you have to decide to what level do we want to have landscaping, do you want to have Wagner Park or Oak Park, two different levels of landscaping. Quite frankly cactus might be a good choice over at Northwest School as opposed to some other material. More though needs to be given to how aesthetically attractive can we make it realistically with what you want to spend. If you are not going to put in irrigation, and I would assume you are not, then why in the world would you be laying out all these grassed areas or whatever. We like grass and plants and trees, but sometimes you have to be realistic. I think if Mr. Houle looked into an inexpensive contract, maybe once in the spring, someone went around and identified the landscaped areas around the school areas, that would go a long way if you did a four times a year contract, I don't think that would be that expensive. Unless you are going into full blown landscaping, I don't have the answer for you.

Chairman Higgins asked if Parks and Recreation's concerns were addressed, and was that part of the bid spec.

Mr. Marinace answered one of the things we had brought before this committee for money saving was to change the curbing from granite to asphalt, and we all agreed that was not a good thing to do. We did not put that in the spec. As far as the planings, we started off very simply, and we may or may not do more depending on what you want to do. Another thing I put in the bid already was an allowance for irrigation to keep the ball fields green. You can pull that money out of the bid and not take care of those fields, or you can choose... depending on how the contract goes.

Alderman Domaingue asked why are we putting in an irrigation system in such an already wet site.

Mr. Ludwig answered typically when a field is constructed it is constructed to shed water not to retain it.

Alderman Domaingue asked do we have irrigation systems at any other junior or elementary school field.

Mr. Ludwig answered some.

Alderman Clancy stated when they put the addition on Wilson School, they put some shrubs in and within a month they were all dead, and that is a shame.

Ms. Zebrowski asked would Parks and Rec be responsible for the sidewalks and courtyard plowing.

Mr. Houle answered I don't know how that would work out.

Mr. Ludwig stated we have done it at times we have done it because in a small area like that you really should not have a truck.

Mr. Houle stated we will bring a maintenance plan for the school before the committee.

Alderman Reiniger left at this time.

Ms. Zebrowski asked about putting trees up as a sound barrier for the classrooms on the highway side of the building.

Mr. Marinace answered those are by unit price and are not in the base bid.

Alderman Domaingue asked what was the issue with Water Works that they were asked to attend this meeting.

Mr. Bowen answered probably fire hydrants. There had been a problem at the School of Technology where no one was inspecting them. In checking we found that the Fire Department was using that site as a place to test some of their pumping equipment and they were frequently using the hydrants. We asked them to test their pumping equipment elsewhere and the problem went away. There are five fire hydrants on this site and it would not be a problem for us to, in the course of inspecting our local fire hydrants, to put those on the list.

Alderman Domaingue asked so the Parks and Recreation Department would be inspecting them.

Mr. Bowen answered yes we do a twice a year inspection.

Alderman Domaingue stated I would like to speak to Kevin again, I know he cannot answer for the Department Head but a lot of the maintenance issues will be between the Highway Department and the Public Buildings Services Department. Are there issues that your department sees as possible problem areas?

Mr. Sheppard answered we have taken a good look at the plans as every other department has, the new drainage system, I think we are as confident as the engineer and architect are that the system is going to protect the building. The courtyard should be more than adequately protected. Even if you do have some snow in the yard, there is going to be snow melts and the water typically will get to the catch basin. As far as maintaining those catch basins, even if the sump does get filled, water will get in. I think the biggest concern with catch basins is going to be keeping the grates clean. Besides that, detention basins typically don't need much maintenance. The only maintenance you might see is litter.

Alderman Domaingue stated people who live on the streets adjacent to this school property, have observed that the Highway Department does not necessarily respond to that area of Brady Circle. With more students walking in this area to an additional school, their concern is for the students who are going to be walking on that street.

Mr. Sheppard answered I spoke to the plow operator who usually takes care of this area, and his plan would be to open up the area for Parks and Rec., and one of his concerns is opening it up for the students. I am surprised that there are concerns

with Brady Circle but if there are, you can pass those on and we will take care of it.

Ms. Zebrowski stated speaking of children walking, how is the emergency access road going to be plowed?

Mr. Sheppard answered I am not sure about the width of that road, we can work something out to take care of it.

Chairman Higgins thanked all of the Department Heads present for attending.

Chairman Higgins addressed item 6 of the agenda:

Bid summary for the new Middle School may be available for informational purposes only.

Mr. Houle stated I have submitted to the Committee the base proposals from six contractors. These are just raw numbers, there are about five add ons and fifteen deducts. We really have not reviewed them except to put the base numbers in. I had a brief conversation with Mr. MacKenzie and Mr. Marinace right after the bid opening, and we would like the architect to review the low bid, which seems to be Bonnet, Page & Stone. Mr. MacKenzie and Mr. Marinace will be meeting with the SCIP Committee who will be preparing a recommendation along with a budget for the Joint School Building Committee to consider. We think we have a workable project here.

Chairman Higgins asked if everyone had a copy of the base bids.

Mr. Houle advised that he would have a final recommendation available at the next Committee on Joint School Buildings meeting.

Chairman Higgins asked if there was anything else anyone would like to discuss:

Ms. Zebrowski stated at the last School Board meeting it was voted on by the Board that we check out alternate sites, specifically the Lake Shore Hospital site as a potential site to put this Middle School, to see if it would be a better site and possibly save us some money. We have over a million dollars right now in site work, these added addendum's come up to another thirty to forty thousand dollars on top of that, and it was felt by the Board that we should be checking out another site.

Chairman Higgins advised to clarify matters, what the motion of the School Board was, was for the administration to look at the Lake Shore Hospital as a site for moving the Chandler School, the administration building, an alternative school and a possible site for the new middle school. I think that it has always been our intent that we do look at that site for Chandler School as well as an alternative school. The middle school, I think we all realize that we are continuing with this proposal, but it is acting as a backup plan if this site should not work out. The administration is putting together a feasibility study to see if that plan would work as an alternative.

Alderman Domaingue stated I would like to ask a question about the vote that was taken. I guess I need to ask Mr. MacKenzie, where did we begin with the Middle School, at what point in time did we begin with the middle school process including the review of the site by the School Board, was it in 1996?

Chairman Higgins answered 1995.

Mr. MacKenzie answered I think it was even before that when the School Board was looking at the increasing enrollments. The Planning Board, at about the same time, was being barraged by new developments and there was a concern in the City that the schools would be overcrowded. I think the School Department had been looking generally towards a middle school program and felt that might solve the problem. We worked with them at about the same time to look at a number of alternatives to address the problem, including additions to existing schools, converting an elementary school to another middle school, several locations, adding to the existing junior highs, that started probably two and a half years ago.

Alderman Domaingue asked the Chandler School has been a problem for about how many years?

Mr. MacKenzie answered probably since it has been in use, about eight to ten years.

Alderman Domaingue stated I am a little bit confused by everything that has taken place in the last couple of days. When I look at the progress of the work that has been done by this committee, and by both Boards... Did the School Board take a vote on this site for the Middle School?

Mr. MacKenzie answered it is my understanding, and Dr. Jack is here, but I believe they had taken a vote a couple of times on this site.

Alderman Domaingue asked they took a vote to go ahead with the Middle School at this location?

Chairman Higgins answered yes we did.

Alderman Domaingue stated we didn't miss any steps, the School Board has already given its approval for the Green Acres site.

Chairman Higgins answered December 11, 1995.

Alderman Domaingue stated I guess my confusion is rooted in the fact that now I am hearing that Lake Shore could be a possible alternative, bringing in Chandler, which has been a consistent problem for years, and for whatever reasons was not addressed, and now we are pulling administration in, and I'll be darned if I understand that part of it. The reason I am asking is because the district that holds an awful lot of the burden for overcrowding is mine, I have three elementary schools and one is almost two hundred students in excess of capacity. Regardless of the best intentions of either Board, we have to be sensitive to those parents of those students in that school as well as the others in that area. I don't have a good answer for those parents who are now beginning to call me to find out what is going on with the school plan. They are getting nervous about whether or not they are going to have to go through another year or two of overcrowded schools. That is unacceptable to me. Within the last 24 to 48 hours, all the plans are up in the air.

Mr. Healy stated I can address part of that. Whether we start in September or not depends on this Committee, and I cannot answer that. The south side of Manchester is not the only pocket or area that is growing. We have the Wellington Road area which is equally growing at a rapid pace. I think the School Board had concerns as to the great number of issues that were addressed because of the water conditions at the Green Acres School site. We were looking at an alternate site. We are spending nine million dollars, and we want to make sure we are putting a school in an area that is the right place to put it.

Alderman Domaingue answered you are not spending that money until the Board of Mayor and Alderman approve it, and we are very much aware of the cost....

Mr. Healy interjected I understand that, but I serve on this committee just like you, I am a taxpayer and I am answerable to the taxpayers just as you are. You might appropriate the money but I have as much concern, as does everyone on this committee who serves on the Board of School Committee and the Board of Mayor

and Alderman. I think you are implying that because you appropriate the money that you would have a greater concern. I hope that is not the case.

Alderman Domaingue stated let me tell you what I am concerned about. Everything you have said is very valid, but all of those concerns needed to be addressed long before we got to this point. We knew the site was wet when we started this process, which is why we had to go through wetlands board approval.

Mr. Healy stated not as wet as it is...

Alderman Domaingue stated no one is going to disagree with the validity of your concerns, but I have to communicate to everybody here that in the south end, there is a pressure over overcrowding. You made the choice to put the school at this site. I don't feel very comfortable right now knowing that there seems to be another agenda here and I for the life of me have not figured out what it is. All the factors you cited, you knew when you started this process in 1995.

Chairman Higgins stated I have the minutes from the Building and Sites Committee meeting from December 4, 1995, in which Mr. MacKenzie came to us and gave us all the details. It was the middle site review. It speaks to the fact that the Board of Mayor and Aldermen at the end of June had allocated funds to hire the architects to begin studying plans for the new school. I went back to 1994 and there were references to it but it had not come before us. It came before us in December of 1995. The first step was that Mr. MacKenzie had formed a committee, and he named who was on the committee, and that under state law the site selection is the decision of the Board of School Committee. What Mr. MacKenzie did was told us right up front that in terms of planning time was becoming critical. That a timeline had been established and that construction must begin by July of 1996 in order for the school to be ready for the fall of 1997. I remember, and I am not going to go through this again, what happened was, why this building was not going to be ready for the fall of 1997 was because of the site, and because it was so wet, and we added another process, we wanted soil samples, water table samples, we added another step that put us back. Then Mr. MacKenzie explained to us all the sites that were looked at and that... there was discussion about whether or not we even, as a Board, approved of the middle school concept. We addressed that, and approved it in concept and then moved forward. Mr. MacKenzie mentioned how much he thought would be allocated by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, which was 8.5 million dollars, and he compared the cost between building a middle school or building two elementary schools which is what we would have needed at the time to take care of the overflow. We looked at all kinds of different concepts, building more elementary schools, putting on additions to the junior high, and the middle school made a lot

of sense, and it is a sound educational program. No money had been spent on the process at that time. That is where we were in December of 1995. You also reported that the committee focused its efforts on locating a building site on the far east side of the city where the highest growth rate has occurred. There has been some growth in the north west and the tail end of the City as well. Mammoth Road is the most important roadway in the area and access to it is critical. The location most central to the new growth is Holt Avenue just off the highway but all the land is developed. Most of the underdeveloped land had problems. Mr. MacKenzie stated that ideally the site should be publicly owned land so that private residential property is not taken by eminent domain. However private sites were considered. The two best sites were Karatzis Avenue near Wellington Road, opposite Roy Drive, and the land where the Green Acres School is located. He talked about how many acres each site had, State guidelines, etc. The Green Acres site had some wet areas, there is only one access via a small residential street, the capacity of the pumps would need to be verified for the sewer system. Most private sites are not developed because they have problems such as sewerage. If a private site was selected eminent domain could be a lengthy process. Mr. MacKenzie stated that the preferred site was Green Acres. It is extremely well located with access to Mammoth Road and close to Bodwell Road. It has the best access to all the developing areas of the City. The large site, and one possible option would be to displace one of the soccer fields and build a school there. There is room to build a school on the north side of the elementary school. The architect, after soil testing, would develop two or three alternative placements for the facility to be considered by the Joint School Building Committee. There would be no additional busses at the site at one time since the starting times for Middle and elementary schools are different. The wet area at the back of the property should not be a problem because the site is so large. In developing another access from the site to Mammoth Road, no families would be displaced because the City owns property right out to Mammoth Road. There was talk about the cost of transportation, the playing fields on the site, and presented five sites to us. The land available for the other sites either had problems or is too small. The Green Acres site is larger than the Southside/Memorial acreage, about 8 acres is wet meadow but it is not a wetland. Although this is the preferred location the Board could change its decision during the next six months while the testing and design work is being completed. There was a motion made and seconded to recommend that the Board of School Committee approve the Green Acres site for the construction of the new middle school as recommended by the planning team. That went to the Board of School Committee on December 11, 1995. That is when we approved it, so we have known all along that it was a wetland. We have gone step by step in this process to address a lot of the issues. Part of what happened Monday night is a concern for the wetlands, and it was in our best interest to look at an alternative site as a backup. A motion was made that it be

sent to the administration because the School Board selects the site. As far as I am concerned they are doing a study, and I would dare say it is on two different issues. Even though it is lumped into one, one of our priorities is to move the Chandler School. The timing was bad, but it is something else to look at in case this does not work out. We are still to hear from the Army Corps of Engineers, is that correct?

Mr. Marinace answered yes.

Chairman Higgins stated we talked about this on April 2, what if the ACE does not approve the site.

Alderman Domaingue stated all I am saying is that because of the confusion that is being generated, parents are generating their own concerns and questions as to where we are in this process. I think we need to be a little more communicative on this issue.

Ms. Zebrowski stated no one is saying that crowding isn't a problem. The problem was that when we first saw the plans for the site, the wetlands were an awful lot smaller than they actually turned out to be. They were only a little pocket up on the side, it was never told to us that this building was going to be sitting on part of that wetlands. We never saw any type of drainage pattern coming out of this until the abutters meeting. That was the first time that we saw what was going on with the site, and it wasn't until it actually went out to bid that we got the final plans on what this site was going to look like. When we were talking with the architect and brought up these concerns months ago, the placement of the building, the noise and the way the classrooms were going to be placed, and we talked about how that courtyard was going to be at that point. We were told certain things, that it was going to be graded away from the door, the front door was not going to be in any danger. It wasn't until three weeks ago that we saw the plans and the whole tub affect. There was no knowledge before that, we were told it was going to be drained away. I think it was a shock to see what the final plans were like, and what we were going to have to deal with and the kind of maintenance we would need to do. I think that we have always discussed where else we could locate it. We were always told there wasn't another place big enough. We walked through Lake Shore Hospital some months ago and I think quite honestly that it would be foolish to settle for a site that is less than adequate, and is going to require a lot of maintenance and money. If the site turns out to be a better site, we want this building soon, but we want it to last. We don't want to have problems with it.

Mr. MacKenzie stated the building is not on a wetland. The proposed building is on sound ground, it is not identified as a wetland, none of the parking areas are on a wetland, the driveways, there is only one fill into a wetland area and that is about .7 acres.

Chairman Higgins stated I am looking at plans that we received on this site dated April 15, 1996, so you must have seen something three weeks ago that triggered something else because we saw these plans just about a year ago.

Ms. Zebrowski stated the first plans we saw did not have quite as extensive wetlands as it turned out to be. We have the drainage pattern that comes across the soccer field, that is the one I am talking about.

Alderman Clancy stated we have heard from Mr. Sommers tonight, we have also heard from Frank Marinace, we also went to visit the two schools in Derry. These people are engineers, and I am sure no contractor wants to put their name on a lousy school, so what is the problem. The schools I saw in Derry show that Mr. Marinace has done a good job. This is their field, they know what they are doing. I don't understand this.

Chairman Higgins stated we have already gone through this debate about what site is better, this is just a "why not take a look at it" suggestion.

Ms. Paradis stated at the first meeting we had on the middle school concept and site, it was mentioned to us by one of the school board members, who asked how many acres of this land is wetlands. We were told eight. Then along the way it became twenty acres. How much exactly are there.

Mr. MacKenzie stated I can calculate the exact number but I believe it is eight.

Chairman Higgins stated this was the preferred site, we voted on it and gave them the go ahead to do it.

Mr. D'Allesandro stated at a meeting held this winter at Chandler School, it was at that point in time that the water issue really became a significant issue, and I believe since that time a number of things have been done to address that issue. We have a responsibility to investigate to the fullest extent.

Alderman Domaingue stated that is why this committee has been receptive to those concerns. The concerns led to the bus trip to see what some other sites looked like.

Mr. Gatsas stated I would like to address the administrative concerns. Something we have talked about at Finance Committee over and over again. Something that is a real growing concern is that the alternative school education and the marriage of an alternative school site, and the Chandler piece, would in fact free up classrooms all over the City, including at Highland and at Southside. That has been the catalyst of this. It is an old issue. We are going to see next year, 27.5% of our budget spent on 17.4% of our enrollment. That is frightening to me because I am also a taxpayer, and if we don't get creative and come up with an alternative plan to address these issues on a long term basis, we are going to end up like Cleveland or Indianapolis, where the schools have gone bankrupt because they have not controlled their special education budget.

Mr. MacKenzie stated as far as the Board of Mayor and Aldermen are concerned, I think they have been very faithful in following the priorities that have been set by the school board. They voted last night to fund priority number one, the middle school, number two, three, and 10% of number four. That is all the money they had, and takes the majority of the bond money that the city has. The fifth priority of the School Board was the Chandler School. The Mayor had suggested, and the Board followed through, an allocation of money to try and address that for the next fiscal year.

Ms. Lamontagne stated my concern for the Green Acres site is flooding problems, and I doubt we can maintain the site properly.

Mr. Gatsas stated I am not trying to one-up what Mr. MacKenzie was talking about in terms of priorities, and bond capacities and CIP issues. Every month, and almost every day, special needs spending gets worse. The Finance Committee, about two weeks ago, the Administration was "called on the carpet" in terms of spending on supplies for a science lab at Central (\$12,000). The very next morning I got a bill for \$174,000 for the placement of special needs students that were ordered by DCYF. I don't know how to combat that. I am not a judge or jury, I don't know how to fix that problem but the beat goes on, and it just keeps happening, and we have to put a long term plan to address special needs in this City. It is going to take both boards getting together and certainly the help of people like Kevin and Bob to bring this forward.

Alderman Domaingue stated I think the Aldermanic members of this Committee have tried to be more receptive to what the schools needs have been consistently. As far as special ed, this Board took a vote to exceed what Senator Gregg was recommending in Washington in terms of special education funding. The commitment is there to try to be responsive to what we are hearing from you are that real issues and costs of education. All I want to see happen here is that the

focus is the kids and how we make room for them in addition to the curriculum. Right now that is the goal of the Building and Sites committee to find a place for them.

Mr. Gatsas stated we would not disagree from an administrative standpoint. We were trying to add to the solution of space through the alternative school site, and the preschool site.

There being no further business to come before the Committee on Joint School Buildings, on motion of Alderman Clancy, duly seconded by Mr. Healy, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee.