

Hampton Falls School District News

2010-2011 School Year

July/August 2011

Gym and Kindergarten Committees

There are two school board sanctioned committees now at work that will be seeking community input throughout their working process. Both aim to conduct research and produce recommendations regarding their specific focus area. Following is an overview of each committee and the topic they are studying. Both committees welcome community feedback as well as active participation. Should you wish to volunteer for either (or both!) of these committees, please contact Mark Deblois at Lincoln Akerman School.

Kindergarten Committee

The first committee is the LAS Full Day Kindergarten Study Committee. This group is studying the feasibility of a transitioning the current Kindergarten into a full day program. The committee is studying the social, developmental and educational impacts of such a change as well as the space demands, budgetary and community impacts. The group is lead by co-chairs Jodi Linnehan Kriner and Marcia Medford and hopes to bring its recommendations to the Hampton Falls School Board in November or December. There will be several means of communicating your thoughts and ideas back to the group upcoming and all Hampton Falls residents are encouraged to participate in building this group's recommendations.

Gym Committee

The second committee up and running is the LAS Gym Renovation Study Committee. This group is attempting to construct a recommended plan for addressing the substandard nature of the current, the original, LAS Gym. As you know, the LAS

Gym serves as a multi-purpose space, acting as the school's gymnasium, cafeteria and auditorium. Since its construction, there have been no major renovations and the committee has determined that the tile floor is crumbling, the air handlers do not function, the locker rooms need serious refreshing and storage continues as a major issue. The group has focused on two possible courses of action. The first, involves a systematic refurbishing of the current facility to bring it up to standards. The second plan, favored by the committee at this point, is to move toward the construction of a new "community" gym on school grounds and the renovation of the current gym space into a cafeteria/large community meeting room, creating the classrooms that this school could effectively utilize and designing a large storage space that would allow us to remove the containers (rented each year) from the LAS parking lot. This group is talking about some very exciting ideas for opening up this new gym to all Hampton Falls residents, be they individuals or community groups. Early morning access for individuals wishing to exercise during inclement weather, scouts and church groups looking to avail themselves of this space, community theater groups utilizing a stage area, family reunions in a large, weather-resistant space and a host of other events that haven't always been possible in this community. A plan to meet not only the school's space and facility needs but an opportunity to extend new potentials to the town. Again, the committee is in the early stages of its work and could use new members as it builds its recommendations for the school board. Please get involved and become part of the vision of a new school/community facility.

Facilities Committee

The Facilities Committee presented its recommendations for the 5 Kensington Rd. property at a public hearing on May 12, 2011.

The Facilities Committee was established in September 2009, when the Hampton Falls School Board adopted a charge for a Facilities Committee. The mission of the committee was to review previous reports, study and make recommendations regarding the current Lincoln Akerman School (LAS) facility and surrounding property.

The major tasks of the committee were to assess the state of the current LAS building and make recommendations regarding the type and priority of renovations needed over the next 5 years. It was not charged to focus on long range planning or options, which was considered in the prior Facilities Committee charter (2002-2003). As part of this process, committee members were to review all prior facility reports, including the 2002-2003 LAS Facilities report and the 2009 Fire Engineer Report by SFC Engineering Partnership, Inc. The committee was also to assess and make recommendations regarding the need, use and possible generation of income from the 5 Kensington Road property.

The committee was made up of 5 members from the community, Steve Burns, Steve Carlson, David French, Jill Munir and Christine Nelson as well as two members of the School Board, Robin Moyer Ratigan and Wayne Skoglund.

Multiple potential paths for utilization of the 5 Kensington Road property were presented. These included:

-commercial use

Little commercial value in property due to location

-residential use

Few options were found for subdividing into residential sites; possible two parcels

-workforce housing

The Workforce Housing Coalition was very interested in the property and completed an extensive investigation to assess if it would be possible to include the 5 Kensington Road Property in the current program underway that is focused on seacoast workforce housing initiatives. An urban planning analysis, environmental review and commercial and residential architecture options were explored using the Housing Coalition's extensive network of urban planning resources. A study to determine the feasibility of the site included soils analysis, site plan review and various options to utilize the property for workforce housing. The need for this type of housing is very great on the Seacoast, so the interest in finding a solution was quite high. The review efforts concluded that no workable solution could be found because the limited frontage on Kensington Road, coupled with the wetland and property configuration, do not allow for enough contiguous space to allow for the economy of scale that the Workforce Housing Coalition requires. In addition, the infrastructure costs to develop the property were estimated to be well in excess of several hundred thousand dollars. The majority of this cost was for site work required to mitigate wetland impacts and build appropriate infrastructure.

-restore/preserve existing property as is

This did not allow the property to be used for the two priority reasons that it was purchased. These include offering a second egress to the school and preserving land for expansion potential.

-restore/preserve main house

The house may have potential as a home/small business property.

-restore/preserve barn

Estimated costs to repair the barn in place were \$70,000-\$100,000. This would result in a restored barn. The additional costs to adapt the barn for re-use would depend on the final purpose. Leaving the barn in place would result in the same limitations on the property as preserving the entire property.

-move the Barn

The barn could be disassembled and stored while decisions were made about a new use or location. To disassemble the barn before repair would add \$20,000-\$30,000 to the project, but it would provide extra time for decisions to be made about the future use of the barn.

-recreation/town use

Informal input on potential uses for the property resulted in a proposal to locate a non-profit community tennis center on 2-3 acres of the property with potential to add other recreational facilities in the future. Benefits of this approach include:

- *Taxable asset for the town*
- *This use is consistent with bond terms*
- *Preserves sufficient land to maintain the top priorities for the property of second egress and expansion potential*
- *Income would provide revenue to offset other required expenditures*

Based on the information gathered over 18 months the Facilities Committee made the following recommendations:

1-Investigate the requirements for sale of the residence at 5 Kensington Road. The target would be to retain sufficient acreage for expansion and secondary egress from the existing school property.

2- Solicit parties or organizations interested in dismantling and preserving the barn. The recommendation is to rapidly move the barn to facilitate both the house sale and other usage of the property.

3-Facilitate an investigation of a master plan for a recreational facility which would enter into a long term land lease on a portion of the remaining property while maintaining the egress and property needed for potential school expansion.

Actions being taken by the Board:

- 1- Create a timeline for the plan to address recommendations of the committee
- 2- Research the legal and zoning issues surrounding the recommendations.
- 3- Develop a plan for voter approval.

The Board met in June for a work session and will continue to work throughout the summer with the goal of completing these actions as well as establishing a capital expenditure plan for the next 5 years considering the findings and recommendations of the Facilities Committee regarding the school building infrastructure.

Life and Safety

Progress continues to be made on the life and safety issues funded by warrant articles approved over the last two years. The Board has awarded contracts for a new fire alarm system of \$34,650 and life safety projects including replacing the door in the art storage room, the restoration of the front stairwell and the relocation of the kiln vent in the amount of \$33,805. Proposals for the pump house, 30,000 gallon tank and associated equipment are currently being considered.

Current Hampton Falls School Board Members

Robin Moyer Ratigan, Chair	rratigan@sau21.org
Thomas Baker	tbaker@sau21.org
Ellen Christo	echristo@sau21.org
Wayne Skoglund	wskoglund@sau21.org
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The Hampton Falls School Board usually meets on the first Thursday of each month. Hampton Falls residents are encouraged to attend meetings. Information about meeting dates and times, agendas and minutes are available on line at www.sau21.org.