A special meeting of the City Planning Board was held on August 11, 2010 in the City Council Chambers in the City Hall Annex at 7:00 PM.

Present at the meeting were Members Drypolcher, Dolcino, Foss (who arrived at 7:09 PM and was seated), Gross, Hicks, and Shurtleff (City Council representative). Messrs. Woodward and Henninger, and Ms. Osgood of the City Planning Division were also present, as were Messrs. Roberge and Mack, and Ms. Aibel of the City Engineering Division.

At 7:06 PM a quorum was present, and the Chair called the meeting to order and asked the Clerk to explain RSA 674:54 and the Planning Board's role in this type of project.

Mr. Woodward explained that pursuant to RSA 674:54, when other government agencies (State, county, School District), are planning changes in land use within the City, they must provide plans and allow consideration by the Planning Board. The Planning Board has the authority to hold a public hearing, if it feels it would be necessary, and may issue written comments to the applicant related to the conformity with the local land use regulations which would otherwise apply to the proposed project.

(Ms. Foss arrived at 7:09 PM.)

Mr. Woodward explained that the Planning Board was not operating under Site Plan Review Regulations and does not have the power to approve or deny the plan. The Planning Board's comments are non-binding but have generally been thoughtfully considered by the other government agencies.

The Chair then reviewed the rules of order for this meeting and announced that he will allow five minutes for each person wishing to speak. Once everyone has had a chance to speak for the first time, a second opportunity will be offered for three minutes each, and then a third opportunity for one more minute. He also requested that once testimony on a particular point has been offered, it not be fully repeated by subsequent speakers.

APPLICATIONS

Review of Governmental Land Uses Pursuant to RSA 674:54

1. The Concord School District proposes to construct three new elementary schools as follows:

    - At 123 Portsmouth Street, the District proposes to construct a new elementary school on the same site with, and as an extension of the Broken Ground School, together with an expansion of ancillary parking and playground facilities;

- At 152 South Street, the District proposes to demolish the existing Conant Elementary School and construct a new elementary school on the same site, together with ancillary parking and playground facilities; and

- At 17 North Spring Street, the District proposes to demolish the existing Kimball Elementary School along with the District's administrative offices at 16 Rumford Street as well as seven adjacent homes, in order to construct a new elementary school on the same site, together with ancillary parking and playground facilities.

Matt Cashman, Director of Facilities for the Concord School District, Chris Nadeau and Erin Reardon from Nobis Engineering, Philip Lewis from HMFH Architects, Inc., and Martin Kennedy, traffic engineer from Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, were present on behalf of the School District along with several members of the School Board.

- At 123 Portsmouth Street, the District proposes to construct a new elementary school on the same site with, and as an extension of the Broken Ground School, together with an expansion of ancillary parking and playground facilities;

Mr. Henninger explained this proposal to construct a 59,233 square foot addition to the Broken Ground Elementary School to replace the existing Dame and Eastman Elementary Schools. While most of the new addition will be single story, a 13,005 square foot second story is also part of the expansion. There is no proposed building demolition, but there will be approximately 400,000 square feet of land disturbance to construct the new school addition, new and expanded parking and loading areas, and expanded playgrounds. Most of the area being disturbed is currently wooded. There will be no disturbance to wetlands, water bodies or wetland buffers.

He reported that they will relocate and expand the existing site driveway on South Curtisville Road and will provide two additional drives further east on South Curtisville Road. No change will occur along the Portsmouth Street frontage.

He reported that the Dame/Eastman School addition will utilize the existing gymnasium at the Broken Ground School, and the students will be able to utilize a new multi-purpose room/theatre space to be constructed in the new school addition. Internal access will be provided to both schools. All mechanical equipment will be enclosed except for air exchange units and vents.

He reported that the proposed Dame/Eastman School is designed to serve a student body of 476 students. The actual enrollment can be larger because the kindergarten and pre-school are half day programs, with separate morning and afternoon classes.

Mr. Henninger reported that the City's Engineering Division has expressed some concerns with the student pick-up and drop-off lane being on the driver's side of vehicles at the Dame/Eastman School. This is the reverse of normal operations. The consultants and the School District staff have pointed out that most of the students using this lane will be in car seats, and meetings with the parents indicated that this

arrangement is preferred over the more typical pick-up and drop-off being done from the passenger side. The Engineering Division was also concerned that vehicle stacking from parent pick-up/drop-off at the Dame/Eastman School entrance could block the main entrance to the school, and has requested that minor changes be made internal to the site driveway so that traffic flow could be reversed if this problem occurred.

He reported that the Fire Department has been working with the District to insure that the new addition and the existing school meet or exceed all life safety requirements. The new addition will be fully sprinkler protected.

He reported that 167 parking spaces are being provided on site for both Broken Ground and Dame Eastman. The Zoning Administrator has completed a parking analysis for this project and found that 44 parking spaces are required for the proposed classrooms, 117 parking spaces for the proposed cafeteria/kitchen, and 148 parking spaces for the proposed 3,770 square foot multi-purpose room.

He reported that the proposed drainage plan results in a decrease in the rate and quantity of drainage runoff. This project requires an Alteration of Terrain Permit from the NH Department of Environmental Services. This reduction is accomplished by the use of perforated pipes, pervious pavement for the parking lots, and an underground infiltration gallery.

Mr. Henninger reported that the existing water service extends a distance of 780 feet into the site from Portsmouth Street. The plans show this service being extended another 680 feet into the site. The City has requested that the applicant reduce the length of this dead end service by connecting to the existing water line in South Curtisville Road. The District's agents have commented that this extension is not in the School District budget for this project. The applicant has not demonstrated that there is adequate water flow and pressure for this project for both domestic and fire flows. There is no planned redundancy in water service to both schools. The schools have been and will again be used for emergency shelters.

He reported that the proposed plans will result in clearing along the southerly property line next to a single family residence at 47 South Curtisville Road for an expansion of the existing parking area in front of Broken Ground School. The existing wooded buffer varies from 25 feet to 75 feet. A fifteen-foot buffer strip of existing vegetation is proposed to be retained along the property line next to this house. City staff has recommended that a landscape allowance be provided to infill plantings along this strip where needed after clearing. The District's agents have advised that there are no funds in the budget for this landscaping.

City staff has also recommended that additional landscaping be provided at the main project entrance to compensate for the amount of clearing at this location. The District's agents have advised that the project's landscape budget is being reduced as a cost cutting measure.

He reported that the construction will result in the removal of two stations at a recently

completed fitness trail constructed by a local Eagle Scout. The plans have been revised to show these stations being relocated.

Mr. Henninger reported that the Architectural Design Review Committee had discussed the design of the site and building with the applicant's design team a number of times and provided comments. He reported the Design Review Committee felt the plans reviewed on August 10th were an improvement over the earlier design and recommended simplifying and unifying the distinct masses but also suggested that it not be toned down so much that it loses the fun.

He reported that the present condition of South Curtisville Road easterly of the existing driveway is not suitable for the intensity of the proposed use. The Engineering Division has noted that with the increase in traffic, the pavement width and road condition beyond the first driveway is inadequate. The City Engineering Division is recommending that the South Curtisville Road be widened to 26 feet of pavement, with a seven foot grass panel and a five foot sidewalk on the northwest side of the street.

He reported that the current driveway is being relocated slightly to the east and will consist of two entering lanes and one exiting lane for a total width of 37 feet. South Curtisville Road at this location is approximately 24 feet wide. East of this drive, the road narrows to 20 feet and then to 18 feet in width at the easternmost drives. The proposed new drives accessing this substandard section are 28 feet and 24 feet wide respectively. The substandard section of South Curtisville Road is being used by the District as an essential part of their one-way on site circulation to the Dame/Eastman School addition. The District's agents have commented that any improvements to South Curtisville Road are not in the School District budget for this project.

He reported that the School District proposes to extend the existing sidewalk on South Curtisville Road a distance of 340 feet from its current terminus to the central project driveway. City staff has recommended that the sidewalk be extended easterly to the last driveway for an additional 280 feet to serve existing and future residential development. Future residential development will be responsible for extending this sidewalk easterly. The District's agents have commented that any improvements to Curtisville Road are not in the School District budget for this project.

Mr. Lewis explained that this will be a two-story building for students in grades pre-K to two. Grade 2 will be on the second floor and the younger students on the first floor. The multi-purpose room, cafeteria, and administration offices will be shared and placed between the Dame/Eastman addition and the Broken Ground existing building. These will have the ability to be open in the evenings and weekends and make it easier to be locked and access limited to the rest of the building. They will also share the mechanical plant. The design of the addition is being broken up visually into different masses and colors. They are now working to bring the colors and masses into a tighter range so that it will be less jarring than shown in the current plans.

Ms. Reardon then discussed the site plan, particularly parking, access and drainage. She reported they are now working to loop the water service. They are working with City

staff, the City's water consultant, and their mechanical engineer regarding water service. They are also working with the Eagle Scout to relocate two of the stations on the fitness trail he constructed.

Mr. Lewis reported that they are carrying a substantial contingency in the project to pay for needed change orders. Some of that money might be available to help with a vegetative buffer for the abutter.

- At 152 South Street, the District proposes to demolish the existing Conant Elementary School and construct a new elementary school on the same site, together with ancillary parking and playground facilities; and

Mr. Henninger explained this proposal to construct a 73,702 square foot replacement for the Conant Elementary School. The new school will continue to serve grades K-5, but will also serve students from the Rumford Elementary School.

He reported that site demolition will occur in phases allowing the new school to be constructed next to South Street while the existing school remains in service. Once the new school is complete, the old school will be demolished, a new parking lot and access road will be constructed, new outdoor recreational space will be developed and most of the site landscaping will be installed. Everything south of the current Rundlett Middle School access drive and parking area will be removed and reconstructed.

He reported that the Heritage Commission has held a public hearing on the proposed demolition of the existing school buildings. Under the terms of the City's Demolition Delay Ordinance the School District is now free to demolish the structures.

He reported that the new Conant School building is being designed to serve a student body of 484 students. The actual enrollment can be larger because the kindergarten and pre-school are half day programs, with separate morning and afternoon classes.

Mr. Henninger reported that the City's Engineering Division has recommended that the parking lot proposed along the southerly property line be made angled parking to reinforce the one-way circulation on site. The School District's agents have advised that the design would actual reduce the number of on-site spaces by nine spaces and have elected not to undertake this parking modification.

The Fire Department has advised that they have been working with the School District to insure that the new building will meet or exceed all life safety requirements. The building will be fully sprinkler protected.

Mr. Henninger reported that 68 parking spaces are being provided on site in addition to shared parking on the Rundlett Middle School driveway. The Zoning Administrator has completed a parking analysis for this project and found that 50 parking spaces are required for the proposed classrooms, 108 parking spaces for the proposed cafeteria/kitchen, and either 156 parking spaces or 258 spaces parking spaces for the proposed 6,022 square foot gymnasium, depending on how parking requirements are

calculated for this project.

He reported that the service area on the north side of the school containing dumpsters, transformer, generator and loading areas will have minimal screening from the Rundlett Middle School driveway. A proposed screen wall was eliminated as a cost cutting measure. All mechanical equipment will be enclosed except for air exchange units and vents.

Existing street trees along South Street and along the Rundlett Middle School driveway will be preserved.

He reported that the proposed drainage plan results in a significant decrease in the rate of storm water runoff and a minor reduction in the quantity of drainage runoff. This project requires an Alteration of Terrain Permit from the NH Department of Environmental Services. This reduction is accomplished by the construction of a rain garden in the southwest corner of the site, a development of a ten-space pervious pavement parking lot for visitors near South Street, and an underground infiltration gallery for roof top and parking lot drainage.

He reported that the sanitary sewer service to the Rundlett Middle School will be partially replaced. There will be minor disturbances in South Street for the installation of a new sewer service and gas service to the site. Water service will be provided from the existing main in the Rundlett Middle School driveway.

Mr. Henninger reported that the proposed plans result in the construction of additional parking and driveways along the southerly property line. The entire length of this boundary is bordered by the back yards of single family residences. The homes along Conant Drive have minimal screening from the existing parking area and driveway. City staff has recommended that a buffer be installed along the boundary to reduce the impact of car lighting on these homes. The recommendation was for a fence or wall about 3.5 to 4 feet in height along this border. The applicant has responded by proposing a four-foot tall stockade fence along a portion of this property line, widening the buffer strip from 5 feet to 10 feet in most areas and by adding 12 white pines. City staff is recommending that this fence be extended along the rear of 16 and 18 Conant Drive at a minimum.

The School District has substantially reduced the amount of landscaping proposed as a cost cutting measure.

He reported that the Architectural Design Review Committee had discussed the design of the site and building with the applicant's design team on a number of occasions and provided comments. He reported that the Design Review Committee felt that overall this was an improvement over the earlier design.

Mr. Henninger explained that the access drive from South Street had presented a number of concerns in regard to its width and function. Site circulation was intended to be one-way in from South Street, exiting onto the west end of Rundlett Drive. The

property owner at 164 South Street utilizes the Conant site driveway as their sole means of access. The School District is attempting to provide two-way movement for the first 90 feet of the driveway to provide access to 164 South Street. To accommodate this movement, the first 90 feet of the driveway entrance is 30.5 feet wide, decreasing to 20 feet in width at the driveway to 164 South Street. City staff has debated whether this driveway should be designed for two-way or one-way movement. The City's Engineering Division believes the driveway should be designed for one-way movement due to the number of potential conflicts with school pedestrian crossings to the immediate north of the driveway. Two-way movement has the potential for reducing the amount of school-related traffic on Conant Drive. If the driveway is one-way, it will need to be reduced in width to encourage one-way traffic flow and reduce the width of the driveway crossing by students and pedestrians. The residential driveway should be separated from the one-way access drive.

Mr. Lewis explained that for the central entrance, they have preserved the look of the original building with a cupola. They had been talking about constructing a new cupola but, after looking at the construction of the existing one, they are now looking at re-using it on the roof at the entrance. The building will be a red brick similar to the brick of the existing Conant School. The intention is to recall the appearance of the existing school.

Mr. Nadeau explained the site plan, particularly traffic circulation. As far as the access to the abutting residential property is concerned, they have given consideration to a number of options for a driveway on that site. They feel this is the best, safest option for that home since the lot is not large enough to support its own driveway.

He also reported that at all three schools they will be using LED lighting. That offers the ability to reduce intensity around the light poles and to keep light from overflowing onto abutting properties. He also mentioned they will be installing a screen fence between their site and the abutting residences to block headlights.

- At 17 North Spring Street, the District proposes to demolish the existing Kimball Elementary School along with the District's administrative offices at 16 Rumford Street as well as seven adjacent homes, in order to construct a new elementary school on the same site, together with ancillary parking and playground facilities.

Mr. Henninger noted that the Planning Board had received written comments from citizens relative to this proposal.

He explained this proposal to construct a 71,418 square foot replacement for the Kimball Elementary School. The new school will serve grades K-5, including students from the existing Walker School. The new plan includes expanded on-site parking, an on-site parent drop-off and pick-up lane, new outdoor play areas, and a bus loading and unloading lane on Rumford Street. A new site access to Pleasant Street is also proposed. The new building will be predominately two-story in height. There is a small enclosed 4,328-square foot third story for mechanical equipment.

He reported that site demolition will involve the complete demolition of the proposed site, including the existing Kimball School, the School District offices in the former Morrill School on Rumford Street and seven existing residential structures. The Heritage Commission has held two public hearings on the proposed demolition of the school structures and the residential buildings. The demolition has been controversial. However, under the terms of the City's Demolition Delay Ordinance, the School District is now free to demolish the structures.

He reported that the new Kimball Elementary Schooling building is being designed to serve a student body of 484 students. The actual enrollment can be larger because the kindergarten and pre-school are half day programs, with separate morning and afternoon classes.

The Fire Department has advised that they have been working with the School District to insure that the new building will or exceed all life safety requirements. The building will be fully sprinkler protected.

Mr. Henninger reported that 46 parking spaces are being provided on site. The Zoning Administrator has completed a parking analysis for this project and found that 50 parking spaces are required for the proposed classrooms, either 125 or 117 parking spaces for the proposed cafeteria/kitchen, depending on how parking requirements are calculated for this project and either 150 parking spaces or 265 spaces parking spaces for the proposed 6,022 square foot gymnasium, depending on how parking requirements are calculated for this project.

He reported that the service area on the north side of the school containing dumpsters and loading areas will be depressed below the level of the abutting residential units along Warren Street and will be further screened with a six foot tall stockade fence on top of the retaining wall on the north side of the loading and service area. All mechanical equipment will be enclosed except for air exchange units and vents.

He reported that the proposed drainage plan results in a slight decrease in the rate of storm water runoff and a minor reduction in the quantity of drainage runoff. This project requires an Alteration of Terrain Permit from the NH Department of Environmental Services. The amount of runoff is accomplished by a reduction on the site of 0.24 acres of impervious surface. The rate of runoff is being controlled by an underground detention basin and storm water quality is being treated by filtering the first flush of runoff through a storm filer unit and three tree wells.

North Spring Street in front of the new school will be disturbed to provide new water, sewer, gas, steam and storm drain service connections to the new school. The District will be resurfacing North Spring Street along the project frontage.

Mr. Henninger reported that the City's landscape architect had made recommendations in regard to the proposed landscape plan regarding the selection of plantings. The school's landscape plans should be revised to exclude the use of poisonous plants given

that the school is being designed to serve a pre-K through 3rd grade population. Where possible, shrubs should be replaced with shade trees. The row of 26 rhododendrons in the parking area on the south side of the Kimball School should be replaced with shade trees.

He reported that the Architectural Design Review Committee had discussed the design of the site and building with the applicant's design team on a number of occasions. He reported the Design Review Committee felt more attention needed to be paid to adding life to the south-facing wall and integrating it better with the North Spring Street façade. Overall the Committee found the design changes to be appropriate and asked the applicant to address their concerns with the main entrance façade on the south side of the building.

He reported that the School District had utilized the services of Vanasse Hangen Brustlin to analyze the parking and traffic impacts of this project. VHB found the surrounding intersections around the school to be operating successfully and that the new school will not adversely impact traffic operations in the vicinity of the school. The City's Traffic Engineer concurs with this analysis. VHB did recommend, however, that left turns be prohibited from the Pleasant Street driveway. During the peak hours, gaps are limited on Pleasant Street for left turning vehicles. One left turning vehicle could effectively block the one-way parent pick-up and drop-off lane to be established on site. City staff has recommended that a gore island be installed to further reinforce the no left turn from this site driveway and the site plan has been revised accordingly.

He reported that the new school will result in fewer employees at the site due to the relocation of the School District offices. The study projects 27 new employees being relocated from Walker School, while 37 School District administrative employees are being permanently relocated. The net reduction in employment on-site and the increase in on-site parking will reduce the on-street long term parking demand on the surrounding residential streets.

Mr. Henninger reported that the major issue identified by the City's traffic engineer was the amount of stacking/parking required to accommodate parent pick-up and drop-off. The afternoon parent pick-up presented the greatest impact to the street system around the school. VHB estimated 58 vehicles coming to the site in the afternoon to pick-up children being released from school. The distance required to stack all these vehicles is approximately 1,450 feet. Space available on site is limited to 300-400 feet of stacking space depending on parent behavior. The remaining demand of 1,100 lineal feet of stacking is equivalent to the distance on North Spring Street between School Street and Pleasant Street. City staff has advised the School District that a plan to address this short term parking demand needed to be developed and any plan needed to be flexible to address changing circumstances or unforeseen conditions. Potential solutions suggested by City staff include remote bus pick-up and drop-off for students at White Park and/or Walker School, staggered discharge times for students being picked up by private vehicles, temporary street closures, and remote queuing and release for parent pick-up.

He reported that the new driveway onto Pleasant Street will necessitate a partial or total removal of on-street parking on the north side of Pleasant Street from North Spring Street to Rumford Street.

A sidewalk easement is needed parallel to Rumford Street along the frontage where a bus pick-up and drop-off lane is being constructed next to the school. The bus lane is designed to accommodate six buses and the sidewalk is being relocated onto the District site to allow for the bus lane to be constructed along the street. The bus lane and sidewalk is proposed to be provided with a snow melt system using recovery water from the Concord steam system.

Mr. Lewis explained that the North Spring Street facade will be a whole story lower than the rest of the building. The entrance off Rumford Street will actually be on the second floor. There will be a two-story classroom wing gathered around a library space.

He reported that the conclusion, after months of evaluating the question of new construction versus renovation of the existing building, was that it would be most cost effective to construct a completely new building. The proportions of this new building will be very different from the existing building because it will be only two stories high instead of the existing four story building. The window arrangement will be very much like the existing Kimball School.

Ms. Reardon then mentioned that they are decreasing the impervious surface and they will have less runoff coming off the site. There will be a pervious concrete plaza and drop off area at Rumford Street and the water that leaves the rest of the site will be treated first.

Mr. Henninger also reported that the Design Review Committee had concerns about the appearance of the Pleasant Street façade which is different from both the Rumford Street and the North Spring Street facades.

Mr. Gross explained that from a public policy point of view this was a very interesting set of proposals. Over the last several years, the Planning Board has been charged with cutting down on sprawl. This is a situation of concentrating education services on the site, but the other side of that is intensification. Intensification brings problems of its own such as traffic costs. What happens as far as impacts on the surrounding areas? He was looking for reassurance that there will be no net harm from this project. Regarding Dame/Eastman, he was concerned from the no net harm point of view about what would happen with South Curtisville Road that is now in substandard condition. One of the impacts of this use is that there will be increased traffic on South Curtisville Road. He asked if the School District had conducted traffic studies and if it had been determined whether there would be increased traffic along what appears to be a substandard road.

Mr. Kennedy explained that from a traffic perspective, the peak hours will be the afternoon period, particularly when parents are picking up their students. With respect to that segment of road between the driveways, the vast majority of traffic will be using

the main entrance so it is not likely that there will be much traffic using the upper two accesses.

Mr. Drypolcher noted that the wood chip burning plant at the far end of the site would generate heavy duty truck traffic for deliveries, and he guessed that segment of the road was not likely to be rated for trucks of that size. He also expressed concern that if the School District did not have funds in their budget for some of the requested improvements, that would mean the City will have to address it in its budget.

Mr. Gross asked if this had been a private development would City staff have suggested that the Planning Board require off-site improvements. Mr. Woodward responded that staff would likely have made a suggestion that the developer provide the off-site improvements.

Regarding water supply to the site, Mr. Gross noted he had heard about sufficient water pressure to run sprinklers but he asked if there would also be sufficient pressure for hydrants. Mr. Lewis responded that the engineers had determined that there is adequate pressure for fire safety for the school. Mr. Gross asked staff to consult with the fire department as to whether there would be sufficient water pressure for fire hydrants because he did not hear an answer to his question. Mr. Woodward responded that while other government agencies do not have to comply with the City's land use regulations, they do have to meet life safety codes. The ability to have fire suppression service is important.

Mr. Cashman clarified in regard to the wood chip plant that it is currently being withheld from the plans. If the bids come in under budget for the project, they will then entertain the possibility of bringing the wood chip plant back in for construction.

Regarding Kimball School, Mr. Gross noted that he had lived in that neighborhood for 42 years so his heart was still in the neighborhood. He saw a reduction of net impervious area, an increase in plantings, improvement in traffic flow along North Spring Street, a reduction in the need for off-street parking, and the building is consistent with the appearance of the existing building. He did not have a lot of critical questions to ask but did ask that they pay attention to snow removal on the Rumford Street side. He also advised Mr. Henninger that there are environmental concerns in that neighborhood, including squirrels and nighthawks.

Mr. Drypolcher asked how the Kimball School building would be heated. Mr. Lewis responded that it will be steam heat. Mr. Drypolcher then asked if they could use steam heat to help melt some of the snow on the site. Mr. Lewis responded that the reality of the design of the heating plant is that the excess heat is being used to heat water inside the building. The system is very efficient, so they would have to add heating capacity to the building if they were to try to heat sidewalks and that did not seem to be a very big benefit. The reality was that it would not work for this project.

Ms. Foss asked the capacity of the bicycle racks at each of the proposed buildings. Ms. Reardon responded that Kimball would have space for 48 bicycles, Dame/Eastman for

12 bicycles because of the age of the students, and Conant would have space for 36. If more are needed, it is something the District can react to and provide.

Ms. Foss had concerns regarding snow load, particularly with respect to Conant and Kimball. Assuming that these are more energy efficient and better insulated buildings than the existing buildings, the load bearing for the roofs needs to be carefully considered because the roofs are flat. Mr. Cashman responded that their engineers had looked at those concerns and noted that, while they are referred to as flat roofs, there is actually a slight pitch to the roofs. Mr. Lewis also mentioned that the roofs are being structured to support a clogging of the roof drains. The roof members are sized to support the weight of snow and ice.

Ms. Foss noted that she recalled that there is a retaining wall at Kimball School on the Rumford Street side with a substantial vertical drop to the schoolyard. She gathered that they were planning to replace that with a gradual slope. Ms. Reardon responded that there is a retaining wall that will be four feet at its highest and the rest of the area will slope down to provide a useable play space. The site is pretty well tiered now and they intend to keep a lot of that.

Ms. Foss noted that on these plans there is an amphitheatre space and she asked the intended use of that space. Ms. Reardon responded that the space will help to provide the meandering walk for handicap access. Mr. Nadeau also noted that a lot of the granite being use in the amphitheatre will come from the Kimball School demolition.

Mr. Hicks asked about the traffic pattern through the Conant School site and whether vehicles will find their way to Conant Drive instead of Clinton Street. Mr. Nadeau responded that it is a one-way drive that enters into Conant Drive where drivers will either turn toward Clinton or South Streets. A one-way access that flows nicely and distributes traffic through the neighborhood seemed to work out best.

Mr. Kennedy also noted that the overall increase of traffic would be fairly insignificant. However, circulation was a separate issue. Mr. Nadeau also noted that the Safe Routes to School Committee had looked very carefully at the best and safest routes for students, particularly those coming from Rumford School area.

Mr. Hicks indicated that it felt to him as though more problems were being created by sending more traffic though the neighborhood.

Ms. Dolcino asked about the intended use of the parking lot in front of Conant School and Mr. Nadeau responded that the intent was that it not be used for drop off and pick up of students.

Ms. Dolcino asked if there was any concern about folks coming out of Rundlett Middle School and trying to turn right. Mr. Nadeau responded that they are trying to prevent drivers from making the right turn by signage and island placement.

Mr. Dolcino needed help understanding the concept of the drop off and pick up lanes.

Mr. Nadeau explained that the closest access to the schools is for the buses since more than half of the students are bussed to school. At the second lane over (except for Kimball where they are completely separate) they have created a barrier between the two lanes to channel students to a crosswalk for safe crossing.

Ms. Dolcino asked the philosophy for reducing from four stories at Kimball to two stories. Mr. Lewis responded that grades K-1 are required to be at grade or have dedicated stairways only for those grades. Dedicated stairways meant that two stairways are needed to be dedicated to kindergarten or first grade. The new building will have an elevator for those who need it. One of the big problems with a four story building is that during an emergency or fire drill, students cannot use the elevator and wheelchair students need to be carried down the stairs.

Ms. Dolcino noted that left of the entrance to Kimball School there is a parking lot. She asked if there would just be a huge paved area visible from North Spring Street. She was concerned about the view, both along Pleasant Street and North Spring Street. It would not provide much green relief. There is going to be a big change in the appearance of the neighborhood and that is going to be a big concern. Mr. Lewis responded that they could look more at that parking area and see if they could add more vegetation.

Ms. Dolcino noted that if they are looking at placing a soccer field at Conant she hoped they would create a regulation size soccer field or even a smaller practice field.

Mr. Shurtleff did not feel that allowing parents to drive onto the campus for drop off and pick up at Kimball would alleviate the traffic problem on North Spring Street. Mr. Lewis responded that the School District will need to look at that operation when the school opens. Mr. Kennedy also responded that there is a benefit by adding the drop off lanes but there is also a likelihood of a slight increase in traffic. He felt as though it would essentially be a wash.

Mr. Drypolcher noted that the existing Kimball playground is larger than the playground being proposed. He asked if there was any chance of keeping it the same size as existing. Ms. Reardon responded that there will be a larger interior space with the construction of a gymnasium. There are new play structures being constructed. Mr. Lewis did not believe the new playground was smaller. He also noted that there is added green space. Mr. Cashman also mentioned that the existing outside play space is asphalt. He did not think there was a net change.

Mr. Drypolcher asked if there will be additional play space at the existing Broken Ground School. Mr. Lewis responded that what is there now is what will be there after construction.

Ms. Dolcino asked how they decided how many parking spaces they needed and how much flexibility there is with parking. Mr. Nadeau responded that the information came primarily from the school principals and what they felt they needed to run their facilities based on their experience. Ms. Reardon indicated that they had also looked at the City's

Zoning Ordinance as well as the individual school's needs and what is available on street in the area.

Before starting to hear public testimony, the Chair reminded members of the public that he will allow five minutes for each person wishing to speak. Once everyone has had a chance to speak for the first time, a second opportunity will be offered for three minutes each, and then a third opportunity for one more minute. He also requested that once testimony on a particular point has been offered, it not be fully repeated by subsequent speakers.

He reminded the audience of the status of the School District as far as what the Planning Board is able to do. He explained that the Planning Board was not operating under Site Plan Review Regulations and did not have the power to approve or deny these projects. The Planning Board's comments would be non-binding but would be thoughtfully considered by the School District.

He also asked that speakers provide their name and address for the record.

Steve Michlovitz, 47 South Curtisville Road, reported that he and his wife had moved to their house last August and it will be the most directly affected by the construction and proposed parking areas. He reported their concerns were threefold:

1. They are currently subject to significant light pollution from the existing lighting on the school property. They have been assured that the proposed new lighting will be downcast and properly shielded. They hope that is true.

2. The existing school building has air handlers that are extremely noisy and create noise pollution in an otherwise nearly pristine setting. They have been assured that while nothing can be done with the existing air handlers, the new ones will not contribute additional noise. They hope that is true.

3. Most important is the issue of a security/screening fence. A fence was erected along the boundary line a number of years ago by a previous owner. This fence was apparently erected because the earlier owners had significant issues with children and teenagers cutting across the yard, leaving debris and causing disturbances when on the school property after hours. They have noticed debris on the school side of the existing fence recently and have noticed older children and teenagers on the school property when school is not in session. During one of the wind storm this Spring some of the fence fell and, within hours, children were running across their yard. With 200 or more new students being added to the school population there, they feel an attractive, substantial security fence should be erected across the property line. This is a beautiful piece of land and a great facility and should be enjoyed by all. They asked that funding for adequate screening to discourage encroachment on their property and to provide a safe secure environment for the students at the school be included in the project budget.

He reported that he and his wife supported the addition and understood the need for high quality and safe educational facilities for children, and asked only that their way of life and living conditions were not diminished or compromised. They were also very concerned about the clear cutting that they learned about tonight.

Alex Vogt, 23 Groton Drive, and chair of the City's Pedestrian Committee felt that more people will have to drive their students to school with these plans. That will cause more problems than the existing conditions. More traffic will cause more harm to the neighborhoods. He felt they should try to direct traffic back to South Street from Conant and redirect two-way traffic back out to South Street. The school has a responsibility to consider the whole neighborhood. The same thing would be true at Kimball School. Enforcing the right-turn only will be impossible at Pleasant Street. He felt the School District was really falling short in addressing the larger community with these plans.

Carol Hargrove, 32 Conant Drive, was very concerned and did not understand how they plan for all traffic to come out onto Conant Drive. They already have school buses and some parents driving along their street. This will just be moving one mess to another mess and not solving any of the problems. With all the houses they will be demolishing, the students at Kimball School still will not have a playground, no basketball courts, and no place to play soccer. The students need to be outside running around and playing on a playground. Regarding the Broken Ground addition, she asked if the multi-purpose room between the two buildings would be large enough for Broken Ground to have a program there such as a graduation or a play.

Barb Higgins, 133 Liberty Street, discussed what is being gained versus what will be lost. The children will have to play on a teeny, tiny playground next to a parking lot at Kimball. This project is a too expensive. She found that it was in the City's best interest to suggest to the School Board that they hold off on the Kimball School demolition and construction. There are many people who are extremely opposed to this project. She noted that there is a 27 acre parcel of land on Clinton Street that is owned by the School District that would be ideal for the new school. Nothing would be demolished, nothing would be lost, and there would be plenty of room for playgrounds. This particular project requires too many changes to be made and too many questions have been left to be answered for her as a taxpayer to support going forward with it. She felt the School District could do much better. She encouraged the Planning Board to strenuously suggest that the School District postpone this project.

Mr. Gross asked Ms. Higgins if the Planning Board did as she suggested and the School Board also said they would not redevelop the Kimball School lot but would build on Clinton Street, what would happen to that neighborhood if the School District abandoned that lot and turned it over to a private developer. Ms. Higgins felt there would be beautiful condominiums constructed from the existing building. That is an historic beautiful neighborhood. The city needs to have people living in the downtown. Maybe the Law Center could use the building. She has found that there are people in the city that would make beautiful use of that property.

Dick Osborne, a 110 Fiske Road resident for almost 30 years, indicated he was intrigued

by Mr. Gross's analysis of the no net harm measurement of development and thought it was a good one. He felt it could have been employed earlier by other Planning Boards when other people sat on them. It is an excellent way to analyze projects. In the case of this proposal, he felt there will be net harm if this plan goes forward. There will be more students, more cars, and more traffic and, since they are trying to put as many parking spaces as possible on site, there will be some parking issues in a neighborhood that is already burdened with parking issues. It is a center city neighborhood. He felt there will be harm done to this neighborhood by this proposal and the traffic that will be coming from the north and wanting to go back to the north.

Jessie Osborne, 110 Fiske Road, noted that the playground was inadequate back in the 1980s. There will be a net loss of outside playground space which is essential to young students and an increase of students in the building. It was inappropriate of the State Board of Education to sign off on this project. She felt parents would be dropping off their students all over the neighborhood. There is a federal court house in the neighborhood and there is not adequate parking there. This is a residential neighborhood but the school is no longer appropriate there. She suggested that the School District hold off on this plan and look at the 27 acre site on Clinton Street. The School Board is being naive to expect that the State will actually provide the funds they are planning on.

Phil Donovan, 42 Long Pond Road and Chair of the City's Heritage Commission, reported the Heritage Commission had provided a letter on its position regarding Kimball School. The Heritage Commission found this plan to be detrimental to the community. The historic and economic value of these buildings and what they contribute to the neighborhood, to the history and character of the city and to the long-term goals of the City's Master Plan outweigh the value of a new school on what is a substandard site. The scale of the demolitions required for this project has not been seen since the days of urban renewal. The School District completed historic surveys on the buildings to be demolished for Kimball and they were reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Office. Both the Kimball and Morrill school buildings were found to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Each of the seven houses was found to be contributing structures to the historic nature of the neighborhood. The neighborhood remains relatively intact. Its significance lies in its varied 19th and early 20th century architecture as well as its function as a downtown neighborhood that housed workers and professionals alike in the nearby businesses and industries. It was the city's first neighborhood with a fully developed grid street system. The block will be changed from its current residential use to institutional, and traffic changes will impact the livability of the neighborhood.

He reported that the purpose of the City's Demolition Review Ordinance was to create an opportunity to identify and explore alternatives to demolition of historically and architecturally important buildings. Through this process the Committee determined that the only alternative to the proposed demolition is an alternative site for this new school.

Mr. Gross confirmed that what the Heritage Commission said was that the property in

question should not be redeveloped for more extensive school purposes because it would mean demolition of houses and buildings the Commission has found to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Mr. Donovan responded that it was because the City would lose existing housing stock and the construction would change the neighborhood. Mr. Gross asked if the conclusion was that the School District should not pursue this project there and Mr. Donovan responded that was the case.

Craig Walker, 94 Warren Street, spoke as a resident and not as the Zoning Administrator. He voiced his concerns with the proposed plan. He felt that the City did need a new school but what had not been shown was that this is the proper site for it. While the School District is exempt from local land use regulations, they have a State mandate to provide a safe learning environment for students. What the School Board is proposing frustrates the City's regulations. He asked the Planning Board to consider whether what was being proposed was consistent with the goals and objectives of the planning and zoning goals. His concerns include that this will have a negative impact on the neighborhood regarding traffic. Safety will decrease. This is a quiet neighborhood. It is not a great spot for children to walk to school. A big issue here is that this land is just not adequate. One of the City's objectives is to prevent overcrowding of land. This plan fails to meet parking regulations because it has added public assembly spaces that can be used by the public which were not available before. That will be a change for the overall neighborhood. This is as far southeast of the District as possible. It is neither in the population center nor geographic center of the District.

Jody O'Meara, 21 Dominique Drive, just around the corner from Broken Ground School, expressed her concern about traffic. She felt there were already high traffic volumes in the neighborhood before the addition of traffic and people that will be come from this new construction. She reported that safety vehicles often have to detour now to get through the neighborhood. Snow banks on both sides of the road create a dangerous situation.

Pia Shea, 15 Beacon Street and a Kimball School parent, has been involved in the study process for about six years. Her overall experience has been very positive. She has felt she has been listened to and she has felt other people have been responded to as well. Six years ago she was surprised at the clear message that there be a downtown school and, as a result, she has felt that would be the case. Any site downtown is going to be problematic because it will be tight. She sees the green space as a net gain. She is in support of the plan but she is also worried about parking and pedestrian safety.

Elaine Kellerman, 1406 Alton Woods Drive, indicated she had circulated a petition against the demolition of nine buildings and construction of a new school and asked that a new site be found for this school. She felt this construction would destroy the fabric of this neighborhood. She felt this issue was way too big to be decided by a School Board of only nine members. She felt this should go to a referendum vote for the entire city. She urged the Planning Board to consider telling the School Board to delay the Kimball School project until they can get it on a ballot. Before destroying an entire city block, the citizens of the city should have a vote about whether they want this.

Charles Russell applauded the Planning Board's thoroughness of its questions. He discussed the wood chip heating plant proposed for Broken Ground and the traffic safety issues related to its construction. With all of the traffic issues, he asked why Kimball School was being placed on such a small space. He felt the Board should be making findings on each project individually.

Kay Westcott, 61 Warren Street, expressed concern about a dumpster right in her back yard, and the odor that will come from it into her back yard.

Linden Jackett, 125 Rumford Street, reported that she spent many years living within that neighborhood and has lived with the traffic issues there for many, many years. Whether there is a school there or not, there will be traffic issues in that neighborhood. With the School District's offices relocated, there will be a number of cars that will no longer be travel to that site. She asked the Board to keep in mind the purpose of the proposed construction was to provide an adequate education for students. She believed that the traffic issues will not be any better with private development there or with no school there. She had observed the process and had faith in it, and she encouraged the Board to look carefully at the project.

Collette Farland-Vogt, 23 Groton Drive, reported that she did not feel heard at the meetings she attended. She knew the value of green space and felt it was needed for children to play and get centered. She does not feel the School Board had heard her concerns. They were never valued and the School Board just continued with their acquisitions and plans.

Kass Ardinger, President of the School Board, spoke regarding Kimball School traffic and indicated that one reason for school consolidation is a decline in school population in recent years. Enrollment at the Kimball School has declined particularly. She felt the protests about the plan were a moving target sometimes about traffic, or about tearing down historical buildings, or about keeping the neighborhood schools small. She reminded the Board that in the 1990s Kimball had about 450-500 students so this plan was really about bringing back enrollments to that level. She reported that this was not about increasing the number of students to anything that had not been seen in the past.

Laura Bonk, 21 Tahanto Street and a member of the School Board, spoke as a resident. She expressed concern about the parking lot on Pleasant Street because parking lots are not safe at night. She was also concerned about changing the streetscape to make it less safe for people walking nearby. She would like to eliminate the Pleasant Street parking lot, keep the houses there, and require staff to use nearby parking garages downtown.

Jim McConaha, 7 Cypress Street, felt that looking at each of the site plans should reveal the problems with the Kimball School plan. He urged the Planning Board to not be discouraged about what role the Board might play. Bringing the goals of the Master Plan to reality is the role of the Planning Board. There are two issues that are particularly important on this site, impact on housing and impact on historical resources. These buildings have value beyond historical value. According to the Master

Plan, the goals are to maintain and enhance older neighborhoods and to utilize and maintain older buildings. Demolition should only occur when there is nothing else that can be done with them. The goals of the School District do not serve those goals. The only alternative to demolishing these buildings is an alternative site for this school as found by the Demolition Review Committee. He did not feel the Committee was trying to trade one bad option for another but was trying to help the School District to find a solution to fit the school's need to provide the kind of educational facility that the students deserve and the City's taxpayers can afford. He urged the Planning Board to suggest a "time out" before demolishing these buildings.

Mr. Gross asked how the Planning Board reconciles the Master Plan's goals to continue to have a downtown school. There is a strong value in this community to have a downtown school. He asked what the Planning Board should do about that. Mr. McConaha responded that the neighborhood school concept was a concept everyone revered and it was a good concept, but the reality was that children did not walk to school. They came in buses and their parent's cars so a school could be constructed anywhere in the Kimball School District and it would be fine. This was not something the community could afford. The driveway itself took up space that could be used for playgrounds, but it needed to be constructed in order to get cars off the street to safely discharge students. He felt there were options that existed. The Heritage Commission offered to assist the School District in finding another site. This was public property being paid for by public dollars. The Planning Board needed to weigh in and offer thoughtful suggestions to the School Board.

Jack Dunn, a School Board member who voted for this project and chairman of the Building Committee of the School Board, explained that where Kimball sat right now used to be the two-room Morrill School. In the 1930s, the School District acquired homes in the neighborhood and constructed a playground. He felt the current proposal was a continuation of that process in a way. He reported that there have been 23 School Board members in the time the School Board has been struggling with this decision. Each member of the School Board has struggled with the decision regarding Kimball School.

Cathy Connors, 5 Cambridge Street, explained she has followed this process for over three years and has spoken on the subject at a number of meetings. Both neighborhood school and playground space have been considered as very important over the years. As she got more involved with the School District's task force, she realized that they were just going to look at the three sites presented tonight. She was very fearful over three years ago that there would be a demolition of almost the entire Kimball School block. To her, keeping grades K-3 at Walker and grades 4 and 5 at Kimball was the ideal situation. She initially wanted to see all the neighborhood schools open but slowly came to the reality, and it was hard for her, that a new school at the Kimball block just would not do. She was very concerned about equity. The playground at Kimball School will not be equal to the other two playgrounds. She asked where the traffic studies were and what was in them. She also asked the route the school buses were expected to take to the school and at what times. She also asked why the School Board did not have to go to the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Mr. Woodward responded to the question relative to Zoning Board of Adjustment that according to RSA 674:54, other government agencies do not need to go before local land use boards.

Mr. Drypolcher informed Ms. Connors that the traffic studies were available at City Hall in the Planning Division office.

Mr. Vogt spoke for the second time and discussed the question of neighborhood schools. He reported that the new thinking was to have neighborhood schools. Towns that had constructed schools outside of town regretted the decision because children could not get to them on their bikes or walking.

Kevin Fleming, 16 Charles Street and a School Board member, reported that a number of alternative sites had been reviewed. They had put in a fair amount of effort regarding alternative sites because of problems regarding traffic and site size requirements. He suggested that maybe the Planning Board could provide ideas about a different site. He would love to see the Board take up the issue.

Mr. Shurtleff asked if the School Board's efforts to find an alternative site occurred prior to acquisition of the seven residential sites and Mr. Fleming responded that the discussions he was aware of took place after he became a board member and that was after the properties were acquired. He did not know what happened before then.

Barb Higgins also commented that the necessity for a downtown school made little sense because probably about 80% of the students would have to be bused. The decreasing population caused this consolidation to occur in the first place because the students did not live downtown now anyway.

Craig Walker spoke again as a taxpayer and noted that the School District paid over $1 million for those seven houses. The total assessed value of all of the buildings that will be demolished is over $800,000. The newly adopted RSA 199:1 will require that the School District investigate reasonable options for replacing a school building, seek input and review by the Planning Board, and comply with the City's Master Plan and land use regulations.

In answer to a question by Mr. Gross, Mr. Walker indicated he did not feel the School Board had made a thorough review of its options.

Pia Shea reminded the Planning Board that when school starts this Fall the students will be crammed into temporary quarters. This process had already begun.

Jack Dunn reminded the Board that four or five buildings would potentially go back onto the tax rolls.

Matt Cashman emphasized, regarding investigating alternative sites, that in 2008-09 he and the City Planner and the Superintendent of Schools had met a number of times to

explore alternative sites for Kimball School. They came up with five sites to explore which each had their problems. They exhaustively explored every possible option that was presented to them. He felt they had given it an honest effort and came back with the same results.

Elaine Kellerman suggested that, since the decision was made in December, Mr. Cashman should explore alternative sites again. She felt it was quite possible that there might be something that could be available now that was not available in December.

There was no one else who wished to speak and the Chair declared the hearing closed at 11:15 PM.

Mr. Gross noted that this had been one of the best public hearings that he had attended and that made his job very hard. He felt good points had been made, and thoughtful, polite discussion had taken place.

Members then discussed whether to continue deliberations at this time or postpone until next week, given the lateness of the hour. The Clerk reminded the Board that it had 30 days to comment.

Members agreed to meet again on August 25, 2010 at 7:00 PM to formulate comments to be forwarded to the School District.

There was no further business to come before the Board and the meeting adjourned at 11:28 PM.

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST:

Douglas G. Woodward
Clerk

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