



General Library Item

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Public Forum

At 6:30 p.m. William Natbony, President of the Board of Education, convened a Public Forum to hear comments from community groups and individuals on the proposed Bond Referendum scheduled for February 8, 2018, and the associated State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process. Mr. Natbony noted that all Board members were present with the exception of Arthur Rublin, and praised fellow Board members for their vibrant and in-depth discussion at the previous meeting.

Stuart Matthey, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Facilities, provided a brief overview and update of the 2018 Bond Project, including a review of the development process and updated project scope, encompassing District-wide facility needs focusing on roofs, building systems, electrical upgrades, code compliance, and health and safety issues; addition/upgrading of security vestibules at the elementary schools; and the renovation and expansion of Greenacres Elementary School.

Mr. Matthey also reported that subsequent to the detailed review by the Board at its November 27 Board meeting of the SEQR report, the report has been amended to include the additional noise and air quality monitoring and air conditioning of some rooms at Greenacres agreed on by the Board.

Mr. Matthey provided an update on the mold testing and follow-up at Greenacres. As reported at the previous Board meeting, the District commissioned an Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) screening at Greenacres, performed by Registered Hygienist Ernest Coon (of Regulatory Compliance). Sampling detection and identification was performed by Environmental Laboratory Services. This comprehensive screening was conducted to test for the existence of any air-related hazards in the environment, including carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, formaldehyde, total petroleum hydrocarbons, biological/bio-aerosol sampling (which includes mold), temperature, total nuisance dust, and relative humidity. Over 400 tests were conducted in all building occupied spaces and the basement area. Elevated mold scores were found in four rooms and the unoccupied basement area; the District followed all the remediation recommendations in the report, performing the work over the Thanksgiving weekend. Re-testing of the affected areas was conducted the following week, and results showed that remediation was successful in all affected spaces.

Dr. Thomas Hagerman, Superintendent of Schools, noted that the District is working on a long-term plan for focused, cyclic air-testing throughout the District as part of the annual budget process.

Mr. Natbony opened the floor to public comment, noting that the usual three-minute time limit on comments was suspended for this meeting. Fifteen speakers came forward:

- David Cooper, an attorney with Zarin & Steinmetz, which is representing a Greenacres community group, expressed procedural concerns about the SEQR process, particularly providing specifics regarding impact on health of potential hazardous substances such as asbestos, lead, air quality and noise monitoring, and mold sources and remediation.

Mr. Natbony responded by directing the speaker to the tape of last week's meeting, when many issues were discussed at length, and the consultant was directed to add specific information regarding those issues to the final report.

- Diane Baylor, President of the PT Council, thanked the Board of Education for its inclusive and responsive process and its modeling of civil discourse, and reported that the PT Council supports the 2018 Bond Project, noting the Greenacres needs significant work. Ms. Baylor also expressed the Council's support for referring the question of solar panels to the District Sustainability Committee, and to continue to study, in contemplation of future action, questions concerning District-wide air conditioning, the A-School and CHOICE buildings, bathroom upgrades, multipurpose rooms, playgrounds, the Middle School fitness center, classroom storage, and elementary school lunch service.
- Xue Su, Kingston Road, saluted the Board for its accomplishments over the past three years, and expressed support for the 2018 Bond Project as financially responsible, comprehensive, and addressing the needs at Greenacres.
- Diane Greenwald, Oak Lane, expressed several concerns regarding the Greenacres project scope. Ms. Greenwald also questioned why air conditioning and elementary food service were deferred, and expressed her opinion that maintaining tax-neutrality is arbitrary.
- Ernie Wechsler, Putnam Road, expressed concerns about the health and safety of students during construction, and advocated a full modular school on the field.

Mr. Natbony responded by noting that the Board indeed holds the health and safety of students as its top priority, and is satisfied that appropriate procedures will be in place to protect health and safety, and that the Board held a lengthy discussion on the question of modular use, and unanimously rejected it.

- Mona Longman, Varian Lane, a member of the Greenacres Building Committee, expressed doubt that the Board had researched every option, including construction of a new building, citing new school building construction in Massachusetts and Virginia.
- Linda Doucette-Ashman, Brite Avenue, Co-President of the League of Women Voters, expressed regret that, because of the Board's deliberation timeline and its frequent changes to the proposals, the League was not able to make an official comment at this time, but that the League looks forward to meeting with the Board in January.
- Mary Beth Evans, Edgewood Road, Co-Chair of the League of Women Voters' subcommittee that is studying the proposed bond, requested that data considered by the District-Wide Facilities Committee in its discussion of air conditioning be posted on the District website. Ms. Evans also requested information on a number of bond scope items.

Mr. Mattey responded that debt roll-off in the amount of approximately \$46 million will occur in 2028, so a bond to carry over that roll-off would need to be scheduled in 2026. Dr. Hagerman acknowledged the League's frustration concerning the Board's frequent revisions, but noted that it reflects the Board's responsiveness to community input. Mr. Natbony reported that answers to the League's questions would be forthcoming.

- Bob Harrison, Fox Meadow Road, urged that a comfort station near the Middle School tennis courts be included in the bond, citing Village support of the project.

Mr. Natbony noted that there are impediments to this project, including requirement of SED approvals, and that the Board has not yet heard from the Village concerning this issue.

- Michael Levine, Walworth Avenue, expressed concern about the mold found at Greenacres, and asked how chronic moisture problems at the school could be addressed, and inquired about the possibility of postponing construction.
- Tony Corriggio, Brite Avenue, thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak without time limits, and posed several questions regarding student safety during construction related to timing, modulars, air and noise monitoring, and air conditioning.

Mr. Natbony responded by noting that noise and air quality monitoring and the large room air conditioning were agreed to by the Board, and are in the revised SEQR report, and that the BBS consultants did not advocate for modular usage; rather, they described how modulars might be used. Mr. Mattey reported that all demolition work is scheduled for the summer only, and will not take place during the school year, and that base level ambient noise will

be measured. Dr. Hagerman noted that 60 decibels is the level of average human conversation and 30 decibels is a whisper.

- Megan Simon, president of the Greenacres PTA, speaking on behalf of the eight-member PTA Executive Board, expressed strong support of the 2018 Bond scope as currently proposed, noting that it would enrich the lives of Greenacres students, addressing the school's urgent need for additional multipurpose space, and bringing classrooms up from the basement where they are isolated.

Dr. Hagerman thanked Ms. Simon for her remarks, noting that moving basement classrooms up was not about mold but about bringing those classes into the life of the school.

- Rona Muntner, Fairview Road, expressed concern about the mold found at Greenacres, and that the plan is to put an addition on a crumbling building.

Mr. Natbony responded by noting that none of the experts consulted on this project expressed concern about the fundamental soundness of the building.

- David Schwartz, Oakstwin Road, expressed concerns that not enough renovation work has been scheduled for the small classrooms in old part of the building and the back playground behind the school, asked about noise level monitoring, and also expressed concern about moving music to the basement during construction due to water issues.
- Lesley Shearer, Brewster Road, expressed strong support for the bond project scope, particularly the renovation and addition proposed for Greenacres. She noted that construction disruption takes place constantly throughout Scarsdale, citing a private home construction project's extremely loud drilling adjacent to the Middle School.

Mr. Mattey noted that the District had gone to the Village regarding the drilling, and that they will talk to the homeowner.

Dr. Hagerman noted that the educational aspect of this bond proposal is of greatest importance, and that information elaborating on that priority is available on the District website, along with many other materials. Mr. Natbony urged the community to be "good consumers" of information and take the time to access these materials and base their decision on the correct set of facts.

Board Vice President Scott Silberfein announced upcoming Board meeting on December 11, 2017, and January 8, 2018.

The Forum adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

The Public Forum may be viewed on the District website (under Scarsdale Cable TV) [here](#)