High School Building Committee sends plans to council, Board of Ed

By Alicia B. Smith
Associate Editor

FARMINGTON — The Town Council and Board of Education will now have the opportunity to vote on plans for the renovations of Farmington High School following final approval by the high school building committee May 3.

The committee has spent well over a year considering numerous options and selected a final plan after adjustments were made to scale back the size and cost of its chosen option, which calls for upgrades for the building to be ADA compliant, reduces sprawl, and updates the auditorium and gymnasium while also adding parking. The plan also maintains the original high school building, built in 1928, a portion of which will become offices for the Board of Education.

The new construction will consist of a main entrance opening to the ad direction of the building that will be three stories and house classrooms. Extending east of this portion of the building will be a main hallway leading to the cafeteria, auditorium, music area, gymnasium and lockers, and the tech and automotive education area.

The second floor will consist of the guidance department, classrooms and art rooms, with a balcony area looking down into the cafeteria. The third floor will consist of more classrooms.

The site plan calls for additional parking spaces from about 500 to about 540, a new drop-off/pick-up area, and the tennis courts will be moved to the eastern part of the property. Access to the playing fields will be renovated.

Construction will take place in five phases for an overall period of 36 months with completion scheduled for 2022.

Original projected costs for the project ranged from $125 million to $139 million for a building measuring 239,000 square feet.

As the building committee re-evaluated the plans, additional space was considered, increasing the size of the building by 10,000 square feet and the cost to $142 million. Eventually, the committee decided to eliminate some of the design options, resulting in a reduction of cost by $8.2 million. The final cost of the project is $135.4 million.

The committee found savings by deleting a locker room, relocating the Board of Education offices to the high school, eliminating some collaboration space and parking lot modifications.

The Board of Education offices will relocate to the first floor and a portion of the second floor of the 1928 building, the rest of which will remain unused except for storage and could have a future community use.

“Of the reasons I supported this is the planning committee member Jean Baron said, ‘I’m very satisfied with how things will go.’”

Chair Bill Wadsworth thanked those hired to draw up plans, O & G Industries and Kaeste Boos Associates, Inc., for their willingness to adjust options at the committee’s request.

The Board of Education will meet May 22 and the Town Council May 23. The town meeting to move the project to referendum will take place June 5, with voting set for June 15.

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