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[CE SBAC] Cape Elizabeth School Building Advisory Committee "A High School Renovation Topic"

1 message

Cape Elizabeth School Building Advisory Committee <cesbac@capeelizabethsbac.com> Thu, Apr 11, 2024 at 5:42 AM
Reply-To: jshedd78@gmail.com
To: cesbac@capeelizabethschools.org

From: Jeffrey Shedd jshedd78@gmail.com
Subject: A High School Renovation Topic

Message Body:

Dear School Building Advisory Committee:

This is a statement I planned to share at last week's meeting before it was rescheduled. I had another commitment last night, and by the time I could get there last night the meeting had finished. I may come to a meeting in the near future to share this statement in person, but my wife and I are going away for a few weeks, so I thought I would share this now.

Public Comment for School Building Advisory Committee

My name is Jeffrey Shedd. I live at 6 Linwood Street.

Since retiring as high school principal, I have deliberately stayed out of school issues. This is the one exception.

I will lead up to a specific point about the high school renovation plans.

But first, I must congratulate the committee for:

Excellent communication and openness to community input.

Focusing so much attention on the Middle School. It is needed. The 30's building is attractive aesthetically from the outside but a nightmare educationally inside. The school has an A+ music program in an F- facility. That's not sustainable. The cafetorium is a constraint on the scheduling and programming of both schools it serves. The long trek up the cavernous Middle School hallway to reach the main office from the front door is not only insecure; it is unwelcoming. Establishing a welcoming culture is as important, if not more so, than physical security measures in helping create a safe school. A smiling face should greet students and parents when they walk in a school.

As you formulate plans for the high school, which I know have not yet been a top priority, I want to address what might seem like a small issue—a fitness facility. Such a facility should serve the school's athletic program, which is among the best in the state, not because of how many titles and championships it wins but because of how many students it serves. It should serve Physical Education classes, which include every single student in the school. It could potentially be used for Community Services programming.

Currently Cape Elizabeth has two fitness facilities—a postage stamp-sized facility adjacent to the pool and a minuscule, smaller-than-postage-stamp size facility between the men's and women's locker rooms in the high school. That facility is small, underventilated, dirty, and smelly. So much heavy, antiquated equipment is crammed in there, it's hard for custodians to clean it. When I gave tours to families considering moving to Cape Elizabeth, I had to embarrassedly and honestly confess how inadequate it was. That was not true of any other space in the high school. Yes, the high school is an energy-inefficient, expensive-to-maintain, sprawling building but, in terms of sizing, there is

no other space that is as woefully undersized as the fitness facility.

With the last building committee, of which I was a part, a plan emerged to include a fitness facility in a planned concession stand/storage area/bathroom building on Hannaford Field. The plan would have created an A or B facility in a D- location. I do not know if such an idea is in the works in current thinking about the high school. I hope it is not.

I hope as you consider the location of a fitness facility, if that is ultimately part of the plan for the high school—and I believe strongly it should be—please be sure to exhaust every creative idea to make sure it's located where it needs to be—physically attached to the high school. I am not a designer, but some possibilities occur to me:

Between the gymnasium and the track

Atop the gymnasium roof

Between the school and the pool. Could the long corridor connecting those facilities be bumped out to create a fitness facility in what is now a courtyard that rarely has anybody using it? The corridor could be preserved. If it could be done, that could be an attractive, perfectly located space for a fitness facility.

In the area where the playground, which serves no high school students, is currently located.

These are just a few possibilities that occur to me. I am sure there are others that trained designers giving this issue their full attention could envision. I would urge the committee and the designers to use your expertise, in consultation with school staff, to be creative about this. Adding a fitness facility to a building behind the locked fence at Hannaford Field might be an easy solution, but it would just be replacing a less-than-postage-stamp size facility with a right-sized facility in a plainly-wrong, to me at least, location.

The committee has many, more important issues before it than this particular high school issue. I want to do what I can to try to put this issue on the committee's radar.

Thanks for all your hard work and listening and creative problem-solving.

Jeffrey Shedd

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