

**Draft**  
**Tisbury School Committee/  
Tisbury School Building Committee**  
**5:00AM, Monday, July 17, 2017**  
**Tisbury School Library**

1

**TSBC Members Present:** Chair Colleen McAndrews, Ian Aitchison, Wiet Bacheller, Catherine Coogan, John Custer, Matt D'Andrea, Sean DeBettencourt, Cheryl Doble, Jeff Kristal, Melinda Loberg, Reade Milne by phone, Siobhan Mullin, Erika Mulvey by phone, Sean Mulvey by phone, Dan Seidman,

**TSC Members Present:** Colleen McAndrews, Janet Packer

**Selectmen Present:** Chair Larry Gomez, Tristan Israel, Melinda Loberg,

**Planning Bd. Present:** Ben Robinson, Cheryl Doble, Dan Seidman

**SAC Members Present:** Wiet Bacheller, Jennifer Cutrer, John Custer, Rita Jeffers, Natalie Krauthamer, Krista Riley, Sarah York

**Others:** Many members of the public including:  
Daedalus – Richard Marks,  
Turowski2 – Libby Turowski, Peter Turowski  
Tis. Historic Com. – Harold Chapdelaine,  
Tis. FinCom – Jeff Kristal, Jynell Kristal,  
Tis. Treasurer Jonathon Snyder,  
Town Moderator Deborah Medders

**School Staff:** Barbara Armstrong, Liz Bradley, Julie Brand, Whitney Burke, Catherine Coogan, John Custer, Amybeth D'Andrea, Erika Mulvey, Sean Mulvey, Sean DeBettencourt, Sarah Hall, Kate Harding, Natalie Krauthamer, Emily Levett, Rita Jeffers, Melissa Ogden, Nicole Shirley, Jane Taylor, Kara Webster,

**Parents:** Holly Baptiste-Jackson, Richard Brew, Anne Caldwell, Fala Freeman, Beth Kostman, Marie Laursen, Mollee Lewis, Jared Meader, Kelley Metell, Kirk Metell, Melissa Ogden, Lori Pfingst, Kara Webster, Shawn Webster,

**Residents/Taxpayers:** Wendy Andrews, Jennifer Cutrer, Roy Cutrer, Sarah York, John Guadagno, Dana Hobson, Jeffrey Kats, Paul Laves, Hyung S. Lee, Holly MacKenzie, Ollie Patterson, Karen Patterson, Julie Robinson, Katherine Scott, Basia Jawviska Silva, Henry Stephenson, Holly Stephenson, Jane Taylor, Dawn Warner, Michael Watts,

**Press:** Heather Hamacek, Mark Alan Lovewell – Vineyard Gazette, George Brennan – MV Times, MVTV - Alex LaMarche,

The Tisbury School Building Committee (TSBC) was called to order. Chair Colleen McAndrews stated for the record that:

- the meeting was being video and recorded by MVTV and by a member of the public;
- Ms. Reade Milne, Ms. Erika Mulvey and Assoc. Prin. Sean Mulvey were participating by phone due to geographical distance and therefore all votes would be by roll call.
- Town Boards with posted meetings and quorums present were called to order:
  - Tisbury Board of Selectmen (BOS) by Chair Larry Gomez,
  - Tisbury School Committee (TSC) by Ms. McAndrews,
  - Tisbury Planning Board by Chair Ben Robinson,
  - Tisbury School Advisory Council (SAC).

Later in the meeting she expressed her appreciation for the rare joint meeting of the Town Boards on this important project.

*(Recorder's note: Occasionally the discussion is re-grouped for clarity and brevity.)*

### I. Review of Preferred Schematic Report

Ms. McAndrews opening remarks (see documents on file) explained the TSBC was a subcommittee of the TSC who had the ultimate responsibility for the school building project. She reviewed the lengthy previous process preceding the TSBC vote to build a three story new school on the present site emphasizing previous: compromises, forums, surveys, hours of conversation with constituents and stakeholders, presentations to Town boards, etc. Opposition was encountered at recent meetings with some Town Boards when Town Leadership could not speak publicly in support of the project, giving the impression that the Town was hedging on the decision. Consequently this meeting was called to give the opportunity:

- for TSBC members to think seriously about whether the project would pass at Town Meeting and on the ballot,
- to meet with leadership, and
- possibly regroup, revoke or move forward with the previous decision.
- Chair McAndrews and Mr. Marks had met with the Martha's Vineyard Commission (MVC) to update them on the project and were well received.
- The TSBC would hold an August Open House for seasonal residents to explain the project status and collect feedback.

- For the ensuing discussions she requested that groups to have one representative speak for them and that everyone to keep their remarks within three minutes

Ms. Melissa Ogden spoke for the Tisbury School staff stressing the importance of the three-story new school decision, chosen in the best interest of the students. She spoke of the staff dedication, the disruption of the construction period, the good fortune of Tisbury being one of the 10% chosen by Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA).

Ms. Emily Solorazza, parent of two Tisbury School students, agreed on all counts, said that the vast majority of parents felt that a new school was best for students, minimizing what was bound to be a lengthy disruption, speaking of the difficulties of renovation and concerns that the project would have to be revisited in the near future, as well as making room for school choice students.

Parent and general contractor Mr. Richard Brew also spoke against displacing students into trailers/modular classrooms and attested that it was impossible to estimate renovation costs. Nostalgia should not affect his son's education.



Taxpayer/resident Ms. Kate Scott sympathized with the concerns on disruption but did not consider that it would be a seriously effect students. She did not consider it nostalgia to preserve an historic building. She preferred to see more planning for a complete renovation expansion. She knew that teachers could deliver a sound education regardless of the options and noted different interpretations of what was in the long term interest of the children.

Taxpayer/resident Mr. Henry Stephenson, spoke in favor of siting the new building on the same location as the old building or more towards Spring St. and would prefer to see a greater sample of design options. He noted that modulars were classrooms, not trailers.

Taxpayer/resident, contractor specializing in renovations, Mr. Harold Chapdelaine had many connections to Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) and building projects and brought up the impact on taxes in the context of other town capital projects (new fire station, police station, etc.) and effecting whether Town residents could afford to live here, stressing that the elderly on fixed incomes had rights as well as children and teachers. His experience was that MSBA projections were always skewed, on the other hand renovation costs could be accurately estimated. Later speaking as Chair of the Tisbury Historic Commission, he reiterated his opinion that the old building was better built than any new building and confirmed its historic New Deal Workers Progress Administration (WPA) origins, worthy of preservation and respect. He pointed out the environmental impact of demolition.

Taxpayer/resident Ms. Julie Robinson said it was a shame to tear down a 90 yr. old and that nothing new would be as well built.

Parent and SAC member Ms. Sarah York commended the hard work and long hours put in by the TSBC members and the experts and designer/architects that were hired. It was unfair to ask educators to teach in conditions that were more difficult than was necessary and it was clear the current building was inadequate for educational purposes. Whether agreeing or disagreeing with the project, people should support the people that Town residents put in place to make this decision.

Former parent and staff member Ms. Dawn Warner stressed that the MSBA had certified the current infrastructure as undersized and inadequate as an education space and was committing substantial funds to the project. She herself had strong emotional attachment to the lovely building but judged it unable to be adapted to current educational activities and technology. The rights of children and parents needed to be balanced against infrastructure needs.

Selectman Tristan Israel was very concerned that whatever the option, it be able to pass at the ballot; and also that the project price needed to be substantially reduced so that taxes were affordable to residents.

- Board of Selectmen Chair Larry Gomez had changed his stance from renovation/addition to being in favor of new construction after speaking to people about the needs of the School especially Special Education. He also favored proceeding on the MSBA deadline schedule rather than losing the entire project. Mr. Gomez hoped that people would not vote no at the ballot because it was not what they wanted. Anyone dissatisfied should get involved and come to meetings.

Planning Board Chair Ben Robinson mentioned the new assessment that showed the Town moving away from the wealthy market, and spoke strongly in favor of bringing the price

down for a renovation addition. He considered this building as better built than any new construction and adequate to the educational needs if properly renovated. He was against throwing away an historic building and referred to: the old buildings of Harvard University, and the historic continuum of students going to the same school as their parents. He advocated for seeing the low end of the spectrum to find a middle point between it and the current high-end estimates.

Town Administrator Jay Grande submitted a letter (see documents on file) stating he was fond of the old building as an important structure with strong community emotional attachment, but after the recent presentation to the Selectmen he felt that conceptually the new school designs were heading in right direction, that its cost was more efficient and predictable, and that it more easily met educational needs.

- The TSBC members then made statements.

Ex Officio member Superintendent Matt D'Andrea respected the MSBA well-thought-out, time tested, inclusive, effective and diligent process. He had been a strong supporter of the Manter site but accepted that close decision (see 6/7/17 Minutes p.3-4 #III) and was working to move forward with the option. He also stressed the new building as in the best interest of the students, educationally more flexible and less disruptive.

Tisbury School Principal John Custer referred everyone to the Education Plan (see Project website) submitted to the MSBA after hard work by and comprehensive surveys of the staff. He emphasized that the plans for the new building were not excessive and were planned for current use (although expansion was possible within the finished design). He also noted that Tisbury demographics were changing in that 80 of the current 315 students were English Language Learners (ELL/ESL). This and Special Education needs made the current space untenable. He detailed the many School programs Spanish, Science/Technology/Art/Math (STEAM) maker space, music, art, etc.

Owners Project Manager (OPM) Daedalus Representative Mr. Richard Marks explained that construction cost were inflating at \$200,000 per month, leading to a situation where the more the project was studied the more it would cost, and noted that a conference call with the MSBA had already been put off a week in deference to this meeting. Once this decision was made there would be another four months of design work including community input forums. He pointed out the renovation/addition would be the slightly larger building due to decreased flexibility and reiterated that a new building would allow internal expansion without addition.

Architect Designer Mr. Peter Turowski emphasized that this was the end of the feasibility phase and the beginning of the design phase. Architects had constantly changed the design as feedback was given. The State required a 50 year lifespan for all new buildings but that did not preclude them lasting 100 years. The State had not declared it an historic structure, although that did not belittle local desires. He reported that the current building although it had bearing masonry external walls, had a light internal structure that currently resulted in disruptive sound transmission, but that made internal renovation more feasible. The Architects were charged with presenting all options and had presented renovation/addition and new structure equally.

Mr. Dan Seidman (TSBC Planning Board representative) felt the TSBC had not put a lot of time into examining each option. He quoted MSBA regulations allowing grandfathering educational space built to historic code and suggested the Committee was not given the information it needed, which had limited the options and was an oversight of the OPM and Architects. He was not a professional educator but was learning about it including a book on Finland the world's best educators which was all about teachers. He could find no correlation between space and quality. He quoted Tisbury staff as saying they could teach with any option chosen and felt that those who couldn't teach in any space should not be teachers. He emphasized the well-built current building that withstood severe New England weather, and advocated for renovation of the current structure with some additions as necessary (cafeteria, re-purposing the gym, etc.). He urged the best possible plan at the best possible cost that met all education needs.

In response Mr. Marks reported he had called the MSBA regarding the general concerns over 900 sq. ft. minimum classroom size which seemed large for Tisbury classes of 14 to 16 students but was included in the renovation/addition design. The MSBA stated it was important to maintain minimum classroom if at all possible. The Education Plan had been carefully crafted over several months work with educational stakeholders. Mr. Seidman again pointed out the MSBA regulation allowing grandfathered classroom size. Mr. Marks responded that these size classrooms did not meet 21st Century educational methodology needs and that the architect and OPM had been forthcoming and had not withheld information.

Ms. Erika Mulvey (TSBC teacher representative) suggested that Mr. Seidman should have brought this issue up in the visioning workshops on educational design. She pointed out the hard decisions made by the TSBC and understood the feelings of those that disagreed. Many members voted for the Manter site because they wanted to keep the current building. She cited the TSBC difficulties of coming together after that compromise and suggested the Town also respect the process and come together to work on the best school, with environmentally smart design that would be a draw for families to move into Town. Parents had indicated that the location was more important than the building.

Ms. Wiet Bacheller (TSBC SAC representative) characterized herself as an ancient teacher who was extremely frugal. She spoke of the difficulties of day-to-day teaching in too small classrooms, having to teach in hallways and find spaces for small groups, all this despite coming from a country where students faced the front and shared one paper. As much as she loved the building, new construction would better serve the town and was cheaper too.

TSBC Selectmen Representative Melinda Loberg, spoke of the heavy weight of the mandates that came with all State funding on a Town-wide basis, e.g. Fire Dept., Police Dept, Wastewater, etc. Consequently, she shared the other Selectmen's concerns that there were overrides in two of the last four years. She would be most comfortable with the option offering the most flexibility on cost.

Mr. Marks responded that flexibility in construction was difficult to gage. The current estimates showed new construction option to be \$3,000,000 less net cost to the Town due to various issues including, elimination of temporary classrooms and efficiency of space. Although it was true that the less a building was renovated the lower the cost, this building was not suitable for piecemeal renovation, due to multiple levels, non-robust interior structure, deteriorating exterior (e.g. masonry cracking and failed 1995 windows), need to

bring to code, etc. In addition such a base renovation would still lack 21st Century learning needs. Consequently he felt new construction was more likely to be cost flexible, including a 2% MSBA incentive for green building.

TSBC Visioning Council representative Ms. Cheryl Doble (also on the Planning Board) supported renovation since the current building was a reminder of how the community historically valued education, as part of the historic landscape that the Town breathed and as preservation of historic value to children. She emphasized two challenges the project faced to pass at two thirds majority at both Town Meeting and the ballot: the disruption to the Town and neighborhood as well as the students and staff, and the cost to the tax base.

TSBC community representative and architect Mr. Ian Aitchison spoke to the issue of long term as well as capital cost concern. He recommended a proactive brainstorming process to maximize good design ideas and minimize expenditure. He preferred budgets to estimates.

Mr. Sean DeBettencourt, TSBC teacher representative, quoted Oliver Wendell Holmes who said, "Taxes are the price we pay for a civilized society". Mr. DeBettencourt emphasized that this price tag included many years of deferred costs. He corrected Mr. Seidman's assertion that teachers had promised quality in any setting, explaining that teachers promised to do their best with whatever option was chosen but that was different from delivering best teaching in inadequate space. He strongly emphasized that 100% of the educational professionals favored new construction. He sympathized with affection for this building where his grandfather, father and himself had been educated, but he asked how it would look if the Town said, "We all came together and objectively chose the most expensive and potentially worst option".

Ms. Siobhan Mullin, TSBC Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) representative, reported that parents overwhelmingly supported a new school on this site. She emphasized the year-long educational planning process. She regretted the amount of misinformation in the Town and the press and promised PTO and staff commitment to get out the vote and to educate the community about the project.

TSBC Finance Committee (FinCom) representative Mr. Jeff Kristal protested the Town's love of complaining and its history of bashing projects at the eleventh hour including: the Stop & Shop, the mooring field, waterfront beautification, etc.. He mentioned the lowered Town assessment and a new school's role in making the Town a more desirable place to live. As a FinCom member he preferred saving \$3,000,000 on new construction. He commended the well-handled TSBC and the thorough process. He suggested town budgeting was the place to save. Mr. Israel objected that although Tisbury had many problems it had much to be proud of.

- Mr. Israel drew attention to other members of the public who wanted to speak. Ms. McAndrews, although noting time constraints, acceded to TSBC wishes to allow further public comment.

Resident and taxpayer Mr. John Guadagno suggested a revote was not on the agenda, a clear violation of open meeting law. Ms. McAndrews responded that it was not.

Former Tisbury School parent and Board of Assessor member Mr. Roy Cutrer expressed his pride in the School, but reported the difficulties of the present building: inadequate space, malfunction Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning (HVAC), etc. He was at a milestone age and nowhere near as good as he was 40 years ago.

Parent and architect Ms. Angie Francis explained that when her clients asked about cost savings, she always advised that to be an effective decision maker the client should limit the number of choices and not spend excess asking talented architects to explore more options.

Tisbury School teacher and SAC member Ms. Rita Jeffers asked people to respect the energy and time the TSBC spent in coming to its decision, and to come together even if they disagreed to move forward rather than spend more money on more options and missed deadlines.

Resident taxpayer Ms. Jane Taylor loved this building but told about how challenging the construction disruption was for her as a student: no lockers, no gym, less space for physical activities, etc. Unfortunately she felt renovation was not the best option.

Resident taxpayer Mr. Hyung S. Lee had been following the process since April and advocated for more detailed examination of the pros and cons of each option. He considered this was a flawed and rushed process that did not produce answers. Ms. McAndrews took strong exception to this pointing out the comprehensive information available on the website, the five-year process, forums, surveys, education plans, etc. She apologized if it looked like she was singling-out Mr. Lee.

- Chair McAndrews reiterated that the MSBA process had been paused in deference to Town feedback and suggested that the preferred schematic could be re-voted. Mr. Gomez maintained that this was an unnecessary action that should not be taken because someone didn't like the original decision. Ms. McAndrews asked again if anyone wanted to revote the action, no one responded. She asked if any TSBC member wanted to change their vote, no one responded. She asked again if the TSBC wanted to revote the matter.
- IT WAS THE TISBURY SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE CONSENSUS TO AFFIRM AND MOVE FORWARD ON THE 11 TO 5 VOTE TAKEN ON JUNE 19, 2017.
- Chair McAndrews strongly emphasized that community concerns would not be ignored and that the TSBC would work to incorporate Town input on an ongoing basis.

Adjournment

THE TISBURY BUILDING COMMITTEE, TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE, TISBURY SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL, TISBURY BOARD OF SELECTMEN, AND TISBURY PLANNING BOARD ADJOURNED.

**Appendix A: Meetings/Events:**

- TSBC – (TBD) 5:00PM, 2nd & 4th Mondays, at the Tisbury School
- TSC – 8:30AM, Monday, July 31, 2017 at the Tisbury School
- Tisbury FinCom - 6:30PM, Second Wednesday at the Tisbury EMS

**Appendix B: Actions** - None

**Appendix C: Documents on File:**

- Agenda 7/17/17
- Sign In Sheet 7/17/17
- Grande/McAndrews email re: School Building Project 7/16/17
- I want to explain the reason for today's meeting...

Minutes respectfully submitted by Office On Call/Marni Lipke.



