

Due to the effects of the COVID-19 crisis, the members of the Concord Middle School Building Committee (CMSBC) have been evaluating the most prudent course of action related to the CMS building project. Per vote of the Select Board, the Building Committee is announcing that following completion of the preliminary Feasibility Study, the committee will *temporarily pause its work before proceeding forward with Schematic Design*.

Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis

The crisis surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic has created significant uncertainty on many fronts. The Middle School Building Project is a significant undertaking for the Town of Concord, one that is rooted in the critical component of public participation. The impact of social distancing has an unprecedented effect on the building Committee's commitment to:

1. A public input process as the means to defining the community's desired building attributes
2. A financial request at the appropriate time

Public Participation

During an extended period of social distancing, sufficiently including the community in the decision-making processes related to the building would be very challenging. We will soon be at the point of finalizing the building parameters to move forward to Schematic Design, which will be ultimately presented to the town for consideration. This is a point where we would expect thorough presentations to the community for review and substantial input. Given the social distancing necessary during this crisis, we do not feel confident that we could execute this review and input phase effectively.

Timing of a Financial Request

According to original plans, the Building Committee is scheduled to bring a Schematic Design to the town for approval at a Special Town Meeting in the fall of 2020. With the financial impacts of the crisis as of yet so unknown, it is likely that the town may not be in a position to consider a significant new capital expenditure at that point. While the committee still firmly believes that a new middle school building is critical and is committed to fulfilling the charge as expressed at the 2019 Town Meeting, we also feel that the decision to move forward can be more effectively considered once there is a better understanding of our financial situation.

Interim Plan

To date, thanks to the collaboration of our Designers SMMA and our OPM Hill International, the Middle School Building Committee has been operating on schedule. Having recently received cost estimates for four initial design concepts, the committee has almost completed the preliminary Feasibility Study,

which creates a natural breaking point in the project timeline. In the absence of the current Covid 19 situation, the next step would be to engage the community in defining the parameters to move forward to Schematic Design. Since this does not seem realistic at the current time, the committee will temporarily suspend activity, meet monthly to re-evaluate timing, and plan to resume work as soon as it is deemed feasible.

Commitment to the Project

A temporary pause in progress will in no way change the Building Committee's commitment to complete this project in the soonest time frame possible. Every member of our Committee strongly believes that there is a critical need for a new middle school building and that the consolidation of the two current buildings at the Sanborn site is the correct strategy. We will continue to monitor the situation closely and will resume work as soon as possible.

Appreciation

As we take this pause, the Building Committee would like to thank committee members as well as the project management and design teams for their excellent work and dedication to this endeavor. In addition, we offer our thanks to the many residents who have offered their input on the project and to the educational professionals who have been an essential element in shaping the vision for a state-of-the-art middle school.

Until we reach that moment when we are able to resume our work and properly engage in a public dialogue, we appreciate the patience and understanding of the community and we share wishes for health and well-being for all.

Respectfully,

The Concord Middle School Building Committee