

**Meeting Minutes**  
**State College Borough Council**  
**State College Area School District Board of Directors**  
**Special Meeting**  
**Monday, August 1, 2005**

The State College Borough Council and the State College Area School District Board of Directors met in a joint meeting on Monday, August 1, 2005, in Room 220 of the State College Municipal Building, 243 South Allen Street, State College, PA.

Council members present: Bill Welch, Mayor  
Thomas E. Daubert, Council President  
Craig R. Humphrey  
Elizabeth Goreham  
Richard L. McCarl  
James H. Meyer

School Board members present: Susan Werner, Board President  
Lou Ann Evans, Vice-President  
Robert Ascah  
Elizabeth Dutton  
Robert Hendrickson  
Janet McCracken  
Donna Queeney

Also present: Thomas J. Fountaine, II, Borough Manager; Richard O'Donnell, Kimball & Associates; Rick Witt, Kimball & Associates; Carolyn DuBois, Kimball & Associates; Victor Krasnopolski, Kimball & Associates; Patricia Best, State College Area School District Superintendent; Stephanie Schmidt, Poole Anderson; Tony Ciccarella, Poole Anderson; Ed Popovich, State College Area School District; Carl R. Hess, Community Development/Planning Director; Mark A. Whitfield, Director of Public Works; Cynthia S. Hanscom, Recording Secretary; members of the media; and other interested members of the public.

Ms. Werner thanked everyone for coming. She explained this was an opportunity to share preliminary thoughts on the proposed high school project.

Mr. O'Donnell presented the campus plan for the high school. The project called for a single building on the north side of Westerly Parkway. The current South Building would be demolished and athletic fields constructed in its place. The two buildings create a great deal of congestion and a high level of pedestrian travel between the two schools, which would be alleviated somewhat with one building. The new building would have two faces. The main face would be along the Parkway. There would be a secondary entrance to the rear of the building for buses and staff. Staff would use the rear parking lot which would also be used for the marching band practice area. The access road to the back of the school would connect with Westerly Parkway directly across from O'Bryan lane. Mr. O'Donnell presented a map of the school and explained the locations of the classrooms, auditorium, library, science labs and additional gymnasiums. Most of Community Fields would be maintained as fields used for physical education classes. There would be an emergency access off of Irwin Avenue next to the Peppermill Apartments. There would be no access from Gill Street or other streets within the neighborhood.

Mr. Meyer asked if there would be more green space provided with the new plan. Mr. O'Donnell believed the amount of open space would even out; they were able to utilize space, such as the bank along the back of the North Building, that had not been used. The parking would be increased but was proposed to be close to other impervious areas. Mr. Daubert noted that it appears to be less parking. Mr. O'Donnell noted that there are currently 600 spaces; the proposal would increase the number of spaces to 1000. Mr. Daubert explained his concern was the parking for Welch Pool. There were a limited number of spaces in front of the pool. Patrons usually spilled over into the adjacent school district parking lot. With this proposal, that school district parking lot would be replaced with athletic fields. Ms. DuBois noted that there would be some spaces on the south side below the athletic fields. Ms. Queeney said the School Board would be meeting with Ron Woodhead, Director of Centre Region Parks & Recreation, and James Steff, Executive Director of the Centre Region Council of Governments, to discuss issues with the pool.

Mr. Daubert noted the fields were located very close to Westerly Parkway. He felt there may be safety issues with balls flying into the street. Ms. DuBois said that both athletic fields were softball fields. The outfield distance is 210 feet and there is another 50 feet to the Parkway. She anticipated there would be some fencing to keep balls in the field. The spacing of the field was configured to accommodate the grade. As plans are finalized, she would consider the safety issues and the need to provide a buffer.

When asked about locker room facilities, Ms. DuBois noted the locker rooms would be in the high school on the north side of Westerly Parkway. There would be a small operations building on the

south side for restrooms and possibly a concession stand. It was concluded that there would be some crossing of the street needed for athletic events.

Mr. Welch asked if it would be feasible to build a pedestrian island in the Parkway. Mr. Hess indicated that planter islands had been discussed but it was determined it would be too difficult because of the number of access points. With this change, planters may be feasible.

Ms. Goreham asked how storm water would be affected by the change. Ms. DuBois explained the discharge would feed down to Westerly Parkway between the two athletic fields.

Mr. McCarl asked the route school buses would take. Ms. DuBois indicated O'Bryan Lane would be the entry point. Buses would then travel up the driveway between the school and Parkway Plaza and travel to the rear of the building. Buses would stack in an angled parking fashion and then pull forward and exit onto Logan Avenue or back to Westerly Parkway. If buses are traveling from South Atherton Street, they could enter by Logan Avenue. Mr. Popovich added that having the buses drop off at one location would reduce the congestion at 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. In addition the parent drop-off would be in the front of the building while buses would be to the rear. Consolidating the parking would also help to alleviate some of the congestion.

Mr. Daubert asked the zoning for the property. Mr. Hess indicated it was Planned Commercial and R-4.

Mr. Humphrey asked if there would be enough room to expand the pool. Mr. O'Donnell indicated it appeared that there would be enough land, but that was really an issue for the Centre Region Council of Governments. Members discussed the areas available for expansion, one of which included the existing parking lot. If the pool expanded toward the hill, there would be less room for people to sit. It was noted that an expansion would take away some features of the pool.

Ms. Goreham asked if the new high school would accommodate a greater population. Mr. Popovich indicated it would not. Mr. Daubert said national studies have shown that graduating class sizes should be no more than 300 students. Ms. Werner indicated that that would require more than one additional school be built to accommodate the high school students. One of the things they hope to accomplish by combining the two schools is to create a sense of unity among the students. If a second high school were established, there would be a much stronger division among the students. Ms. Best indicated a small school initiative was established to address problems such as violence and the high drop-out rate. To do this, students need to feel that they belong to the school. A committee has been established to work on the "small school approach." The design of the building and the classrooms will address smaller groups of students and student mentoring.

Mr. McCarl asked about the second level gymnasium and swimming pool. Ms. Queeney indicated they would remain. Mr. O'Donnell explained the auditorium and cafeteria would be new.

Mr. Daubert asked about the band room. Mr. O'Donnell said the musical wing has been moved to the back of the building. It will tie in with the bus area and the practice area.

Mr. Daubert noted the plans called for two new gymnasiums. Mr. O'Donnell confirmed that there would be two gymnasiums constructed on the second level that would include a fitness center. These two gymnasiums would replace those lost when the South Building is demolished.

Mr. Welch asked if the new library would be as large or larger than the sum of the two libraries. Mr. Witt stated that it would be about equal.

Mr. Hess asked the time frame for the project. Mr. O'Donnell stated they hoped to complete the design phase by the Fall of 2006. The construction would occur in a 3-year phased operation. Mr. Welch noted the Fall of 2007 would be the 50th anniversary of the North Building.

Ms. Goreham asked how much area would be added with the construction. Mr. O'Donnell said it would be about 10 percent increase in area.

Mr. Welch asked the number of seats proposed for the new auditorium. Mr. O'Donnell indicated the existing auditorium included 800 seats; the proposed auditorium would seat 1,300. There would be areas on the second level that could be converted to instructional areas. Mr. McCarl asked where he would park if attending a play. Mr. O'Donnell said he would park in the main lot along Westerly Parkway. The same would be true for a sporting event.

Mr. McCarl asked if a tunnel was considered for pedestrian traffic crossing Westerly Parkway. Mr. O'Donnell indicated there were too many utilities located in the right-of-way for that to be feasible.

Mr. Daubert asked if the driver training site would remain. Ms. DuBois indicated there would be no change; there would be a slight modification because of O'Bryan Lane connecting through to the back of the school.

Mr. Daubert asked if a light would be needed at the O'Bryan/Westerly intersection. Ms. DuBois noted that a traffic impact study would need to be done that would address that concern. He noted that the cost for installing that light would need to be paid for by the School District. One board member indicated that traffic problems should be the responsibility of the municipality. The School Board will take care of the buildings but the streets should be the responsibility of the city. He encouraged Council to consider this project a collaborative effort.

Mr. McCarl noted that one of the reasons the upgrade is needed is because of the different needs now compared to those in schools 10 to 15 years ago. He asked what kinds of changes would be incorporated into the redesign. Mr. Popovich noted the focus was on three main issues: the changing education needs, the problems associated with the road crossing, and that the building was 50 years old and needed some physical work. All these drove the need for the project. Ms. Best added that a flexible space for the Career and Technical Center (CTC) required drastic changes. This is the time to shift from standing alone computing to computers in the classroom. There are 14 labs now and she hoped to reduce that to build more computers into the classrooms.

It was observed that the construction to be built above the grade to the rear of the north building would present a new view for the community. Mr. Krasnopolski indicated the height of that part of the building would be 16 to 18 feet above ground level, similar to a single-story facility.

Mr. Welch noted the only negative aspect is that staff parking will remove some of the green space along Atherton Street. He encouraged the designers to try and keep the sense of green lawns in that area. Mr. O'Donnell agreed that green space would be taken but felt it was better to put the parking along the main road rather than closer to the residential neighborhood.

Mr. Meyer noted that Council has discussed the problems associated with speeders along Atherton Street. One concept was to install a light at Hamilton Avenue. He asked if that were done, could the plans be rearranged to create an access point from Hamilton rather than Logan Avenue. Mr. O'Donnell noted there would be several ways to connect to Hamilton Avenue. His concern would be the direct connection from Westerly Parkway and Atherton Street, and resulting cut-through traffic.

Mr. Daubert and Ms. Werner thanked everyone for coming. Ms. Werner urged Council to keep the School Board informed of their concerns.

There being no further discussion, the School Board adjourned, and Council adjourned to an executive session at 7:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Cynthia S. Hanscom  
Assistant Borough Secretary