

Submitted on Thursday, January 11, 2018 - 10:19

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Message:

I attended the January 10, 2018 Open House at central High School and, frankly, was left with more questions than answers. I understand a schematic is a work in progress, but, since this one is to be voted on in less than two weeks, the confusion evident last night is very concerning. For example:

1. I asked if the parking lot(s) would feature permeable pavement. One person said they didn't know, another said "no." No one could/would answer why not.
2. I asked about drainage. One person said there would be a retention pond (a truly alarming thought on a school campus) and another said there would be underground storage of storm water. No one could assure me that the current drainage issue which sees water from the northwest corner of the school property flow north across Church Street, down the hill to Hill Street and then into my back yard on Washington Street would be resolved.
3. No one could answer why the pipes in the Burnham property had not been drained (or the heat left on) prior to the onset of bitter temperatures, resulting in broken pipes and flooding before salvage operations, if any, could take place.
4. No one could answer the specifics of plans for lighting the athletic fields and whether those lights would affect nocturnal wildlife common in the neighborhood.
5. Conflicting information was offered as to the extent and kind of fencing that would surround the athletic fields.
6. Conflicting information was offered as to whether the sidewalk shown between the softball and soccer fields would be open to the public or whether it would be behind a fence when events were not taking place. Given that Lynn Street is being taken from the neighborhood it would be nice to maintain pedestrian access. If not, there will likely be an increase in students cutting through private property which has been an increasing problem..
7. No firm answer could be given as to the question of the safety of students crossing Church Street to the athletic fields given that the overhead walkway now seems to be off the table.
8. No firm answer could be given as to whether construction traffic, and then permanent traffic, to the Hill Street entrance to the athletic fields might negatively impact the brick pavement on Hill Street.
9. School personnel seemed unaware about the hit and miss nature of snow removal from sidewalks bordering properties acquired by Unit 4 for this project.
10. One representative of the design team was under the impression "a little tuckpointing" could allow the existing retaining wall on the north side of the former "Y" property to remain. The wall has deteriorated to the point that bricks regularly end up on the adjoining sidewalk and can easily be removed from the wall by school children walking by.
11. As regards nearby properties, the schematic includes a property at the southwest corner of Church and Elm that was torn down many months ago. On a more positive note the error on the schematic labeling Elm Street on the west side of West Side Park as Lynn Street has been corrected. Although a vehicle is still shown headed the wrong way on Church Street on one drawing. That may seem like nitpicking, and maybe it is, but errors and omissions of the nature noted in this point do not inspire confidence.

Again, I recognize that the overall site plan can be a work in progress.

But, I really was hoping for some answers for the neighborhood before this is voted on on January 22. The lack of detail is one thing. Conflicting information is another matter entirely and did not reflect well on the organization of this project.

And, for the record, I voted for the referendum the second and third time. But, for those who have been critical of friends and neighbors for raising issues "late in the game", I submit that it was impossible to know details since they are still changing.