

**Stow School Building Committee**  
**A Brief History of Key Events**  
September 10, 2003

May 13, 2002

Creation of the School Building Committee (SBC) was approved by voters at the May 2002 Annual Town Meeting. The warrant article stated that the SBC would have five members and that it would be "...appointed and controlled by the Stow Board of Selectmen and the Nashoba Regional School District Committee... The same warrant article also provided the sum of \$125,000 "...for the purpose of conducting a building needs analysis and feasibility study, preparing a long range school plan and educational specification, and for developing the conceptual design drawings and project cost estimates for the remodeling, reconstruction, expansion or making of extraordinary repairs to the Center and Pompositticut schools, and for costs incidental and related thereto..." The article also stated that the SBC "shall be responsible for selecting the project consultants and shall direct the work of the consultants..."

June 19, 2002

The original five members of the SBC were appointed during a joint meeting of the Stow Selectmen and a representative of the School Committee. The members were appointed "...for a term to last until the feasibility project is completed." Three associate (non-voting) members were appointed at the same meeting.

July 8, 2002

The SBC prepared an RFP for the feasibility study; advertised project in *Central Register*; and arranged school tours for prospective vendors.

Aug. 3-6, 2002

Reviewed nineteen proposals independently.

Aug. 9, 2002

Met to summarize scores and identify top three vendors.

Aug. 26, 2002

Reviewed reference checks; discussed interview criteria.

Sept. 9, 2002

Interviewed top three vendors; selected The Design Partnership of Cambridge (TDPC)

Sept. 25, 2002

First meeting with TDPC; reviewed work plan; noted deadline of Dec. 1, 2002 for preliminary submission to SBAB (School Building Assistance Bureau); agreed to meet with TDPC every other Monday through year-end.

Oct. 7, 2002

Received preliminary birth/enrollment projections from TDPC and summary of comments from staff interviews at Pompo and Center.

Mid-October, 2002

Signed contract with TDPC for feasibility study (\$75K).

Oct. 21, 2002

Received final birth/enrollment projections (650 students in ten years); buildings have been inspected; discussed timing of town meetings to seek approval for detailed design plans and final bonding; received determination that Pompo deed does not preclude use of building for other purposes; i.e., non-education OK.

Nov. 4, 2002

Received second enrollment projection (Rickes Associates): 741 students in ten years. Reviewed site analyses prepared by TDPC and began discussing options (add/reno, new building, etc.).

Nov. 18, 2002

Met with about 25 residents to review SBC activities to date. Received revised enrollment projection of 727. Concern raised about accuracy of projection in light of pending 40B developments. Reviewed five site options and related architectural designs:

Option	Pompo grades	Center grades	Pompo/Center Construction type
1A	PreK-2	3-5	Reno & Add / Reno & Add
2A	Vacated	PreK-5	Vacated / New
3A	PreK-2	3-5	New / Reno & Add
4A	PreK-1	2-5	Reno & Add / Reno & Add
5A	Vacated	PreK-5	Vacated / New

Informed by TDPC that both sites have restrictions that would limit expansion of footprint; Pompo more restricted than Center. Concern expressed re: deciding on a given option without knowing where well needs to be located. Concern expressed re: traffic impact. TDPC said traffic studies usually not done at this [feasibility] stage. SBC eliminates Options 1A, 2A, and 3A. There is a preference for 4A (but no official vote). Received preliminary cost estimates of each option.

Nov. 25, 2002

Received recommendation from Historical Commission: Stone Bldg. should not be moved, but blacksmith shop can be relocated. Reviewed cost estimates for 4A and 5A. Net cost of each option is about the same (\$16-\$17M). Space projections based on SBAB mid to high specs. Discussed presentation at Special Town Meeting in January; pros and cons of 4A and 5A. Concerns raised again re: well and septic issues.

Dec. 2, 2002

TDPC gave SBC completed feasibility study and reported that abbreviated copy was sent to SBAB on Nov. 27. TDPC found only one other town that had a quantitative projection of 40B impact: Boxboro estimated 0.37 students/household or 2.2 additional students/grade. TDPC states that 40B impact would not be “problematic”. Discussed cost of preliminary traffic study (both options 4A and 5A will affect Rt. 117 traffic). Discussed well at Center and requirements to determine if adequate water supply is available and compatible with proposed site plan. SBC voted to authorize traffic study. Reviewed updated cost projections:

	Center		Pompo		Total		Net Cost
	Sq. Ft.	Cost	Sq. Ft.	Cost	Sq. Ft.	Cost	
Current	24,566	n/a	24,915	n/a	49,481	n/a	n/a
4A	73,806	18,152,566	47,625	10,306,954	121,431	28,459,520	17,237,016
4A (reduced)	68,806	17,193,006	43,625	9,498,328	112,431	26,691,334	15,468,830
5A	112,000	25,877,833	0	0	112,000	25,877,833	15,196,962

TDPC provided comparisons of existing space at Pompo and Center with SBAB recommended space (three levels). [Note: TDPC to verify entries on “Current” line in table.] SBC asked TDPC to provide per square foot costs for other comparable projects. Dec. 11, 2002

Received preliminary traffic study report. Further discussion on water source and septic at Center site; agreed to work with Conservation Commission and DEP. TDPC presented updated construction costs:

	Center		Pompo		Total		Net Cost
	Sq. Ft.	Cost	Sq. Ft.	Cost	Sq. Ft.	Cost	
4A	63,530	13,632,296	44,492	9,636,765	108,022	23,269,061	12,025,867
5A	105,000	21,494,077	0	0	105,000	21,494,077	10,813,206

TDPC distributed comparative per square foot costs as requested at last meeting. Voted unanimously to recommend option 5A at Special Town Meeting. Received estimate of \$450,000 from TDPC for cost of preparing design plans.

Dec. 16, 2002

Discussed steps required to drill test well at Center site. Reviewed draft of Special Town Meeting presentation and plans to educate community in advance. Agreed to present only one option. Received estimate of \$2 to \$4M to build new fire station. [There was talk of using Pompo as a fire station; if so, town would save some of new construction cost.]

Jan. 6, 2003

Met with Capital Planning Committee. Received strong recommendation to look for other land for new school; Center site will not allow long-term expansion and if town is going to build a new school it should have capacity for student population at maximum build-out. Received traffic study. Had long discussion on strategy regarding article for Jan. town meeting: should we request \$450K for design phase or not? Committee voted 3-2 in favor of a new school on an alternate site and resolving the water/septic issues at the Center site [in case there is no alternate site]. Reviewed prices for several other parcels under contract to get idea of land cost (data provided by Board of Assessors). Voted unanimously to revise the town meeting article to request funding for feasibility study of additional parcels and completing water/septic work at Center site.

Held public forum same evening. Chairperson Nancy Fleming summarized activities and plans to-date:

- Recommendation is a new two-story pre K to 5 building behind the present Center school
- Raze Center
- Return Pompo to town
- New building would have a “two school feel” to it
- Plan to request full bonding at May 2003 Annual Town Meeting (ATM) and put project out to bid fall 2003
- At the start we learned that there was no suitable town-owned land for an alternate site
- Discussed enrollment projection and the SBAB requirement for 10-year horizon

- Noted need to provide space for small number of pre K special needs students
- Explained why we need more space now even though there are fewer students than we had in the '70s: educational process has changed, smaller class sizes, etc. Also noted that our plan is well within state guidelines for space requirements.
- We project 748 students in ten years and will need 6 classrooms for each grade (1-5), 7 K classrooms, and 1 pre K room for a total of 38 classrooms. (There are 23 classrooms currently.)
- Reviewed existing conditions and site constraints
- Described planning options considered by the Committee and why we are recommending a new two-story building
- Summarized cost estimates: add/reno both schools (108,000 sq. ft.): \$23.3 million (\$12 million after SBAB reimbursement); new building (105,000 sq. ft.): \$21.5 million (\$10.8 million after SBAB)
- Noted impact of 10-point drop in SBAB rate: net loss of \$2 million
- Stated cost to upgrade both Pompo and Center: \$9.7 million with no additional class space; also, all costs would be paid by town
- Summarized benefits of recommended plan (5A1): less cost than add/reno at both schools, shorter construction time, no phasing, more efficient use of staff, more efficient delivery of services, schools would be clustered, Pompo becomes available for other purposes
- Noted unresolved issues: water, septic, traffic, is this the best place for a new school? If we build elsewhere, would need to buy land with no SBAB help.

#### Jan. 13, 2003

Special Town Meeting: SBC requested additional \$60,000 to resolve water/septic issues at Center, refine project costs, and explore up to three other sites for a new school building. SBC said it would return at May Annual Town Meeting to present findings and recommendations and to request money for design phase and possible land purchase.

#### Jan. 22, 2003

Workshop on School Building Committee Continued Feasibility Study. Attended by representatives of Selectmen, FinCom, Capital Planning, and SBC. Discussion led to seven proposals:

1. Identify parcels of land >20 acres
2. Consult with Judi Barrett who just completed a housing needs study for Stow
3. Determine exactly what the current Pompo and Center sites can support
4. Consult with a Boxboro resident re: his experience with DEP
5. Resolve water/septic issues at Center
6. Determine whether upgrading Pompo and Center to current codes can be phased
7. Articulate a policy for long-term plan to meet municipal needs

#### Jan. 27, 2003

Discussed whether to proceed with site work at Center. Budgeted amounts are: \$60,000 for Notice of Intent, \$1000 for septic determination from DEP, \$9500 to complete test well. Reviewed population projections prepared by SBC member; data showed far fewer students in grades K-5 than studies from TDPC and Rickes Associates. Attended Joint Boards meeting; purpose was to give direction to the SBC. Received input from

members of Planning Board, Capital Planning, and Selectmen. Selectmen Chair summarized five options for SBC to consider:

1. Perform basic repairs to both buildings.
2. Renovate and add to both buildings.
3. Build a new school on an existing site.
4. Build a new school on a new site.
5. Option 1 or 2 above plus purchase land for future school use.

#### Feb. 10, 2003

Kathy Farrell accepted as new Associate Member. Discussion re: asking Bose to gift some of their land to the town. Discussion re: forming a subcommittee to identify alternate sites. This activity may be beyond the SBC's charter; perhaps Master Planning Committee should handle site investigation. Learned that Capital Planning voted to recommend maximum of \$4.5 million for work at Pompo and Center. Reviewed list of Pompo and Center building needs and cost estimates from TDPC.

#### Feb. 24, 2003

Received letter from Capital Planning confirming \$4.5 million cap. Received revised 10-year enrollment projection from Rickes: 712. Determined current capacity of Center and Pompo to be 300 and 308 students respectively.

#### March 10, 2003

TDPC responded to SBC member's enrollment projections. Noted that the member's work assumed linear population growth—no clear evidence to support this. TDPC believes growth in near years will be faster. NOI for access to proposed well site at Center has been submitted. Public hearing with Cons. Comm. set for Mar. 18. Decided to contact Open Space Committee re: other available land. Chairperson asked each member to state their position on what SBC should do.

#### March 24, 2003

Ongoing concern re: proceeding with well work at Center: potential environmental impact. SBC voted this matter again and unanimously agreed to proceed. TDPC working on back testing data for their enrollment projections; to be ready Mar. 31. Learned that school district wants to restrict work at Pompo and Center to projects involving health and safety. Identified key points to discuss during Joint Boards meeting on Mar. 25.

#### April 2, 2003

Received info on land from Open Space; eleven parcels identified. TDPC reported that DEP would consider Hale, Center, and fire station sites as contiguous for wastewater treatment calculation. Preliminary data show total just over 10,000 gal/day.

#### April 7, 2003

Completed review of lists of work proposed at Center and Pompo. Voted unanimously to request an amount not to exceed \$1,726,075 in warrant article for May, 2003 Annual Town Meeting. TDPC trying to meet with DEP on need for wastewater treatment facility at Center.

#### April 14, 2003

Revised work list to \$1,527,000.

April 24, 2003

Reviewed outline of Town Meeting presentation.

April 28, 2003

Met with Malcolm Fitzpatrick re: citizen's petition on land-taking. SBC moved to approve spending up to \$6400 for more detailed estimates of cost of work at Pompo and Center; passed unanimously. TDPC presented wastewater calculations showing that expected output at Center is well under the threshold. SBC agreed to defer well work at Center until DEP has reviewed and accepted TDPC's estimates. Still no back testing data from Rickes as requested; SBC asked TDPC to prepare same.

May 5, 2003

TDPC reported on revised cost estimate for Pompo and Center work: \$549,136 (excludes paving, intercom, and portable classrooms). Voted \$13K for intercom bringing total to \$562,136. Voted to accept TDPC as project architect for Pompo/Center work. Capital Planning Committee updated re: new estimate.

May 12, 2003

TDPC will prepare a timeline for Pompo/Center work. Discussed need for paid project manager. Total cost now at \$608,336 to include manager. Voted unanimously to approve \$610,000.

May 19, 2003

Approved last-minute revisions to cost estimate just prior to Town Meeting. Total now \$594,177. Voted unanimously to request \$595,000.

June 23, 2003

No response from DEP on wastewater calculations for Center site. TDPC presented their back testing data. SBC voted unanimously to recommend that Selectmen pursue acquisition of Habitech parcel. Chairperson announced her intention to resign. TDPC presented summary of feasibility budget and corrected cost estimate sheets for Pompo/Center.

July 14, 2003

TDPC heard from DEP; requested a modification in calculations of wastewater total. TDPC presented same at this meeting. Chairperson distributed summary of expenses to date. SBC confirmed that Center site was not first choice for a new school because future expansion would be limited, we would lose athletic fields, the existing school would need to be razed, and there are ongoing concerns about water and septic capabilities. SBC decided not to apply for a variance on wastewater matter and incur additional expense related to Center. Instead, SBC confirmed need to identify and explore alternate locations that would provide a building site more in line with the town's long-range need.

Aug. 11, 2003

Met with Greg Jones of Board of Selectmen re: possible "cohabitation" on O'Grady site. Voted unanimously to arrange site evaluation by TDPC. Evaluation to include entire parcel, included area designated for "Active Adult Neighborhood". Greg Jones told SBC to consider two 500-student schools: one at Center and one at new site.