

Considerations for Orleans Elementary School in the Fire Station Feasibility Study

Elaine Pender, Principal OES

Submitted to Orleans School Committee January 24, 2022

- Traffic Impact and Access Study to include evaluation and design of Intelligent Transportation Systems infrastructure to improve safety, mobility, and sustainability. (parking and circulation study)
- Planning Studies & Design of Infrastructure to Improve the Safety & Accessibility of Walking & Biking to School
- Outcomes as a result of the study-
 - Sidewalk from Eldredge Park Road to the Field Entrance
 - Repair cracks in the cement under the Portico
 - Improve Handicap Accessibility (parking and sidewalk)
 - Widen the School driveway from Eldredge Park Road
 - Reconfigure the front loop to accommodate two drop off and pick up areas for both busses and cars
 - Reconfigure parking lot to accommodate school, tennis courts, and the Fire Department
 - Increase lighting in the parking lot
 - Create a secondary means of exit from the school property for arrival and dismissal or for bus use
 - Create sidewalks and walking paths between the Fire Station and the School
 - Create a space for a bike rack
 - Clear signage (directions, safety, and informational)
 - Landscape area between the Fire Department and the School to include mature trees and plantings for privacy.
 - Create direct access from the fire department to the school
- Preserve as much of the native plantings horticulture as possible
- Repave walkways around the entire circumference of the school
- For Consideration to benefit the School and Community

- Relocate the Tennis Courts and install an obstacle course for students and a multigenerational fitness circuit for the community (Outdoor Health and Fitness)
- Install a walking path around the perimeter of the property for school and community walking programs
- Design walking and biking pathways between OES, Fire Station, Boland Pond, NRMS, and the Library
- Public Restrooms and hydration station
- Sponsor installation of Outdoor Classrooms
- Sponsor installation of a Natural Playground
- Sponsor installation of a Natural Presentation area with bench seating

CONTINUED DISCUSSION ON PRELIMINARY CONCEPT FOR FIRE STATION EXPANSION

-Questions Posed by the Orleans School Committee and Answers Provided by Town Officials-

Q: Looking back on page 5 of the presentation from January 12th provided to the Committee, “the town will look at municipal properties in a parallel track”. Will municipal properties be included as candidates in the two simulated models?

A: It was originally thought that the Middle School property would be an option, but now we are looking at three sites, which would include ultimately the Orleans Elementary School property and two other sites if we are fortunate enough to get any solicitation from the public or private land owners. In the RFQ for the designers conducting the study, we are asking them to work with us as we go out and solicit for private property. The goal would be three properties total (Elementary property and two other private sites).

Q: By allowing OES property to be included in the feasibility study, can you almost guarantee it will be one of the simulated models?

A: Yes

Q: Will you allow input from School Committee before it’s a “done deal”?

A: Yes; we want the Committee’s participation.

Q: Does OES have any veto power over the design?

A: Yes

Q: Looking at page 9; Single Multipurpose Driveway: What guarantees are there that the town can get the land for the second driveway?

A: At this time, there is no guarantee.

Q: Looking at page 10; Concept of Dual Driveways: Who would own the existing driveway that abuts the Nauset Regional Middle School Property, and would that be used by OES?

A: The driveway (exists right now) would be for the business operations of the fire station, and would be used by OES.

Q: What would the driveway connected to the proposed fire station be used for?

A: The driveway connected to the proposed fire station would be the emergency egress for fire station vehicles.

Q: would the FD have the right to cut off access at any time in the future to that driveway that OES will use, and will that be something that we need to incorporate into our stipulations (IMA – Inter Municipal Agreement)?

A: Yes, you would include that into the IMA in writing.

Q: Who would own the land that the additional parking is on in front of the tennis courts?

A: During study, we would define those areas; looking at the photo on page 10, the existing parking lot below the tennis courts would be OES property; anything south of that would be fire station property, but you would want to include this in the IMA that OES would have access to the parking area.

Q: Please explain the statement on page 12 “Enhanced access to the Fire Department during emergencies”.

A: Fire department operations always want a second means of egress in an emergency. Looking at the photo on page 9, in an emergency situation, they would enter through their driveway, and be able to exit via OES driveway. We will need to wait to see the final configuration before that is decided, and the Orleans School Committee would have an active role in that.

Q: Page 13 “Expedited connection to the town’s sewer system” – please explain.

A: Due to the increased size of the station and compliance with DEP regulations, we would have to increase the septic system (IA - Innovative Alternative design system), and would need a tight tank to drain garage space waste from truck run off which is not allowed in a septic system. The vision would be to have gravity system go out to Route 6A rather than putting in a pump station, which would save money and be better for the environment as a whole, and there is a possibility that the Middle School could come over to this connection in the future.

Q: Looking at the photo on page 10, is that a picture of what the station would look like in the end, or is it a picture that has the entrance for construction?

A: This would be if the town was able to secure the purchase of the land from the abutter.

Q: If that does not possible then it becomes the photo on page 9?

A: Yes. The abutter is still engaged in hearing about the project and what the town will offer him.

Q: Aren’t there safety issues with that particular design on page 9, where the fire dept is using the left hand side of it and potentially OES parents are coming into the right hand side?

A: We will need to get a traffic study engineer involved to determine this.

Q: Will there be a barrier between fire station and the school (i.e. bushes) so we don’t lose character of the school?

A: We would hope we can put in trees to buffer the property. A design team will be important in this process.

Q: What is the current size of the fire station, and what is the size of the proposed station?

A: Current size of the station is 11,000 square feet; proposed size is 22,000 square feet. The designers will be able to give further details once the process begins.

Q: If they don't demolish the existing fire station until the new one is complete, how are the big vehicles and equipment access the new site?

A: We would need to convert an easement by the fire station from general construction traffic to the temp/permanent way for the fire department to come in and out, and eventually that would go away once they remove the old building, but we do not have an agreement with the abutter yet.

Q: Wouldn't the study committee ultimately be the ones to answer these questions?

A: Yes, but the fire chief and facilities director both are on the Study Committee, and the Study Committee would like to have a representative from the School Committee either as a liaison or attend the meetings. The Study Committee works under a charge created by the Select Board, but at this point the School Committee would set the parameters (concerns with respect to a feasibility study involving property under town jurisdiction and control). Right now we are looking at ideas to formulate what would be the basis of an agreement to go forward and those steps. The Feasibility Study Committee would work with architect design firm to put ideas on the table to see what works and have further meetings with the school committee to be sure we are all in agreement.

Q: The information given and pictures so far that have been presented to the school committee is not the realistic mock-up of what it will truly look like? Are there any rules or laws pertaining to distance of an emergency facility being close to a school?

A: Yes, correct, this is not a true picture of what it will actually look like; these are just beginning ideas of the facility and property. If you look at the Town of Chatham's fire station, they are about 95 feet from the school.

Q: Should the elementary school need to be replaced in the future, and we have 23 acres of land, is there usable land on Orleans Elementary School property to do so?

A: North of the ball fields there is a slope to Boland Pond; you'd most likely build the new school on the ball fields, and then fields would be moved.

Q/Comment: Why do we need a new fire building that is 30 years old, whereas the school is 70 years old? Are we building municipal buildings to last 30 years? Lastly, we should be looking at why the current fire station building can't be renovated, as if we put in a two-story building close to the school the campus will be completely changed. We should be also looking at other municipal properties rather than just the elementary school.

Comment: Elaine Pender submitted a lengthy list of Considerations for OES in the Fire Station Feasibility Study (see document). This document would be incorporated into the agreement for the feasibility study.

Q: When we get to point of making motion, do we refer to a list that we have for considerations?

A: Add a date the list so there is a reference included in a motion (identify the items discussed by the committee as outlined by...) and that becomes part of motion.

Q: If we do make the decision to be a part of the study, does the study come back to the School Committee to say yea or nay, or is it sent to the town to vote on? What is the process?

A: Study will identify three properties to discuss (Orleans has looked at everything they currently own, and there is not a lot of vacant land that would work and also meet response times the fire department needs);

Select Board would like interim report in August that they've identified properties for further study; study contemplates series of evaluations, and then two of the three sites would be selected to go to the next step which would be to put together a mock design of how it might work. Orleans School Committee will absolutely be involved with anything that has to do with the Orleans Elementary School property. Right now the Town is only asking that the School Committee agrees to include the site in the study, and as far as the outcome; the Committee needs to be happy with the study. If the School Committee does not like the outcome, then the School Committee does not take the following step to look at a design.