

April 2, 1987

5:30 P.M.

A special meeting of the Wallingford Town Council was held on Thursday, April 2, 1987, called to order by Chairman Gessert at 5:37 p.m. Answering present to the roll called by Susan Baron were Councilmembers Adams, Gouveia, Holmes, Killen, Papale, Polanski, Rys, and Gessert. Mrs. Bergamini was not present for the meeting. Also present was Mayor William W. Dickinson, Jr.

Discussion on the Parker Farms School Renovation, requested by Mr. Musso, 56 Dibble Edge Road, Wallingford, Ct.

Mr. Musso began by thanking the Councilmembers for attending the meeting. He added that he thought it was a poor decision by the school officials to renovate the Parker Farms School. It started out being a \$1 million dollar project and has jumped to almost \$3 million. It is going to be like having a \$3 million dollar albatross hanging around our neck. I stated right from the beginning that they should add on to the Yalesville School, but they seem to have something against Yalesville School. Since they have started that, there have been all kinds of developments on the west, north and east side of route 68, which is where all of the students are going to be coming from. The reason you should put additions there is because you should have neighborhood schools. The big savings is the future bus costs. Almost everyone will have to be bused to Parker Farms School. There isn't going to be much of a savings now between added additions and renovating Parker Farms School. In the future, there is going to be big savings in the busing costs and you will preserve the neighborhood schools.

Mr. Gessert asked what percentage of the kids at Parker Farms School are going to be bused?

Ms. Corinne Sommo, a member of the building committee explained that the 200 children that will be coming from Yalesville School will have to be bused, just like the 200 children who would have attended Parker Farms School are being bused to other schools. Those 200 students that will be returning to Parker Farms School will be walkers.

Mr. Gessert explained that we will be busing the same number of kids either way.

Mr. Musso added that he does not believe those figures. The ones that are going into the development on the west side will be walkers to the Highland School, the ones on the north side of Parker Farms Road will be able to go to the Highland School addition or the Yalesville School addition and the ones on the east side will be able to go to Rock Hill School although, some of them will have to be bused because that is far away from any of the schools. When I reviewed this plan, I was told that there were going to be 21 classrooms at the Parker Farms School. 21 classrooms with additions would cost \$1.5 million dollars, where they are proposing, it will be \$3 million dollars. At Parker Farms School, they have a square footage of 38,000 square feet and we are only going to need 15,000 square feet. So, we have a double size school which we really don't need. The Yalesville School has 12 classrooms and by adding on to that you are not going to lose 12 classrooms, so you are only going to need 9. So, 9 classrooms would only cost 1/3 of the \$1.5 million dollars which would be \$500,000.00. Neighborhood schools would be near the children and you would save on busing. Modular classrooms are a good idea and Cheshire is using them now, and they could be available for this coming year, if that is the route you would like to take. It would save a lot of money in building, the classrooms would be there when you need them, it would save on buses and it would preserve the neighborhood schools. There are other options and the Parker Farms option is a poor option.

Mr. Rys commented that when he mentioned modular classrooms, this was something that could be utilized in future programs. He suggested that Mr. Musso should go down to the Board of Education Administrative Offices and ask for the distribution sheet for the students throughout the elementary schools throughout the Town of Wallingford because most of the schools, with the addition of Parker Farms to the system would be pretty close to capacity. The only school that is not going to be close to capacity is the Highland Elementary School, where the Superintendent of Schools has indicated that he was going to have that at

approximately 75%, just for the anticipating growth on the west side of town. I do believe in the modular process, but I am looking more towards the future not for an immediate solution because right now, we are about half way through the Parker Farms project.

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Mr. Musso added that the modular classrooms have lasted 20 years in Cheshire.

Mr. Rys explained that modular classrooms are just walls placed on a platform which are mounted on top of cement blocks, you have to build some sort of a foundation. Rock School and Highland School were kind of added on piece by piece by piece so in both locations what we have is California style.

Mr. Musso added that he would like to see additions put on the schools that are going to have the greatest amount of increase, drop the Parker Farms School immediately.

Mrs. Papale asked Mr. Devine, if the project was dropped right now, how much will the Town of Wallingford lose.

Mr. Devine stated that to date, they have spent about \$500,000.00 and have comitted to about \$1.9 million dollars in Contracts. The work that is in progress will probably come in at another \$200,000.00.

Mr. Musso added that he believes that the taxpayers of Wallingford will be saving a lot more money than he first thought.

Mr. Devine gave Mr. Musso a budget report and suggested that he review it.

Mr. Gessert added that we know that we are committed to an Architect for his work, a Construction Manager, a new roof that has been put on the building and there is more work going on inside so, that figure of \$1.25 million dollars is probably an accurate figure at this point in the ballgame. Some of that work has been contracted and done and they haven't gotten the bill yet, so they haven't written the check yet but they owe them for the work.

Mr. Musso commented that Judd Square Associates said that they can be re-negotiated and you would have to settle for the profit that they would have made on the deal.

Mr. Gessert added that you have to pay them for the work that is already done.

Mrs. Papale commented that Mr. Musso's comments are well taken and she knows that he is sincere but, she feels that we are already too far involved.

Mr. Musso said that he believes that they should just call this a bad investment or poor decision.

Mrs. Papale added that they went through a lot of meetings and spent a lot of time on this and it was with our o.k. No-one expected it to cost this much. The Committee never even thought it would cost this much but, this is what happens when you get involved in a building and I feel that we are too far involved in it.

Mr. Musso did not agree and added that you can always turn around. He added that he would like the Council to think about this.

Mr. Adams asked Mr. Musso if he had a figure for the addition of the 9 modular classrooms and Mr. Musso stated that it was \$100.00 a square foot for new construction, so that will come out to about \$73,000.00 X 9.

Mr. Adams pointed out that this is much more than \$500,000.00 and asked Mr. Musso if he could guarantee that that would be the price of the classrooms. These are the figures that the Building Committee was committed too also. As far as guaranteeing these figures, I don't think there is any Contractor that will do that. You have to take into consideration, now that Parker Farms School is being totally renovated, there was a big problem as far as insulation was concerned which is still a factor at the Yalesville School. In the long run, you have to take into consideration that this new school is going to be energy efficient, whereas now, we have 12 classrooms at the Yalesville School that are not very well insulated. If you are going to look at expenditures down the road, you have to take into consideration, the amount of money that is going to be saved with a completely new school that is energy efficient. The location of the Yalesville School is also on a busy highway and I think the safety factor of that School is something to

be concerned with whereas Parker Farms School is situated in a much safer environment as far as that is concerned. Again, the fact of the guaranteed price, \$73,000.00 was quoted to you but, what does that include? This is a figure that someone gave you. It's not an estimate, not a bid, it's a ballpark figure which of course could be extremely low compared to it. If we did take a chance on something like this here and stopping what we are doing right now, we'll find ourselves in the same situation or probably a worse situation where we are going to be paying a lot more than what this school is going to cost us. That's where I am looking at it from. 222

Mr. Musso explained that he did not ask anyone if they would guarantee it to him and added that Mr. Cooke said that it can be done this way. He added that he called a gentleman from the State of Conn. who is in charge of school facilities and he was told a ballpark figure of \$100.00 a square foot for new construction. Another Architect (Dan Lyons) from

Wallingford and he was told it would cost \$80.00 to \$100.00 a square foot. They are all circling around \$100.00 a square foot.

Mr. Adams pointed out that they are just talking about the building and are not talking about all of the other items that you have to add to a building.

Mr. Devine commented that about 4 years ago when this question of Parker Farms came up, a recommendation was made that Yalesville School be closed and Parker Farms maintained, Mr. Musso spoke out for the closing of Parker Farms and at that time, we would not need any more classroom space.

Mr. Musso stated that when they closed Parker Farms School, they had very good reasons because that school only had 50% enrollment and anything I said about the Yalesville School 4 years ago, I will stand in back of it. I don't feel that we need any extra classrooms now.

Mr. Musso added that in reference to Mr. Adams point on traffic, there has been more accidents at the Parker Farms School than at the Yalesville School.

Mr. Gessert added that we were told by the Board of Education that the heating system in Yalesville is limited. If you look at your proposal of adding rooms, then there are some other things that you are also going to have to do.

Mr. Killen commented that he was under the impression originally that Mr. Musso was suggesting adding on to both the east side and the west side but were not including the Yalesville School. He was surprised that Mr. Musso wanted to keep the Yalesville School and just add on to other schools in addition to that so that would cut down on the number of classrooms that had to be built.

Mr. Musso replied that this is an option that can be followed. He felt that Yalesville would have an increase in enrollment also but, if you want to eliminate Yalesville School, you could put 11 classrooms over at Rock Hill School and 11 at Highland School. If you keep Yalesville School, you only need 9 classrooms.

Mr. Killen added that he likes Mr. Musso idea but does not know if the Board ever went into adding on where the need might be. But, you are here before us asking us to take certain steps and there is no way under the sun that we can tell them to keep the Yalesville School open. That is up to the Board of Education, not the Council.

Mr. Musso commented he would like the Board of Education to listen to him.

Mr. Killen stated that we all have our own opinions but added that the Board of Education is governed by State Statutes and they have certain powers that we have no control over and one of them is deciding to open or close a particular school.

Mr. Holmes commented that from a planning standpoint and a management standpoint the smartest thing to do is what we are doing now and that is rehabilitating the school. If you look at the development that has been going on in the past few years on the west side of town, most of the activity has been generated on Parker Farms side. There has been very little development going on in the Yalesville School area. To not go ahead with Parker Farms and keep Yalesville open, that's where you are faced with the increased transportation costs and increased busing routes. I've always felt that if you can spend money now, up front and do a project right, we are going to save money in the long run.

Mr. Musso did not agree with Mr. Holmes. He added that Parker Farms is 38,000 square feet and we only need 15,000 square feet.

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Mr. Holmes pointed out to Mr. Musso that you have to be concerned with the future. He added that he would be more proud of a school like Parker Farms for the town than the modular classrooms. I think the kids deserve much more than that and the future of the town.

Mr. Musso said that he thinks the children in Cheshire received a good education even though they have modular rooms.

Mr. Adams pointed out that whatever estimates are given on any type of construction, it's an estimate. He added that Mr. Musso has come in with a statement that Judd Associates would be able to build that for \$100.00 a square foot and he is happy to hear that people can be that precise and he added that he will publicly apologize to Mr. Musso when the Robert Earley Renovation is done for exactly \$2.5 million dollars. Sometimes, there are hidden costs and it is very seldom that you can have a building built for exactly what they estimated because, there are other factors that do come about.

Mr. Musso explained that with that \$100.00 a square foot, it includes the price of the Architect.

Mr. Gessert commented that it was his understanding that with the Architect and the rest of the fees that they are talking about, in round figures it is somewhere in the neighborhood of \$68.00 a square foot.

Mr. Killen commented that he does not know the answer and added "Do you want to prepare for the future and get it done that way, or do you want to sit back and see what happens so we can blame everybody else?" He added that he appreciates Mr. Musso coming before the Council and expressing his ideas.

Mr. Gouveia thanked Mr. Musso for bringing his gripes to the Council and said that he should be applauded and he added that in this case, he believes Mr. Musso is marching to the sound of a different drummer. I feel what we are doing at this point, is the right thing.

A motion was made by Mr. Killen to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Holmes.

VOTE: Unanimous ayes with the exception of Mrs. Papale who was not present for the vote; motion duly carried and the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Meeting recorded & transcribed by:
Susan M. Baron, Council Secretary

Approved

David A. Gessert
David A. Gessert, Chairman

4-14-87
Date

Rosemary A. Rascati
Rosemary A. Rascati, Town Clerk

4-14-87
Date