

Commissioner George M. Anzuoni  
Response in Writing

High School Project responses are shown in red.

At the last meeting of the Revere Housing Authority Board (the "Board"), the Mayor and the Owners Project Manager (collectively, "OPM") appeared before the Board for the first time to notify the Board that they are considering certain state properties on Constitution Avenue and Cooledge Street ("RHA Properties") as a possible site for a new high school. This property is comprised of 286 units under the Chapter 200, Veterans Gold Star Mothers, of which 154 units are being affected.

After the Board questioned OPM in detail, it became quite apparent that out of the three remaining sites, the RHA Properties were number one on the list. OPM also mentioned that the City of Revere (the "City") would provide replacement housing for Revere Housing Authority ("RHA") residents at either the Beachmont station parking lot or Wonderland Dog Track sites ("Replacement Housing"). Of note, the Replacement Housing may not be as desirable as a location, nor equivalent in land area or structural square footage to the existing RHA Properties.

The Board was informed that Wonderland would be used as a site for the new middle school in the future. A central location was stated as the reason for the use of the RHA property. It would seem that the location of the middle school at Wonderland would involve the attendance of a younger student population than a high school, where the age of attendance is older. Further, the location of a new high school at the Wonderland site is more centrally located than the RHA because it is located more within the boundaries of the City. OPM further stated that the School Building Committee, which was established by the City/School Department, has not made a decision yet. *High School Project Response: There are currently no plans for a Middle School development at the Wonderland site. The Building Committee has considered the Existing High School site as a potential future location of a Middle School in the event that a new High School is built in one of the two off-site locations under consideration. This would help alleviate over-crowding at the existing Elementary Schools and best suit the School District's long-term needs. It is anticipated that by the time a future Middle School project is underway (after closeout of the High School project), the Wonderland site will already have been developed.*

In an article that appeared on the front page of the Revere Journal within the last couple of weeks, however, the author stated that the Building Committee is assessing a proposal to choose the RHA Properties as the site for the new school. The status of this proposal is rather surprising to this Board member given that it seems to have progressed quickly after the last Board meeting. As disclosed to this Board previously, one of our Board members is also a member of the School Building Committee.

As a Board, we appreciate our initial involvement in this process at last month's meeting. There, however, are a number of areas which have not been addressed, such as the outline and the complete plan of what the future holds for both the RHA and its highly respected residents, for whom we are responsible as a Board.

*High School Project Response: Although the Revere Journal did not interview any members of the current High School project team it is likely that they have followed Building Committee meetings to inform their coverage of the Project. These efforts are appreciated and help keep this major Project in the forefront for all members of the Revere community. As The Journal likely heard via Building Committee or other public meetings the Building Committee's task, per the Massachusetts School Building Authority's process, is to diligently consider all options related to the new High School in order to select the most educationally appropriate and cost effective solution for the City. The concept of locating a new High*

School at a location other than the existing one, including the Revere Housing Authority site, has been under consideration since the inception of this current Project. The current Project team remains to be equally pursuing development of options at the Existing High School, Wonderland, and Housing Authority sites. The outreach to the Revere Housing Authority followed the initial Project “Preliminary Design Program” report phase where it was determined those three noted sites are the only ones in the City where further study should be focused. To truly determine how the Revere Housing Authority site might be able to both house a new High School plus provide new modernized housing for current residents (whether on-site and/or at newly developed sites in the City), the City and Revere Housing Authority must work cooperatively in the coming months, in parallel with the development of High School options at the Existing High School and Wonderland sites.

While previous outreach to the RHA has noted the Beachmont MBTA lot and Wonderland as possible locations for new off-site housing, two new sites that are under City control (and would not require the time and expense of land acquisition) have since been identified as potential locations and are being considered for a portion of the relocated housing: the Central Avenue municipal parking lot and the former McKinley School. While it remains the City and Project’s objective to provide the maximum amount of replacement housing on the current RHA site, the density of replacement housing units can be less in the event that other new sites are developed and some residents move into those locations. The City and Project understand that these ideas must be further developed through close coordination with the Revere Housing Authority.

**The Project is requesting that representatives of the Revere Housing Authority meet with representatives from the City and High School Project to more rapidly progress the concept. We propose scheduling meetings between representatives of the Housing Authority, the City and the Project team beginning next week (October 12-15) to discuss these questions and the next steps in the process.** These meetings are proposed to include discussions with Housing Authorities in neighboring municipalities (East Boston and Chelsea) to discuss their recent and ongoing experiences with similar housing redevelopment projects in those nearby communities. While the City can provide guidance, backing and support for this process, and the High School Project team can vet locations and configurations for replacement housing, the Revere Housing Authority needs to be an integral leader in advancing any redevelopment concept at the RHA site. **While information from these working meetings would flow to the monthly RHA Board Meetings, in the interests of time the City and Project would request that RHA representatives including the Executive Director and Board Chairperson meet with the City and Project team in the coming weeks prior to the next RHA Board meeting to better prepare a comprehensive update for the Board.**

Please note that RHA’s mission statement is to provide “good, clean, safe, decent housing” for its residents. There are unanswered questions that have not been fully addressed: *High School Project Response: Detailed information related to this question, and some of the following ones, can be found in the first major milestone report produced by the High School Project Team. This document is referred to as the Preliminary Design Program (“PDP”) and contains detailed summaries of all Project parameters, processes, and decisions. A link to the full document is available below. General responses will be provided to these questions, with references to the appropriate section of the PDP report as needed.*

Link to Project website:

<https://reverehighschool.zenfolio.com/>

Link to entire PDP report:

<https://4.files.edl.io/e007/08/30/21/160057-7c38ab18-2d17-4463-bbf1-bc5227dc4c52.pdf>

What process and criteria did the Building Committee utilize to narrow down the list of potential building sites? What outside circumstances did they take into consideration for example, the

effects on the men, women, and children that are residents in these units? *High School Project Response: Summaries of the options studied by the Project can be found in PDP section 3.1.6 Preliminary Evaluation of Alternatives. As noted above, the High School Feasibility Study RFP's contained the need to study the Existing High School site plus the RHA and Wonderland sites. During the initial study phases, a number of other sites were explored with the Building Committee and its Site Selection Sub-Committee. One undeveloped site (Caddy Farms in North Revere) and a number of privately owned sites which would require eminent domain (Furlong Drive area, Squire Road Stop & Shop area, McKinley School area) were studied and systematically eliminated from further consideration based on a number of parameters presented to the Committees. The PDP phase culminated in Building Committee meetings on June 17, 2021 to present the final options including schedules and costs and a subsequent meeting was held on June 24, 2021 to rank the options based on scoring categories that had been established by the Building Committee in the prior months. Minutes/presentations for these meetings are available via the website. The Project's outreach to the RHA began following these decisions, in July and August.*

*All Building Committee Meeting Agendas, Minutes and Presentations*

*<http://reverema.ig2.com/Citizens/Calendar.aspx>*

*June 17, 2021 Building Committee – Options Presentation*

*<http://reverema.ig2.com/Citizens/FileOpen.aspx?Type=1&ID=1645&Inline=True>*

*June 24, 2021 Building Committee – Final Options Scorecard (Options for further study highlighted in green)*

*<http://reverema.ig2.com/Citizens/FileOpen.aspx?Type=1&ID=1650&Inline=True>*

*The Project Team would like to stress that the only way the RHA site concept can be moved forward is with the support of the RHA. While all sites under consideration will impact the Community at large, and their respective neighborhoods, it is understood that the RHA site contains added complexity and coordination. Despite the challenges, the potential benefits of a High School Project being the catalyst for a generational modernization of the Revere Housing Authority site are numerous. With proper teamwork the Project Team believes there is the opportunity for both the Revere Public School System and the Revere Housing Authority to be in better positions to deliver on their respective missions for generations to come. If a High School Project at the existing RHA site is able to provide a new High School plus allow the City and RHA to deliver modern replacement housing on a redeveloped site with enhanced amenities for both the School and Residents, the long-term upside for all parties is significant. As noted above, current Project study shows that to achieve this without creating dramatically increased density requires some amount of units to be moved into new housing at other City sites, especially at the outset of the housing redevelopment process to allow High School construction to begin. This detail in particular is one that the Project would like to work with RHA representatives and the Board to develop.*

1. How did the RHA Properties become an option? Who recommended it? *High School Project Response: This site option (plus the Existing High School and Wonderland sites) was included as requiring detailed study in the City's request for OPM and Design Team services.*
2. Has a feasibility study been completed, or will a feasibility study be completed, for each of the three proposal sites? Will the RHA be privy to any feasibility studies at the time of the publication? *High School Project Response: The High School Project Feasibility Study is ongoing. The next major step the Building Committee must make is selection of the "Preferred Option", which represents a specific building and landscape configuration on a specific site. Currently the*

*Existing High School site, Wonderland and the RHA site all remain as options. The Preferred Option must be identified in the coming months, which has been the catalyst for the Project's outreach to partner with the RHA to determine the viability of the RHA site options. After selection of the Preferred Option the Feasibility Study will continue into Spring/Summer 2022 with a Schematic Design phase to advance the chosen option to a more detailed design that can verify a final budget and schedule prior to final approval of the High School project. At that point, the Feasibility Study ends and if passed by the Building Committee and City Council, the Project proceeds into the typical Design Development / Construction Documents / Bid / Build phases.*

3. Once it became an option, what background investigation had been implemented for the purpose of determination that it would be a viable site?
  - (a) was a legal opinion requested from attorney(s) to uncover a procedure that was legally required to be followed to obtain this land by the City?
  - (b) were any state officials or agencies contacted to again uncover what legal procedures that needed to be followed to obtain this property by the City?

If so, what was the response from each official or agency that was contacted by the City, school, or any agent on behalf of the city?

*High School Project Response: The above response makes reference to the PDP phase report and Building Committee activities that investigated this site in tandem with the others under consideration. The Project has not secured any legal opinions about how the RHA site transition would be handled, and the Massachusetts School Building Authority is the only State agency who has been involved and being updated continuously. **The City is proposing that the Project identify and hire legal and development consultants agreeable to RHA who specialize in public housing redevelopment to assist the City, RHA and Project team in identifying a more precise process to support the concept as soon as possible.** The consultants would assist in laying out the legal and schedule-related parameters and work with all parties (including EOHEd) towards the future issuance of a Request for Proposals for Developer services.*

4. What is the proposed procedure that will be put in place in order to purchase the RHA Property? If there is a plan to purchase this land, what is the vehicle that will be utilized to fund the purchase? *High School Project Response: There are no plans to purchase the RHA site. The City and Project Team's current understanding of how a redevelopment process would go is based on the experience of other nearby cities that have gone through such a process (such as Boston and Chelsea): RHA would retain ownership and engage in a partnership with a developer to execute the new housing. It is likely that the land associated with the High School footprint itself would need to be deeded to the City. This is anticipated to be offset by new offsite housing locations and will be investigated more as the concept progresses.*
5. The OPM mentioned at the last meeting in August of 2021 that replacement housing will be built by the City for the residents who will be displaced.
  - (a) Where will the replacement units be built and why this site?
    - i. At what proposed costs?

ii. Are the plans drawn for these units?

iii. How will it be funded? What vehicle would be utilized to fund them?

*High School Project Response: The Project Team has been, and continues to perform "testfit" studies to determine how much housing could be relocated onsite, and how many units might need to move to new housing sites to allow the High School development to fit without creating high-density replacement housing. These details need to be worked out via partnership between the Project Team, City, RHA and EOHED. Without the support of the RHA, any potential configuration of onsite and offsite new housing is simply a concept. The details related to funding will have to be worked out as the developer process is established, but the initial idea is that the process would be funded via the City or a future public/private agreement between the RHA/City and a development partner.*

(b) Since RHA houses are at low or negative income levels, what subsidies will be made available to RHA from the Commonwealth in order to properly house these residents? Please note that our population for the most part is low income and cannot afford "affordable" housing. *High School Project Response: These details would be worked out with the legal and development consultant and ultimately the development partner. Based on the experience of other cities it is anticipated that current capital subsidies to RHA would be passed through to the redevelopment partnership and direct operational subsidies would be converted to Section 8 subsidies. All plans being pursued by the Project Team seek to provide replacement housing for all current residents without a negative impact to subsidies.*

6. One question that was raised by at least two of the Board members is if the Wonderland site had any buildings on it and how would the City obtain this site. The OPM response indicated that there were no buildings on the site and that the City has the legal procedure of eminent domain available to it to obtain the property. OPM also stated that the eminent domain avenue would be a quick turnaround time to obtain this site. There, however, still remain unanswered questions with respect to this option:

(a) What would be the cost to obtain the Wonderland site? Compared to the purchase of the RHA and also the cost of the construction of more replacement housing? *High School Project Response: As noted above there is currently no plan to purchase the RHA site. Site control for the High School would be achieved by the City and RHA working together and determining the correct mix of onsite housing relocation plus the addition of new offsite housing locations. The "cost" for this option, in effect, is the cost to provide appropriate modern replacement housing. The Project is in the process of having an appraisal done of the various parcels that make up Wonderland. As that site is privately owned, it would be acquired via a negotiated purchase or eminent domain.*

(b) As far as the proposed costs of the new high school, what is the estimated cost of construction and furnishing the school? *High School Project Response: Preliminary conceptual construction, fit-out and project costs for viable building options on each of the sites being considered can be found in the PDP Submission and in the link to the presentation above from Jun 17, 2021. The remaining options range in total*

*project cost from \$356m to \$425m. These costs are in the process of being updated during the current phase of the High School Feasibility Study.*

- (c) What is the reimbursement percentage on the new school from the MSBA? Unless there is another funding source for the site acquisition, is it still the MSBA policy not to reimburse the cities and towns for the site acquisition? How will the City purchase and fund this site? *High School Project Response: The MSBA will not participate in reimbursement for land acquisition costs, which is an advantage of the publicly owned sites (Existing High School and RHA) and a dis-advantage of the Wonderland site. The current MSBA reimbursement rate for Revere is 76% and with additional incentives points that will be sought for sustainability and maintenance, we anticipate a rate of approximately 79.5% of eligible costs. (80% is the maximum reimbursement rate that MSBA offers.) The MSBA reimbursement system is based on eligible costs: there are project costs such as land acquisition and legal fees that are categorically ineligible plus various “caps” on reimbursable services and construction. At the PDP phase, the total project cost of the options for further study was \$356m-\$425m, with the associated “local share” of that budget range being \$197m-\$263m. The City of Revere intends to fund this cost without a debt override vote.*

I am certain that additional questioning will arise from this Board once it receives the responses to these questions. In light of the complexity of this issue, it would be appropriate for both the questions and written responses to be placed into the Board’s minutes in order to become public record.

The RHA Board looks forward to working with the City and the School Building Committee to make certain that the most advantageous plan and complete plan is adopted and is most beneficial for all parties involved, including, most importantly, for the residents of RHA.

*Additional Questions copy/pasted from September 21, 2021 email to Executive Director Tricia Dunphy from Commissioner Fatouh Drammeh:*

1. How will the city ensure that RHA does not lost its portfolio and maintain it bonding? *High School Project Response: All options being pursued would be tailored to work with the RHA’s situation and not negatively impact these items.*
2. Will RHA hold the lease to the new site residents will be relocated to and how will they still own the lease to new building sites on the RHA property?
3. Will the resident to be relocated have the same outdoor space as the current housing?
4. Who will foot the bill for the relocated of residents ( moving, medical cost)
5. Will resources be provided on site at the new site?
6. What is plan to provide mobility ( transportation) for veterans and people with disability?
7. What is the plan to convince residents to move to another site? *High School Project Response for questions 2-7: Many of these details would need to be worked out to the satisfaction of the City and RHA as the process develops. Based on the initially reported experience of the Boston and Chelsea Housing Authorities, site and building amenities within new housing development that have followed this process are typically greatly improved. As noted in previous sections of these responses in bold, follow-up meetings with Boston and Chelsea are encouraged to help advance the discussion. Specific details related to the ownership and leasing of new housing areas, access to transportation, relocation expenses and site and building amenities would be worked out via partnership between RHA and the City with*

*input from the legal and development consultants. As previously noted, the intent would be for the RHA to retain ownership of housing sites. Ultimately, the RHA would have the opportunity to ensure that replacement housing met their member's needs because they would be directly involved in the final planning and configuration of new/replacement housing. In terms of the housing units themselves it is anticipated that amenities in the new units would dramatically exceed the existing post-war buildings. Those units relocated onsite would be constructed amongst a totally redeveloped site that includes a new educational facility, athletic fields, playgrounds and other upgrades. Offsite housing would be designed to support and enhance the Elderly or Veteran residents that could be better served at smaller locations such as the Central Avenue Parking Lot and former McKinley School. Determining which residents might benefit from the upgrades those locations could offer is a key "next step" in working with the City and RHA to advance this concept.*

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